

## Ernest G Wylam - Faith

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Along last May when we had our first little convention at Henderson and voted as a group to have another one in October, and I personally want to thank Brother Roll and the friends hereabouts for making this privilege possible for us. By the Lord's grace, and I'm sure that in exit to Brother Mount's Prayer, we will all go away from here renewed in strength and courage and consecration and feel that it has indeed been well for us to be here this morning. I would like to call your attention, dear friends, to faith. Paul has given us a very good process of delineating love by telling us what faith does not do and what it is not.

We're familiar by nature with a great many things which, as fallen human creatures, we are confronted with in our daily lives, and so Paul, taking his cue from that, seems to feel that we will be better able to appreciate the spiritual and ethereal and abstract things of love by calling our attention to the things that it doesn't do first and the things that it isn't first and then telling us what it does and what it is. By the same token, this morning I'm going to invite your attention not to some of the things that faith isn't, but rather to some of the things that faith believes. Faith is, like love, a somewhat abstract proposition. It's hard for the natural man to comprehend it.

Paul gives us a very good definition for it, and he was somewhat stymied, evidently, when he said it was the evidence of things hoped for and the substance of things unseen, and I'm sure none of us could improve on that definition. But we can take from the Scriptures some pretty pointed applications of faith in action, which is my purpose this morning, considering the good fight of faith fighting faith, resting faith, the works of faith and operative faith fighting faith, resting faith, working faith, and operating faith. This brings faith right down and sets it in our laps, and as we consider these things from a scriptural standpoint, we'll be able to see where we fall short, where we perhaps are strong, where we have some power, where we have some vacuum which needs to be filled in by prayer and by watchfulness and by the grace of God.

So just to give us a little basis on which to work, I like to use the definition which we have in our theology of faith as spiritual, as natural men and women. We have the natural senses of taste, smell, sight, touch and hearing, and these have all been given very beautiful correspondences in our religious life. We won't go into the others, but faith has been referred to our human sense of we Never saw God. We never talked.

We never heard him talk audibly to us. We never shook his hand. We never had any of these physical senses which we need so much in our human relations and our material relations brought in direct contact with God or with the things beyond the veil. Nevertheless, we do maintain, in a sense, we maintain touch. We keep in touch with things which we have never seen.

We keep in touch with God. We keep in touch with Christ, with the brethren who've gone beyond the veil. We are, as it were, already in touch with the things of the millennial age. By reason of the faith which we have, be it much or little, we are in touch in proportion to the measure of faith which we enjoy. Now.

We are told in the Good Book that faith is the foundation or basis of our hope. We cannot have very much hope unless we have faith. Hope consists of desire and expectation. You might desire something very much. A little child as Christmas time approaches.

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A little boy desires a red wagon, maybe a little fire truck. Or the little sister desires a doll. But they have to have something beside the desire. They have to have some expectation of it, and when Christmas morning comes and they come down and steal down the stairs and there's the Christmas tree and the little red fire truck underneath the tree, and a doll for a little sister.

That desire and that expectation has reached its prudence in realization. The little boy doesn't any longer hope for a fire truck. He's got it. The little sister doesn't any longer hope for the doll. She has it.

And so Paul tells us that this faith which we now enjoy is a transitory thing. That when we get beyond the veil, we will no longer hope for the blessings of God's kingdom. Because they'll be there. We'll be in the midst of it. We'll be part and parcel of it.

We'll have it, and so Paul says, what a man hopeth for, he doesn't hope for after he comes to have attained it, and so Paul tells us that faith is the basis on which our hope is built. Without faith as a basis for our expectation, we wouldn't have very much hope, would we? But he says that faith and hope will ultimately pass away.

So let's enjoy our faith and hope all we can while we've got it. Because when the kingdom of Christ is established and God's blessings are abroad in the earth and that part of God's plan is in its fulfilled state, we will no longer hope. Neither will the world of mankind hope for the blessings of Christ's kingdom. They'll have it. They'll enjoy it.

But Paul goes on and says, though faith and hope will pass away, love endureth forever. But we do now have this faith and this hope. I want to give you two texts, one in Romans 8, the 24th and 25th verses, where we for we are saved by but hope that is seen is not for that which a man seeth is why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it, and in the same book, two chapters over the 17th verse of the 10th chapter, we read, so then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

Now our presence here today is substantial proof and evidence of the fact that that we have faith in this Word, that enough of it has entered into our minds and hearts and lives to quicken within us a desire to know more about it and through it, more about God, or else we wouldn't be here today, and so we're glad that we have been greatly blessed by the Lord in the measure of faith which was the seed of hope and promise. That which the Bible speaks of as the gift of God. Faith is the gift of God. Now, that refers only to the first part of it, that little grain of faith which we inherited from our forebears, probably running here back to the Garden of Eden.

You know, Adam didn't have to have faith in God, as Paul says. He saw him, he had him. He enjoyed God. He walked with God and talked with him in the garden. Adam didn't have to exercise faith in God, neither did Mother Eve.

But after they had been cast out of the garden and Cain and Abel and the other brothers and sisters came along, they had never seen God, but they had to have a measure of faith in him by reason of the things which their parents told them about, and so we see faith starting back there in that wonderful arrangement which God made, and after they were cast out of the garden, even Adam and Eve had to have faith in the promise which God gave them, that ultimately the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head, and they had that faith, and they continued with it. We come on down the stream of time till our day, and Jesus says of our day, when the Son of Man cometh, will he find faith in the earth?

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The question is left unanswered. But the conclusion which we draw from his question is very, very little, and so the fact that what little faith there is, we are permitted to share, and so we're here today. But that isn't enough.

Just to have that seed of faith, that gift of God, we have to have the operation of this, Romans 10:17, which says, faith cometh. Additional faith. On top of that gift, additional faith cometh how? By hearing and hearing by the word of God, and so we have this precious privilege of building up and strengthening and pyramiding our faith as we continue in the ways of God and of Christ, listening to the word of truth.

And that increases our faith and builds us up and makes us strong. Now, is it sufficient just to have the Word in our. In our minds? My old grandmother read the Bible through once a year, from the time she learned to read, I presume at around six or seven years old, until she died up in her 80s. I presume that she read the Bible true, at least 74 times, maybe even 78 times.

And she could quote it pretty good, but she didn't know very much about it. Now, her husband didn't know. He couldn't quote it as much, my own grandfather. But he used to tell me about God's kingdom upon the earth and about the blessings of restitution, the time of the resurrection. He was, I think, of the Philadelphia period of the Church.

He not only had a measure of faith, I mean a major of the Word in his head like his wife had, but he also had it in his heart. She didn't have much of it in her heart. She was sort of a tyrant. But he was a very different kind of a Christian. Very loving, very gentle, very kind, sympathetic, understanding, compassionate.

He had not only the word of God in his head, a little of it perhaps. But he'd made more use of what Lily had than she had of the multitude that she had, because he had it in his heart. So it isn't necessary. It isn't sufficient, dear friends, for us only to have the Word of God in our heads. We need it in our hearts, too.

And unless we have it in our hearts, we're not going to get very far with this faith which is built upon the Word. Because without it in our hearts, we won't know how to use it. It'll just be something which kind of is too much for us, and we won't be very good examples of God and of Christ. But when the Word comes into our heads and then it has fruitage in our hearts and we find it brings forth the fruit of God's Holy Spirit, then we are living examples not only of to the other believers and to our brethren in the truth, but our brethren of the nominal household of faith and also to unbelievers who may reject us now and think we're a little off the beam, you know.

But the Lord tells us that in the day of their visitation they will thank God on our behalf and be proud that they knew such people as we are. Well, that's all right. We're glad that the Lord has a provision for them and that in time they will also come into this precious faith and truth. But now to get down to our subject, I take you for fighting faith over to 1 Timothy, the sixth chapter and the 12th verse, where Paul tells us a little about this matter. When he says, fight the good fight of faith, he's talking now to his son Timothy.

But he said, o, but thou, O man of God, Flee these things which are preying upon the minds and hearts and lives of other young men. Paul was an older man than the one to whom he addressed this book, Timothy, and he realized the the trials and temptations and testings to which all Christians were subject, and particularly to the young men, and he mentions the love of many that is the root of all evil and covetousness and so forth. But he says, thou, O man of God, please these

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things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life whereunto thou art also called and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Fight is a good fight of faith. Well, to fight you got to have somebody fight. Should Christians fight? Well, now that's a problem, isn't it? Well, evidently we have to fight because the Bible says the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual.

We're told that we have weapons and that we are soldiers of Jesus Christ, and now Paul points out the battlefield fight the good fight of faith. Well, who are our enemies? Well, they've been very beautifully summed up, and as three in their prime divisions, the world, the flesh and the devil, we have great familiarity with the world as an enemy.

Now, the world is a wonderful place. It's God's earth. This is going to be made beautiful when the time of restitution comes, and the earth is spoken of as God's footstool, which he will make beautiful, and the 24th Psalm tells us that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

And still we find that we have to fight this particular world. Of course, that 24th Psalm speaks of the world of the millennium, and that is a different story. But now we have while we have many blessings in the world, we have many things which are just beyond our Comprehension, and we do appreciate them. We appreciate the privilege of I In this millennial day.

We're already 84 years into the millennial age, or 82 according to the way you figure it. But at any rate, here we are, almost 100 years into the millennium. The seventh of the thousand years, the 7,000 years of God's rest day, and what do we have? Why, we have blessings on every hand.

All of the applications of electricity. Our electric lights, our transcribing machines, our the ignition systems of our automobiles, our radios and televisions. Why, we can hardly live an hour today without having the blessing of electrical energy that plays some part in our lives. Then, particularly in the morning, we appreciate the benefits of refrigeration. We can go to the refrigerator and mother can get out a nice half a dozen oranges.

Or a can of concentrated orange juice, and we can have a nice drink that a king's ransom couldn't have bought a hundred years ago. All the money in the world couldn't have provided the kind of refreshment which we have in the morning, and we could go on and amplify that in many ways. We have our automobiles, our internal combustion engines, our radio, our telephone electronics.

In all of the budding application which it has ultimately to be used and harnessed on behalf of further shortening the toil of man, and we do enjoy the blessings of the world. But as Christians, we find that we have a fight on our hands because of these very blessings. They bring an allurements, an invitation, a temptation to compromise and to go too far along the line and decide in the direction of the world, and the consequence is that we have to fight these allurements.

We have to fight these temptations. We have to resist them, and so the world is no slight enemy when it comes to this fight of faith. Then we have the devil and the demons, the host of his assistants. We have enemies who are of the spirit, of the adversary, even amongst our fellow human beings.

And we wrestle not against principalities and powers alone. But against the rulers of wickedness in high places, and I'm sure that any Christian who is watching his daily course. Will find many times

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during the day. When evil suggestions and evil temptations come seemingly right out of the blue.

The only way we can account for it is these powers of evil which whisper, those little demons that sit on our shoulders and suggest a compromise. Or that we violate our conscience, that we yield a little too much this way or that way. We could spend a lot of time talking about the enemy of the evil powers which we had called to our attention in our morning bow. I will be resistant to occultism and spiritism, not only to those particularly active forces of evil, but to the little temptations, the little foxes that spoil the vine that the Bible tells about. Well, that's enough of the fight against the adversary and his minions.

But the greatest enemy of all is our flesh. We have this old perverse cross grained human nature of ours to cope with, and of all the enemies that we have, the one that is the most difficult to overcome and the one that we'll have to fight until the last day of our lives is our humanity, and that is the one that will really bring us those experiences which will prepare us as new creatures for the work which the Lord wants us to do in the age to come. We cannot sanctify the things of the earth, dear friends.

They are contrary in spirit to the Spirit of the Lord and they're just as opposite as day and night, and endeavor is necessary today more than ever before to be spiritually minded and to cause our conduct and our actions and our course of life conform to spiritual things. So we have this good fight of faith that Paul told Timothy about. Fight the good fight of faith. Now paradoxically over in Hebrews we have Paul talking about another application of faith as the rest of faith.

Well, how in heaven's name can you fight and rest at the same time? That would be a difficult thing for anybody except a Christian to do. But the Christian knows what the score is. They know what this is all about. I take you to the fourth chapter of Hebrews, the first three verses as a basis for this thought on the rest of Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us, of entering into God's rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto the Hebrews. But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, as I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest. Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world, and so we have while we're fighting this good fight of faith, on the one hand we have the rest of faith.

Now only a Christian could understand that, only one who knew what it is to have the rest of faith while you're fighting at the same time we who have this rest of faith have entered into God's rest. Now what does that mean? Well, let's go back to the Garden of Eden. Let's go back to the time when Adam had been created and God had placed him and Mother Eve there in that beautiful environment, placed before them the opportunity for life eternal. He had told them that if they would obey his voice and be resistant to the temptations and forego this tree of knowledge of good and evil, they would live forever.

In other words, he said, now, if you don't do that, and if you partake of this tree of the fruit of which I have forbidden you, thou shalt surely die. I place before you, in other words, two courses of action, life or death. It's up to you now, Adam. I'm not going to make you do either one. You're a free moral agent.

You can do as you please. You can choose life and live, or you can choose death and die, and just as surely as you choose that court, that's just what's going to happen to you. You're going to die.

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Well, we know what happened.

Adam chose the wrong course and he died. But let us consider the matter now from God's standpoint. After he had placed man in this beautiful garden, you suppose for the next few days and weeks and as it rolled into probably a couple of years, that God walked the floor worrying about what was going to happen to Adam, that he might eat of that tree? Well, God knew he was going to eat of that because he planned salvation even before he created the earth, much less Adam. He provided the ransom.

He provided the Lamb slain before the fiery foundation of the earth to undo what Adam was going to do. So God knew all about it. But you think God was disturbed and present in his mind about what was going to happen to this little pair of human creatures of his? No, I think God was perfectly tranquil, perfectly quiescent. I don't think he worried one particle about it.

Well, we could come on down the stream of time for about 4,000 years when the Logos, the very apple of God's eye, the first of his creative work, his right hand, he who was rich for our sakes became poor, became the babe of Bethlehem, took upon himself the form of a servant and grew up through babyhood and childhood and boyhood's youthful years into a young man. You think God walked the floor worrying about whether this son of his would be faithful in carrying out the work which was to be done. God had already shown in the tabernacle pictures how if he didn't do that, he would certainly die because the high priest was a picture of his son, and the high priest deviated in the slightest minutia of detail in carrying out the ceremonies of the ritual of the tabernacle services, say of the atonement day when he went in to sprinkle the blood, he would never be brought forth alive. He would die before the altar. Tradition has it.

This is a rather ludicrous thought to interject here, but it's interesting at least. Tradition has it that when the high priest went into the most Holy to sprinkle the blood, they had a long cord tied around his ankle that went out into the court of the tabernacle so that if he died, they could pull him out because nobody would dare to go in there into the presence of God because they'd also die. Well, now, whether there's any truth to that, I don't know. But tradition and folklore has that story. At any rate, it brings into focus the fact that when that man, the high priest, went in before the mercy seat, the sprinkle of blood, as Paul says, it is given unto man once to die.

Of course, that was a typical picture of Christ carrying out the atoning work which would make it possible for the human race to have life again. But the Lord was in a precarious position if he failed to carry out the ritual which God had provided for him. That's why the Lord was so anxious in Gethsemane by these swift Greeks, drops of blood, and in his agony was concerned and perturbed about whether he had fallen down in any slight particular, and he was concerned about it not only because of his own danger and the hazard in which he which he was facing, but I think more particularly he was concerned whether he had failed his Creator, whether he had done something that would disappoint God.

For he had been through all of those ages of creative work, ever rejoicing before him daily his delight, and the Master was fearful that he might fail his Creator, and so he was very much concerned. But was God concerned about it? No.

We can't believe that God was disturbed in the slightest degree, and that's what he's speaking. Paul is speaking of here as the rest of God. Now he says, if you and I are living up to our privileges, we can have that same kind of rest. Having entered into his rest.

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Well, I know that it's very, very rare are the times when we enjoy that rest completely. We have to be on a pretty high plane of spiritual life and realization and being to have that rest and not be perturbed or anxious about anything, and much of the time we are concerned and perturbed. But it's an evidence when we lack that rest, that we're a little bit short on the side of faith. Because Paul ties faith right in with this matter of the rest of God.

And so, dear friends, we have the assurance of the Lord that when he would go, he would leave with us that peace which is the heritage of God's people. My peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you not as the world giveth. No, the world can't give anything like that, but God gives it through Christ, and it is our privilege to.

To enjoy that peace, that tranquility, that quiescence of mind and heart and spirit, regardless of how our frail craft may be tossed upon the sea of life, no matter how high the tempest or how severe the storm, as Jesus on the Sea of Galilee. When even those fishermen who had seen everything that they thought the Sea of Galilee could kick up in the way of a storm, their hearts were failing them that night. They thought they were destined for the bottom of the sea, and they awakened the Lord. Aren't you concerned about our flight?

We're going to perish. Well, Jesus had that rest of God, O ye of little faith. He spoke to the storm. The wind stopped the waves smoothed out the dust devils wells, and they were brought to their desired haven, and that was the picture which we have of the tranquility of mind and heart and spirit of those who enjoy the rest of the faith.

The story is told of a little boy who was out playing with his playmates one morning, and about 10 o'clock he started packing up his toys. It was apparent that he wasn't going to play with them anymore and they were very much concerned about it. What are you going to do? I'm going to go home.

Oh, don't go home. Spoil our fun. No, come stay and play with us. No, I'm going home. But what are you going home for?

You mad at it? Oh, no, no, I'm going home because my daddy's going to come take me for a ride, and they brought up all the arguments they could think of to try to prove to this little fellow that maybe his daddy wouldn't come. Oh, they could just think of more things to get him to stay there. The little fellow kept on putting his things in the basket and finally he was walking away from them.

And one of them took a final parting shot. He says, how do you know your daddy will come and take you for a ride? Because he is my daddy. All of our friends now, dear friend, you and I have got a daddy too. Please fill this book with promises for us?

Do we believe them? If we do, our faith will be just as fixed in our God and our Father as this little boy's faith was fixed in his daddy. Well, I presume that he came and took him for a ride, and someday we're going to take a nice ride. We're going to join that heavenly praise.

Our Pentecostal mission friends will talk about it as the great ecstasy. Well, we have many ecstasies now. But what will be comparable to that ecstasy which will come when the last of the members of the bride class have passed beyond the veil, while the great company goes down into tribulation and wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb? The king's daughter, having been made all glorious within, according to the 45th Psalm, is brought into the king's palace, and that triumphal parade from earth's atmosphere, where they have been gathered, as Paul says, caught up to meet

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the Lord in the air.

When the 144,000 go to their heavenly bridegroom into the wedding, and the door will be shut, and that part of the parable of the virgins will reach its consummation. Then afterwards, the psalm says, the virgins, her companions will follow her. They also shall be brought. They miss the wedding, they'll get there for the reception. But all the extra to say the wonder of that glorious transfer of the Church into the presence of God at the time of this triumphal entry into the courts of heaven.

Is it worth waiting for? Is it worth striving for? Is it worth exercising these promises? We have the privilege now, dear friends, of having this rest of faith.

We also have works of faith. Let's take a look at James 2, 17-26. That's a rather long passage of Scripture. I won't take time to read it all. Even as faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works. Paul says, show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works, and so you see, dear friends, we have works of faith. Thou believest that there is one God. Thou doest well.

But that isn't enough. The devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou, O vain man, know that faith without works is dead? Then Paul draws from analogy from the patriarchs and the ancient worthy, and then he winds it up by saying that for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.

What are our works of faith summarizing? We have the fight of faith, the rest of faith and now we have to work while we're fighting and rest. I mean, how can you work and rest at the same time while you've got a fight on your hands? You couldn't as natural man. But as Christians, we can.

And some of the works of our faith are developing. The likeness of God's dear Son and of God himself in our characters. Sons of the symbol of the embroidery of that robe of righteousness which has been imputed to us as we endeavor by prayer and by survival of our trials and testings, to break down and sacrifice and dissolve this old fleshly resistive force while we build up in its place the strength of character of the new creature. We have the words of activity in God's service. Perhaps it's only a word to the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, or the lady across the garden gate when she's hanging out the clothes to tell her about the kingdom.

Or the man who works next to us in the shop, or the stenographer who works in the same office with us. Or maybe even the boss himself. Well, most of them won't listen to us, but we have the job of responsibility of telling them anyhow, and that's part of the work of faith to let our light shine before men, and then again, we have also the privilege of passing out tracts, of following up some of these radio calls and calling on these people at write in.

Some of you are probably here today because you heard the radio for the first time and got a little glimpse of this glorious message. Maybe some of you wrote down to the friends there at the dawn where Frank and Ernest headquarters asked some questions, and our brother Lomas, who was formerly of your neighboring town of Evansville, is very active in answering the questions of these your friends that write in. Some of them listen, some of them ask questions, and some of them heed the answers, and some of them just brush it off and say, well, maybe they're right, maybe they're wrong.

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But in every class that I visit nearly in the pilgrim work, I find some who have somewhat recently assembled themselves and united themselves to us by reason of the radio work. Because somebody came out and called on, and we have these privileges, dear friends, of calling on these listeners who want to know about the Lord's kingdom and about his plan. We have that open door of service. We have the privilege of attending our Berean studies.

Not only the privilege of attending, which is Bible, but also the privilege, too, as a work of faith, of preparing our lesson beforehand. That doesn't mean to say if the conditions have overwhelmed us and we didn't have a chance to prepare our lesson. We could stay home. But if we can, then one of our works of faith is to get our lesson. So when we go to the brim study, we'll be able to put in our 2 cents worth.

And maybe out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God's praise will be perfected, and maybe in our humble station we'll be able to answer questions that even the elder couldn't answer. Or maybe we'll express it in a way that someone else could understand when he uses high polluted language, that somebody maybe wouldn't know what he was talking about like one old brother when Brother Russell one time in a question meeting was laying out one of the deeply involved applications of our doctrines, and an old brother in halting tongue rose up in the audience and said, brother Russell, I don't understand what you're talking about. So Brother Russell went over it again.

Now do you understand it, Brother? No. Brother Russell went over it again. Now do you understand it, Brother? No.

And some little old insignificant fellow over in the corner said, Brother Russell, let me tell him what it's all about. In broken, stammering, faltering words and tongues, he told the brother what it was all about. Brother Russell says, do you know what it's all about now, brother? Yes, he said, I understand it perfectly. So you see, dear friends, we never know when someone will be able to get the message from our stumbling, stammering lips.

But let us be on the alert to do what we can to do the works of faith. Now, in our closing segment of this little subject of study for today, I want to show you how faith operates and how we can make it operate for ourselves. I'm going to call your attention to a man who, like you and I, once, didn't have any faith. This man didn't have any more faith. Well, he just couldn't draw any comparisons.

He just didn't have any faith. His name was Gideon. His people were up in the mountaintops where the Midianites had driven them. They had taken control of their land, and these Jews had been crowded up into the mountaintops where the shortness of the season made it almost impossible for them to grow anything.

And as a consequence, when the time came for them to thrash out what little grain they had been able to harvest, they were fearful that the Midianites would discover that they had a little food and come up and steal away what little they had left, and here was Gideon. He had a little, a little crop it was precious a little. But he had to go out and get behind the wine press. He couldn't use a great big threshing floor like they did when they were down in the valleys where they spread their grain out on the floor and run their oxen around upon it and have a lot of spectacular equipment to fresh out the grain.

He had to use a little stick for the hinge in it, and he'd stand there and he'd flail out this grain back of the wine press for fear some of those Midianites would come and steal it. We read about this in the sixth chapter of Judges. Here it says, and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel, and

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because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them dens, which are in the mountains and caves and strongholds.

And so it was that when Israel had sown that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites and the children of the east, they even came up against the Jews, and they encamped against them and destroyed the increase of the earth until you come to Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor assemble, and they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude.

And Israel was in bad shape, and it came to pass that when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites, God heard it, and he sent a prophet, a messenger, unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, thus saith the Lord of Israel, and I brought you up and reminds them of their past history, and we go on, skip over that, and there came an angel of the Lord and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah.

That pertaineth unto Joash the abiezerite and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress to hide it from the Midianites, and this angel of the Lord who had materialized and appeared as a man sitting under the oak tree, I imagine Gideon was there hammering out his wheat, and suddenly he happened to be aware that there was somebody there, and he looked up, and here was this stranger. He just thought he was another man because he had the form of a man.

And Gideon was probably a little alarmed for the moment. I think anybody would be under those circumstances. But the funny part of it was the salutation with which this stranger greeted Gideon. The angel of the Lord appeared unto him and said unto him, the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. Well, you can just imagine how Gideon felt about that.

He must have been awfully surprised. He was surprised when he saw that fellow sitting there under that tree, but he was probably a whole lot more surprised when he was greeted with this. The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. Well, Gideon just did what was perfectly natural. He says, oh, yeah.

He didn't put it in that many words, but that's substantially what he said. Listen to this, and Gideon said unto them, o my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, did not the Lord bring us up out of the land of Egypt, but now the Lord hath forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites? And you greet me by saying, the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor was not a part of Gideon's makeup.

He didn't believe a word of it. He didn't think that he was a man of valor, and he certainly didn't think that the Lord was with him or with any of his people. But the angel said, well, now, Gideon, you've been selected. You remember back in Moses day when Moses there in the land of Midian, and the Lord appeared unto him in a burning bush and said, moses, I want you to go back to Egypt and deliver your people. Oh, Moses said, no, I'm not the man.

You're talking of the wrong fellow. I can't even speak. I'm slow of tongue, slow of speech, couldn't have gift of gab like some of us. At any rate, God has selected Moses. This angel said to Gideon, now, Gideon, Gideon, Gideon, the Lord has selected you to lead Israel out onto the field of battle, and you're going to just wipe out these Midianites.

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Oh, no. Gideon says, not me. You're mistaken in your identity. You're talking to the wrong fellow. You're thinking of somebody else.

Well, he says, I'm the least in my father's house, and my father's house is of the poorest tribe. Oh, no, you better go get some of the big fellows in our nation. No, the angel said, Gideon, you're the man that God has selected. It was just because of the littleness of this man in his mind and heart that God could take him and make something out of nothing, just like he did with you and me. Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble.

Well, finally, Gideon evidently developed a desire. He had that desire part, but he didn't have much expectation, and so finally he was convinced enough. So he said, well, if you're right, I guess he was first cousin to our friends over across the line here in Missouri. He says, show me.

Show me. Show you where. Gideon said that. Then the angel of the. Let's see, here it is.

And he said unto him, Gideon said to this angel, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then show me a sign that thou talkest with me and that what you tell me is true. Show me. He was willing to be shown, at least. Well, that's why some of us today are here this afternoon, this morning, because we were willing to be shown. A lot of people that hear this message are not even willing to be shown.

They'd rather believe that God is a devil than the eternal departure, the wicked. But some of us wanted to be shown. We were willing to believe it. Gideon was willing. He says, show me, and then I'll have something more substantial to work on.

And Gideon said, now, let us first have a little banquet here, and I want to give you a nice little repast. I'm poor and we haven't got very much, but if you will just stay around a little bit, I'll go in and see the old lady and we'll see if we can't get some victuals for you, and he went in and they brought out a pot of broth and some cakes, and Gideon had a little pile of stones there, and he put them on this pile of stones, and then the angel said, now, Gideon, take that pot of broth and pour it all over those victuals.

Now, when Sister Lemon got a nice dinner up for us last night, Sister Lyla and I had come in. What would she have thought if I'd have said, now, Sister Lemon, let's just pour the coffee all over the table, all over this nice supper you've gotten ready. Well, I think Sister Lemon said, well, I don't think I will to entertain you anymore, and I don't think we'd ever been invited to come there again. But we didn't do that.

We enjoyed the supper that keeps us there. But this was a different kind of an arrangement. Gideon thought, well, that's a funny thing to do, to burn my humble offering. I know I can't give the man very much, but I certainly didn't expect this kind of reception. But he poured the broth out all over the vill.

The angel reached out his or his sword or his staff, and a great explosion blew the whole thing up, and away went the riddles, and away went the angel, too. He disappeared, and Gideon was just scared to death. Well, he'd asked for it he said, show me.

But he didn't certainly expect to be shown that way, did he? But the angel showed him, and Gideon was frightened. He thought, well, I'm sure of honor. He remembered how Moses had been told by God that no man could see God and live, and he thought this was God.

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And he said, o, woe be unto me, for I have seen God, and when Gideon perceived that it was an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, alas, O Lord God. For because I have seen an angel of the Lord's face to face. But from somewhere, though the angel had disappeared, he called to Gideon. The Lord said unto him, peace be unto thee.

Fear not, thou shalt not die.

And so Gideon asked to be shown, and the Lord showed him. Still, Gideon's faith wasn't quite enough. The angel told him, now I showed you. Do you believe that the Lord wants you to deliver Israel? Well, I want to believe it, Gideon thought.

I want to believe it. But I'd like to have a little more evidence even than that, and so Gideon said in this next part of this proposition that he'd like to see. He'd been shown. Now he'd like to see some evidence.

Then Gideon, he went farther. Where is this? About that, please. Gideon said, now, if thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the floor and the dew beyond the fleece only, and it be dry on all the earth beside it, then I shall know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou saidst so. All right, King of Brett, get your fleece ready.

So he got a piece of wool, and he put it on the ground, and they went to bed. The next morning when they woke up, the fleece was soaking wet. Well, now, it's a hard thing to do to make wool, absorb water and become soaking wet on the ground. It was all dry around. They wrung out this fleece, and they got a basin full of water.

What did Gideon say? Behold, I will put the fleece of wool on the floor and let the dew be on the floor, and it be dry upon me all the earth around. Then shall I know, and it was so. For they rose up early in the morning and thrust the fleece together and wrung the dew out of it.

A bowl full of water. So Gideon's faith increased a little bit. It was commencing to operate, you see. First he wanted to be shown, then he wanted to know. Well, he realized that he was pressing his point pretty far, but he still wasn't quite Convinced.

And Gideon said unto the angel, let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak. But this once, let me now, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece, let it now be dry only upon the police, and upon all the ground let there be dew, and God did so that night. For the next morning it was dry upon the beast only, but there was dew on all the ground. Let me prove you.

But this once more Gideon said, what had he done? He'd asked to be shown, then he'd ask to know, and then he'd ask to prove. Even as you and I, we sought the Lord exactly. We might find him. We asked that we might be shown the truth, and God showed it to us, and our faith increased a little bit.

And then we asked that we might know it, not just see it, but know it, and God permitted us to come to know it, and then God invites us, as in the words of Malachi, prove me now forthwith, if I will not open unto you the windows of heaven and pour you out of blessings such that you will not be able to receive it, and no one can be in the truth very long until they have gone through these steps of seeking being shown, coming to know and then proving that the Lord is good and that he's faithful and we can believe the things that he said, and we were like Gideon, we didn't have much faith to begin with.

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But what happened to Gideon? Why, from that time he went on with just 300 men, he put to flight the hosts of Midian. A complete victory attended his efforts, and it was all based upon the operating faith which this angel developed in this man who didn't have any faith to begin with, and so, dear friends, we have the privilege of fighting the good fight of faith, enjoying the tranquility and peace of the rest of God, the rest of faith.

The while we do the works of faith in the service of our king and at the same time operating faith in our daily lives and making it a real going concern. I hope the Lord may have blessed you in this effort as he did me in preparing this study. So we all will be rejoicing together.

It I like the first couple of verses. Paul 196.

I get to ask you to stand again and kind of give you a rest.

I don't know whether some of you folks know this song or not, but I'll pull one on you maybe that you don't know, because we don't know some of your songs too well. In the dawn book down at the cross where my Savior died down where the cleansing from sin I cried There to my heart was the blood of life. Glory to his name. Glory to his name. Glory to his name.

There to my heart was the blood of life Glory to His name. Now the last one fourth. Come to this fountain so rich and sweet Cast out more soul at the Saviour's feet Flood in the day and be made Glory to His name. Glory to his name. Glory, Glory to His name.

There to my heart was the blood of life Glory to His name. All right, let's have another prayer. Then we'll have Brother Mary come forth and bring us another message. Probably we'll have a little intermission. Is that right, brother?

That's right. About 10 minutes. About a 10 minute intermission after prayer.

Our Heavenly Father, we bow Thy Divine presence with gratitude and with praise in our hearts that we could fellowship together here around the truth, Thy Word. We're thankful and grateful for all of our blessings that we have in Thee and for the understanding of Thy Word that Thou has given us, and so Lord, we are just grateful that for this time that we can come together and that we can fellowship, and we ask God bless them to be with us throughout this day. May every soul here today receive a rich blessing from having been here.

And may our bonds be tied together in Christian love because we have been here this day. Now I ask I bless them to be with us in the name of Jesus we pray and ask it for them.