

Appropriating the Blessing of God

Pastor and Author A.W. Tozer

June 1, 1958

In the book of Exodus, the 23rd chapter, you know where the text is these nights. Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Then, verse 23, for mine angel shall go before thee, to bring thee in unto.

Now, that is all tonight that I want to deal with. They asked me what I was going to speak on tonight, and I said, making our enemies work for us. But I got one jump ahead of my development. That will be next Sunday night, making our enemies work for us.

But tonight, I want to talk about the appropriating of the blessing which God has given us. Now, it says here, bring thee in unto. Those words just sink down into your mind. God said to Israel, the angel which I send before thee will bring thee in unto.

Now, this was the benign purpose of God for Israel. He would bring them into their possessions. But you know, there is a little bit of simple logic here. They were not in their possession. They were somewhere else.

So, God said, I will bring thee in unto your possessions, the place which I have prepared for thee. They had been in Egypt, the iron furnace it was called, that terrible place of bondage. And in order to get them in unto their own land, He had to bring them out of the land which was not theirs. In order to get them into the good land, He had to bring them out of the bad land.

So, it was out of and in unto. Those prepositions are very important here. Out of, in, unto. Now, that's very simple. I suppose that it couldn't be made simpler than that unless we had a chart that God had given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the land which was way up on the north round Lebanon and was to be cleared down to the Dead Sea, that was to begin at the Mediterranean and go across the Jordan way east. And it was a vast territory there and extremely rich and fruitful.

And God said to Abraham, now this is mine to do it as I will, and I will to give it to you and all your descendants after you. But they had had a little lapse in their development, and they had been in Egypt for a hundred years, not their land. They were slaves there.

So God said, I bring you out of, and now you're halfway in between out of and into. So now while you're in this vacuum, I want you to know that I am sending my angel before you that he might lead you in unto.

Now, any child can make the application here for their spiritual principles that lie here as deep and solid as the hard rock upon which the temple is built. The purpose of Christ is exactly the same for His people, to give us a glorious inheritance. Not a little piece of land or a big piece of land, not even a rich piece of land or glorious piece of land that lies between Lebanon and the Dead Sea.

But His purpose in Christ is to give to us a spiritual inheritance infinitely greater than this land which He gave to Israel. That was a symbol or type of that which He's giving to us. But you see, He cannot give it to His people while they're in the old land. So He brings them out of the old land in order that He might bring them into the new land. He brings them out of the bad land that He might bring them into the good land. He takes them out of their sinful yesterday that He might lead them into their blessed today and tomorrow.

Now, there it is, as simple as can be. But there is a breakdown among us, and that breakdown is that we accent the importance of the out of, without following it with the into. If that sounds technical and dull, I'm sorry, but maybe we can get past that. Do you see what I mean? That the breakdown is that we are getting people out of and not getting them into. So that's why we are the way we are.

You see, you can't get people into till you've gotten them out of, and the out of is first. You've got to get them converted first. You have to get them regenerated first, forgiven first. You have to get them turned around unto God first. That's getting them out of. But there is a vast and rich and sun-kissed land in the spiritual realm for His people now.

God's people are extremely ingenious in dodging around spiritual responsibilities or even spiritual privileges. We have plaintively and poetically made the good land to be heaven, and some of our most beautiful hymns make it so. And I'm not going to stop singing them because I understand that God has another land for us, that land which He has for us in the world to come, that going across spiritual Jordan finally into the heavenly land.

All that is true. But in emphasizing it, we forget one most critically important matter, and that is that the good land is for us to enter and enjoy now while we are here in this present life. And yet almost nothing is said about it. They talk about getting us rid of our sins, and the average testimony has to do with, I used to chew, and I chew no more. I used to smoke, and I smoke no more. I used to take dope; I take dope no more.

Now that's getting us out of. Then we sit down and pray for me that I may hold out faithful. We say, but the fact is that's only the negative element. God wants us to now begin to emphasize the positive and begin to talk about that into which the Lord is leading us.

Now, somebody will say, will not this follow on automatically? If we get out of Egypt, will we not automatically get into the holy land? If we get out of our bondage of sin, will we not automatically enter into the place of spiritual victory? The answer is an emphatic no.

Remember this, and all of you embryonic preachers who will someday yourself be preaching and pulpits and having people listen to you, allow me to tell you this, that truth is effective only when we emphasize it. Unemphasized truth is never effective. You have to come down on truth with a hammer in order to detonate it and set it off. There are many churches in this town that say we believe in the new birth, but they never preach the new birth.

And the result is nobody ever gets the new birth under that kind of ministry. There are those that say we believe in the separated life, but they're careful never to preach the separated life. Or they say we believe in tithing, but they never preach it. They believe in missions, but they never preach missions. They never preach these things, and the result is they are not in their midst, that truth is effective only when it is emphasized.

And Christians will not seek to enter a land they do not know exists. If we place the emphasis upon getting out, we will all line up on the bank of the Red Sea and build our tabernacles there and thank God for getting us out of the iron furnace. And we should thank Him, and we should never forget that we were once bound in sin as a captive I lay, neath the snare of the tempter under sin's mighty sway. We mustn't forget that any more than Israel should forget that she was once in Egypt in slavery. But we must remember that the only reason God took Israel out of Egypt was that he might get her into the land long promised her in the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

So, when the Lord forgives a man's sin, He doesn't forgive his sin in order that the sin might be forgiven. He forgives his sin because He can't take him in where He wants him to be until the sin is forgiven. When the Lord breaks a habit in a man's life, He doesn't break it that it might be broken. He breaks it as a means to an end, as a way of getting him into the new land. So this is that which is overlooked in our time, and the result is decadent Christianity.

We three preachers were upstairs here, as we do three times a week in prayer, and a good brother called up and wanted to come. That is, he called up a little while before and said he'd like to come and pray with us. I'm not going to mention his name, for I don't want to quote him without his permission. Although, knowing the boldness of his preaching, I'm sure he'd say it if he were here.

But he is on the staff of Moody Bible Institute, at least he works with Moody Bible Institute and has for years, goes up and down in the land, and I said to him, brother, so-and-so, I'd like to ask you a question. You get around a lot among Bible conferences and in prophetic conferences and Bible classes here and there. What is your opinion? How do you find the gospel churches? He said, rotten from head to foot.

This was a Moody man, a man who you might know certainly isn't going to go too far overboard in saying things. He said, rotten from head to foot, he said, the tragic condition of things among the gospel churches.

Well, you know why? It's because we have put the emphasis, the accent of importance, upon getting people out, getting their old life record canceled, getting them eternal life so they'll be sure to go to heaven at last. But we say little to them about this glorious spiritual land that is now ours, and into which we can now enter by faith in Jesus Christ. And I wonder whether that terrible expression, rotten from head to foot, couldn't be explained by reading something in Matthew 12.

Listen. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places seeking rest and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth

he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself. And they enter in and dwell there. And the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Now, I do not want to press the interpretation that a man who lies down on the shore of the Red Sea and never goes any further is worse than if he was in Egypt. I wouldn't press it that far. But at least it's a significant and ominous chapter here, this section of this chapter. Significant and portentous. Our Lord spoke those words.

Now there is a land of promise, my brethren. And as I have said, it is not heaven at last, that it eventuates in heaven. It will be there at last. But there are too many people living in defeat, waiting to be set free when they go to heaven, hoping that somewhere between the time that they die and they arrive at heaven, they will go through some sort of a purifying experience that will set them free from all their bondage, and they will discover all the blessed land which they were supposed to have had while they were here on earth. But I believe that that is a great mistake and a misunderstanding of the Scriptures.

The land of promise is chosen for us by God, out of the goodness of His heart, and secured for us by oath and covenant, and all the infinite resources of God are back of it. When God puts Himself back of anything, all of God is back of that. All of the infinitude of God is back of that. The limitlessness of God is back of it. Oh, I pity people sometimes, people who don't have much. I've never been too rich. But I'm touched when I see how little some people can get along on.

My little grandson who has a bank account of a dollar and a quarter. A dollar? Well, he's got two and a quarter. Now he had a birthday. And he got himself another dollar, so he had now two and a quarter. That's a pitiful little amount, isn't it? Two and a quarter in this day. This day of lots of money, little lad that's five years old, and he has himself a bank account. In his own name, two dollars and a quarter.

Well, now if he were to put his resources back of anything, it wouldn't be very much, would it, really? You couldn't do much with two and a quarter now. But when General Motors puts their resources back of something, or Ford or Rockefeller, you've got money back of you.

And so, when we think of God, we think of limitlessness. We think not of any limit. There's no little thing. God says, now don't be careful. This has got to last a long while. And this grace I'm giving you now is, there's only a small amount of it, and they're using it up pretty fast. So be careful of it. No, no. The grace of God is equal to God, because the grace of God is not something God has, it's something God is.

You see what I mean? The grace of God is not something God hands out bit by bit, as a father might hand out dimes and quarters to his growing children. It's not something God has, gives, and hasn't got. Because he's given it, it is something God is. The grace of God is God. It's a facet of God.

You take a great diamond, made out of one thing, carbon, and under tremendous pressure, geological pressure, made into a diamond. They cut that diamond into many facets. And how you can turn it around and look at it from a dozen different ways, and if

it's a good diamond, it'll flash and catch the light and throw it back. Every facet is the same diamond. It's just another facet of the same diamond. It's all one thing.

And so, God is all one thing. Whether we're talking about the love of God, it's all one thing. It's God-loving. We talk about the mercy of God, it is not something God has, it is God showing mercy. We talk about the grace of God, it is not something that God has, it is God being gracious. If we talk about the goodness of God, it is not something that God has, it is God, in his goodness, being good to people, so that we have it in infinite degree.

So, when God redeemed His people, redeemed us sinners, His lost sheep out of the land, His poor Israelites out of the bondage of Egypt, you and me, whatever our race or creed or color or background, when He redeemed us, my brethren, He secured for us this good land out of the goodness of His own heart. Never forget that. And what was this land into which he took them?

Now I want you to notice that this land was not a primitive land, waiting development, as it was here in America. There was a time on this continent when this land was primitive, when the buffalo roamed here, and the Indian. And when there was scarcely more than a patch here and a patch there in corn, outside of that it was a vast wilderness from what the politicians called the rockbound coast of Maine to the sunny slopes of California.

And men came here and with their axes and their spades and their shovels and their plows and their oxen and their horses and their good, tough, sweaty muscle, they conquered this continent. It was something they had to develop. And they began with a hut on the east coast and ended with all the glory that California claims for herself. So my brethren, that was America. But listen what God says about the land He gave to Israel.

When the Lord thy God shall have brought thee in unto the land, this is Deuteronomy 6, 10 and 11, in unto the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities which thou didst not build, and houses full of all good things which thou fillest not, and wells digged which thou didst not dig, and vineyards and olive trees which thou didst not plant. This was all worked out for them. It wasn't something they had to do.

What busy beavers we are, and we're always ready to sign a card or accept a challenge to go do something real hard and real fast. We'd like to sanctify ourselves and get victory for ourselves by wrestling it out, working it out. God said to Israel, now, normally men go in and take over a land and they develop it, but this is the land I promised to your fathers. This land's already developed. This is already rich. There are pomegranates on the trees and there's fruit there, as they well knew, so big that one bunch had to be carried, grapes had to be carried between, on the shoulders of two men. And he said there are rocks there who are out of which the honey flows.

I remember the honey trees. Do you remember them, brother? You ought not to remember the bee trees of other days. Why, the bee tree, my father, you used to watch bees. And a fellow would sit down and he'd look up, and they might think he'd lost his mind, but he knew what he was doing, he was watching the bees. He was watching

which way they went. And then he'd get up and move in the direction, sit down a while again, and getting their beam, finding out which way the bee was going. And after a while he'd find that bee tree, and he'd cut the thing down and he'd have enough honey to last him for several years. And you'd find it literally flowing out of caves and out of bee trees, back to where I come from.

And that was exactly as it was in Palestine. It was a land where the bees made honey, and where it flowed with milk and honey. Somebody says, what about that, flowing with milk and honey?

Now, I want to be delicate, but I have driven many a herd of cattle home with the udder leaking, with the milk literally flowing. They were so full of it and so well bred and so well taken care of that they couldn't wait for it to be milked. And I just wonder how many gallons of it's lost on the road coming home. Flowing with milk and honey, the honey flows and the milk flows and there's butter and wine and food of every kind.

All you have to do is to recognize that what Israel had on earth, His people have in the Spirit. What they had in the flesh, we have in the Spirit.

Now, God would drive out these people, he said, and give this whole business to Israel. But somebody raised a question here and says, how could this be? Did not the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Jebusites and the Amorites and the Philistines and the rest, did not they own this? What right had God to take it from them? The answer is, they owned nothing at all. The great God Almighty gave them breath for their lungs and blood for their veins and brains for their heads and muscles to move their bones about. The great God Almighty had given them everything and had given them that sweet, beautiful land that lay between the seas.

God had given it to them and their response had been to degenerate a people so filthy, so vile, so completely bad that Dr. R. A. Torrey said that God was forced to amputate them. As you amputate a cancer out of the body, they had gone so bad. They were rotten with syphilis and many other kinds of diseases. They were worshippers of the vilest gods. They offered their little children to Moloch.

Do you want to know what that means? You want me to be tolerant? That's the word we hear now. If you express a conviction, somebody says, now be tolerant, be tolerant. They want you to be tolerant. Nobody is supposed to have a conviction about anything or be on the side of anything or against anything. Oh, you can be on the side of mother and against polio, but further than that, they want you to sit and say, now be tolerant, brethren. There are some things you don't tolerate. You just don't tolerate them.

And God in His sovereignty was not going to tolerate Moloch, for instance. Who was Moloch? Moloch was a great iron or metal of some sort, thing cast in the shape of a man, and his arms extended forward like this. And he was hollow inside, and there was a grate underneath. And those arms were hollow as the rest of the god.

And a man, an Amorite or a Hittite or a Jebusite or a Philistine or whatever it was, would, in order to appease the wrath of Moloch, would heat that furnace red-hot until those arms were hot. Then he would take his little baby boy or girl and throw it into the

arms of Moloch. And there would be a wild, piercing shriek, and then a gurgle and death for that little one. Thank God it didn't take long. They died quickly, but they died there.

And the Almighty God said, you caused your children to pass through the fire unto Moloch. And God wouldn't have that. God had given them everything they had in the first place. God had given them breath for their lungs. God had given them intelligence to develop that land. And He said, you forfeited your right to the land, and beside that it belongs to Abraham. Abraham holds the deed to this land, and you have usurped it. He said, I'm bringing in My people. He said, here, it's all yours.

They never quite took it all. They compromised with those frightful heathens. They'd have had a few Joshua's, the son of Nun who never would quit till the work was done. If they'd have had a few Joshua's, they might have done better, but they didn't. The result was, they took the land, but they never quite took it. It was only half taken.

And so they mingled with the Amorites and the rest. And the result was a degeneration on the part of Israel, and so with the children of God. We either don't go in, or we don't go fully in, or if we go fully in, we don't take it over.

Now, I want to talk a little more about our high spiritual inheritance, this gift from God, and I want to bear down on it that it's a gift from God. You say, what is it, Mr. Tozer? Well, it is what we call the deeper life, or the spirit-filled life, the victorious life, and it is the sovereign goodwill of God that has given it. Remember, in God's good heartedness.

You see, the reason you get things from God is not because you pray or because you fast. The reason you get things from God is that God's goodhearted. God is good. His mercy brightens all the path on which we move. And it's the goodness of God, it's the goodness of God that decided to create us in the first place. I'm glad I was created.

Are you? Are you glad, or are you defeated? Do you wish you were dead? Do you wish, like Job, you never had been born, or being born, you'd been carried dead from your mother's arms to the grave? I don't, I don't, I don't. And I don't anticipate the time will ever come when I do. Maybe I will when I get old, but I don't, I am not now.

Now, stop your laughing. I mean, when I get older, maybe I will. But up to now, up to now, I'm glad I'm alive. And though I've suffered a lot, I suppose being sensitive, I've suffered more than a lot of people. I often tell about the dentist.

I said to a dentist one time, don't you think some people are more sensitive than others? Brother, he said, some people's pain threshold is so low they suffer from practically nothing, and other people never suffer much. He said, I had a truck driver fall asleep in my chair while I was pounding, pounding fillings into his teeth. He couldn't suffer at all. Well, I've suffered some, and I've suffered more than other people.

And a lot of things that never happened to me have hurt me. You know that so too. A lot of things have never happened to me, but I'm still glad I'm alive. And if I'll die five minutes from now, I'm glad I've lived this long. And I'm glad I've seen God's sunrise in the morning. And I've seen the clouds drop down their rain and water that places below from his chambers above.

And I'm glad I've seen little children. And I'm glad I've read poetry and heard music and watched the birds fly and heard them sing. And I'm glad I've stood with others and sung, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. I'm glad I was created, brethren. Some of you may have some cracks about that now. I don't claim to be another Stan Musial.

But I'm just a man made in the image of God, and that was itself a gift from God. That was itself. That God made me not a cat or a worm, but a man in His image was a gift from God. And the wondrous personality that He's given us. I grieve that people don't develop themselves. We don't develop our personality.

I said that some two or three Sundays ago when I was preaching about young men, last Sunday I guess, and how they waste the powers that lie within them. They study only when somebody gets behind them with a ball bat and threatens to bash their brains in. They study. And then as soon as they get out from under the thumb of the teachers, they go back to the comic strip and the baseball score. And they don't develop that thing that is in them.

But some people say, but I never had an education. Neither did I. And I have known many that have not. Education, all the books of the world can be bought now for anywhere up to a dollar, and lots of dollars around to buy them. All the books of the world. And in this city of ours, you can get a musical education. You can get an artistic education. You can get an education in almost anything if you just apply yourself.

But the time that we waste, the wondrous personality that God has given us. Little, you'll excuse the expression, little grandson today was looking at the cat. And he said, Daddy, why can't I talk to her? Now that wasn't a foolish question. There was an intelligent boy of five come up against the question of the inability to communicate with the lower world.

You can talk with God above you, but you can't talk to the beast below. Half a dozen words he knows, but that's it. But you have personality. You have the image of God built in. That was out of the goodness of God. He didn't have to do it. He could have left us here to be guided by the stars, but He gave us a whole Bible. Sixty-six books. Sixty-six wonderful books.

Oh, Thy Word is forever settled in heaven. Here it is, out of the goodness of God. God owed Abraham nothing, the old idol-maker. He owed Isaac nothing. He owed Jacob nothing. He owed no man anything. But He gave us our Bible, and He gave us our Savior, and He gave us pardon, and He gave us the Holy Ghost to be in His church. And He guides His people.

Quote it here tonight, guidance. And I thought of another verse on guidance. When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them. No true shepherd ever drives His sheep from behind. He leads them from before. He guides His children, and it's all out of the goodness of His heart.

When will God quit? When will God run out of blessing? Never while the ages roll, never while the stars shine, never after He has rolled up the heavens like a vesture and laid

them aside. Never, never, for as long as God is God, God will be all He is now. And the goodness of God is guiding you. God will guide you by His goodness.

You know, someone quoted here tonight this verse, I will guide thee with mine eye. But do you know that's not quite correct? That's correct as we have it in the King James. But if you look at other versions, you'll see it says, I will guide thee with mine eye upon thee. Somebody let a couple of words fall out there in transcription down the centuries. I will guide thee with mine eye upon thee.

Dear old Nicholas of Cusa got an icon, a picture. He said, now look at that picture there, look at that. One of those pictures, you've seen them, wherever you go, they seem to be looking at you.

Did you ever see a picture like that, a face and the eyes? And anywhere you went, they followed you. As a boy, I used to go out and look at the moon and try to run away from it, run all around over the yard or field. And everywhere I went, the moon followed me.

And so these eyes follow us. And old Nicholas of Cusa said, now let that be an object lesson to you. Just as this picture, the eyes on you, wherever you go, any part of the room, so the eye of God is eternally and forever upon you, and you can't walk out from under it, and you can't hide from it, and you can't get away from it.

I will guide thee as long as my eye is upon thee, and my eye is upon thee as long as I exist. I am what I am, that is my name forever, the eternal God. From the eternity past to the eternity to come, God is God. And so the goodness of God is guiding us, and all the land is before us.

Now, I want to read here a little passage from Joshua 1 and show you how we take this, how we take this victory, how we take this guidance, how we take this place which is ours. God says to the man Moses, after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses, my servant, is dead, period. No, no, no, no, no, semicolon; Moses, my servant, is dead, now therefore arise. Go over this Jordan, thou and all this people unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you as I said unto Moses.

Now I want to tell you something. God has a free, full, victorious, God-conscious, God-blessed life for every one of His redeemed children. We can enter into it right now, right now, for every one of His redeemed children. And we can have just as much of it as we'll take. We can go just as far as we will go.

But somebody says, if I entered into a deep, full life, would that mean that there would be no opposition? No. It would mean that for the first while people would point to their heads when you weren't looking and say, always it's that way, brother. The devil has an understanding with all the deacons and elders and half-dead pastors and soggy church members that everybody's to stay half-saved.

But if anybody insists upon getting all the way in, they say he needs to see a psychiatrist. And they say he's sick. You can expect to hear that now. That's the charge they make

against you. They used to just toss a man to a lion, and there was a groan and a crunching sound, and he was in heaven. But now they're more subtle, you see, brethren.

If you don't believe what is the proper thing to believe, what we hear from Washington and Moscow and the University of Chicago, if you don't believe what you're supposed to believe if you insist upon being a little bit individualistic, they say you're sick. They say, well, he's disturbed. I know who's disturbed, but it ain't me.

It's the fellow that wrote the book, he's disturbed. And the professor that stands up there before the church, he's disturbed. When my disturbance has long gone down the drain, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, and my Father in heaven goes before me. So, they'll say you're disturbed.

I well remember it. I well remember it. I went through the whole business, even in our Christian Missionary Alliance. If anybody's here a missionary or preacher from the Christian Missionary Alliance, say nothing about it in New York.

But it's true, nevertheless. When I began to seek God, some of our good friends in the Alliance Church worried about me. They worried. They should have worried, but not about that. Ever notice that when you get a good, tough critic after you, he never criticizes you for the thing that's wrong with you? He always digs up something that you're not guilty of and blames you for that. And the thing that you and God know is wrong with you, he never sees that at all.

I've had that happen all down the years. Every time I've been put on a griddle and made to sizzle and fry, it's been for something I didn't do. But the things that did do and should have been jailed for, the Lord never brought up, because the blood of the Lamb cleansed them all away.

So if you go ahead with God, my brother, you may be perfectly sure that some stodgy old wooden Indian down there will say, I'm afraid he's disturbed. Well, John Bunyan, you know, wrote about the man who got disturbed. His name was Christian. He started on the road toward the Celestial City and his wife wasn't disturbed, neither was his family, but he was. He got out of there and started off for heaven.

Most of you, I think, don't know that John Bunyan wrote a sequel. And in the sequel, Christiana, the wife got disturbed, and she came along after him. Did you know that? In the regular first part of Pilgrim's Progress, we end with the Christian having a few gurgles in the stream and getting across to heaven and getting up on the other side. But there's a sequel to it, and Christiana gets disturbed and says, now that I think it over, she said, I'm afraid we were tough on my dear husband now in heaven. So, I think I ought to become a Christian, too. So, she takes the whole family and follows that.

Now, you may be sure that you can't get, you can't go on with God and be let alone. If you took up almost any kind of sin, they'd let you alone. They'd say, be tolerant, let him alone, let him alone, be tolerant. But if you get right with God and then go on with God, they won't let you alone. But the dear Heavenly Father will look after you.

This promise, an angel before thee, is valid, and it's valid for you tonight, and it's valid for me. But you say, how do I do this, Mr. Tozer? How do I, how do I put my foot down? Well, a lot of God's people overeat and keep on overeating, but their mind never quite clears up.

Finney said when he felt the power lift off of him sometimes and he wasn't as effective as he had been, he took a half day off fast and prayed. He said it took time out to wait on God. He didn't eat any breakfast, just waited on God and got straightened out.

And if some of you dear people would risk being called queer and fanatical and would just decide some morning that you were going to give God a chance at you and put yourself in a position where the Lord can talk with you, and you can talk with the Lord.

Get the Bible before you there, get on your knees and wait. Don't worry, wait. See what God the Lord will speak. And insist on pushing through. I like to push my prayers on God and insist that God listen and hear me. Your personal spiritual experience, God will guide you into it. It's there for you. Your desire for guidance, so necessary in this big old dark world of ours, God has that for you.

And for this church, and that's really why I started preaching this series, which continue yet for a few Sundays, this church, we need guidance now. We're going to get it. And the fact that we don't know what doesn't bother me at all.

If God would tell me 24 hours ahead what He was going to do, I'd be one of the stuckiest-up fellows on the Southside, you know. But He just lets me follow along step by step, and then look back and see all the time God's been with us.

Did you hear that song our brother sang a while ago? It says, I will make the darkness light before thee. Do you believe that? Where does it say that in the Bible? Doesn't it say that in Isaiah? I will go before thee, and I will make the darkness light before thee? Yeah, Isaiah, on about 43rd, 45th chapter. What is wrong, I'll make it right before thee.

Now listen, I will send my fear before thee and will destroy all those to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their back, and I will send hornets before thee. I won't read the rest. All thy battles I will fight before thee, and the high place I'll bring down.

When thou walkest by the way, I'll lead thee, and on the fatness of the land I'll feed thee. And a mansion on the sky I'll deed thee, and the high place I'll bring down. With an everlasting love I'll love thee, though with trials deep and strong I'll prove thee, but there's nothing that shall hurt or move thee, and the high place I'll bring down. But you know the trouble with you and me? The trouble is we try to be so modest in the presence of God. Why don't we push in and take? Push in and take.

Moody told about a dog. He said that a friend of his had a dog, and it was customary, oh, my wife wouldn't allow this, but it was customary, feed the dog at the table, just the scraps. No more, just the scraps. If somebody was eating a nice piece of meat and there was a little part too tough, he gave it to the dog. And he got used to that. He got used to

living on the scraps that were tossed. There's something even about that even in the Bible.

And so Moody said to him, do you know something? You conditioned this dog to live on scraps until he couldn't eat a good piece of meat if he gave it to him. The fellow said, oh, I'll show you. So, he took a steak and he set it down on the floor. The dog looked at it and then looked up at the master and looked down at it, looked up at the master, said, go ahead. Looked at it and then looked up at the master and said, this isn't my, this doesn't look like my rations. He said, I'm used to scraps. And he went over and laid down. He said, you win. He has been conditioned to live on scraps until he won't eat steak when he's got a chance.

Moody said a lot of Christians like that. He said they've lived on crumbs so long that when God sets a whole table before them, they're too modest. They go off and lie down and say, no God, excuse me, but I'm poor worm and no man and a miserable man and don't deserve it. Of course you don't deserve it. Nobody argues that you deserve. You don't deserve to be led. You don't deserve to be guided. You don't deserve the rich land of victory and hope. You don't deserve the fullness of the whole. You don't deserve anything. But can't we stop seeing or begin to see and stop thinking that it's deserved? It's nothing we deserve.

It's out of the goodness of God. Goodness of God. God's good and therefore you get it. Not you're good and therefore you get it. But he says, yes, but brother, so-and-so's a good man. He fasts four days a week. He isn't a good man because he fasts. Fasting is a convenience for him, as I suggested here a while ago. But it's no virtue and no merit. And it doesn't change God's mind any.

God is good and our God already has given you rich spiritual land flowing with milk and honey. And it's out of his goodness and not out of your merit.

Why don't we do something about it instead of just listen and then go home. You dear young people. Now here you are. You're in your teens now. You're impressionable, alert, intelligent. God can talk to you. In ten years, you'll be in your twenties, middle twenties, late twenties. Ten more years you'll be getting middle-aged. Ten more after that and you'll be starting down the hill.

We have them all around us. Old dried-out empties that had a chance or were brought up in our Sunday school and church, that heard the best preachers in all of America, and I don't refer to myself, preaching from this pulpit and missionaries ablaze with God. And they had every opportunity in the world, but they settled for crumbs. And now they're getting old and they're getting rigid and rigor mortis is setting in their soul before they're dead. They hope to go to heaven, but they're not even too sure about that.

It would be a convenience if there were a purgatory, but there isn't any. It would be a convenience if there were for some of God's poor people. They might go there and straighten out. But Paul said, absent from the body, present with the Lord.

Where's purgatory? No purgatory. As the Nazarene preacher said once in my hearing, he believed in purgatory, but he believed it was right down here now on this earth. When

the fire of God falls on a man, that's purgatory. God cleanses him then. I believe in that kind, but not the other kind. Not a niche somewhere where God hangs souls up to cool off and dry out and purify. No, I don't believe it. I don't care how high up in the ecclesiastical scale you go, I still don't believe it. God wants to do it for you now.

Some of you young people may be impressed a bit now that you're going out of here tonight and you're going to go off quipping, joking, fooling. You're going to go out and eat a lot of stuff, and then you're going to go kidding and joshing off to your house and go to bed. Tomorrow morning, any good that God may have wanted to do for you has dissipated like the morning dew. It's all gone.

Oh, that God would raise a few, and he's done it. He's done it. We have a high batting average here. He's done it, that God would raise a few serious-minded young men and women who break loose from the frivolities and nonsense of youth and seek the face of God. Will you? Will you? Will you?

If I give an altar call, say, will you come down here, come down, sniff, blow your nose, and go home. I don't want that. I want you deep, deep inside of your heart, I want you to settle it. God first. And I'm going to give God my life, and I'm going on if it costs me my friends, and if I'm thought queer, and if my people think I ought to see a doctor because I'm disturbed, I'm still going on with God. We raise a few like that up. You'll see what God will do for you.

May God bless you. I send an angel before thee. Every place you put your foot is yours. Take it tonight. Take it. It's all yours. You don't have to fight for it or work for it. It's all yours. A gift from God. Amen?

Father, we pray tonight. We pray tonight in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. O God, we don't have to beg Thee. We feel sheepish in begging. It's like begging it to rain when it's already pouring. It's like begging the sun to shine when it's blazing at high noon without a cloud. Like blazing the river to flow when it's flowing a mile wide out to the sea. O God, we can't beg for Thee to bless us nor lead us. Already Thou art all prepared to do that. Thou art out ahead of us, looking back, wondering why we tarry.

Pray Thee for all these people that have been here tonight. We want guidance for our future. We want victory for our present. We want help, and Thou has promised to give it to us. Blessed be Thy name. Blessed be Thy name. I will break asunder the gates of brass, and I will cut the bars of iron, and I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hidden riches of secret places. And I will do these things unto thee and not forsake thee. Blessed be Thy name.

So we're not going to beg, we're going to thank and praise Thee this night, and ask only that Thou will touch one after another, that they might slip out of here with a hush of the Spirit upon them to find some quiet place in there with open Bible to press on and in until it's all settled and the die is cast and the bridges are burned.

And as Elisha slew his oxen and used his wooden plow to cook their meat and make a feast, he couldn't go back to farming because he had no equipment left. He'd slain it and burnt it. Help, we pray thee, that these friends may slay the oxen and burn the plow and

not go back anymore, but go ahead. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.