

FAITH and PATIENCE are ANTIDOTES to sluggishness.

UNBELIEF and LACK OF ENDURANCE are the cause of it.

It is possible to be sluggish either in hearing or in acting. Faith and patience, things that accompany salvation, enable the believer so to inherit God's promises that he enters into the realization of them as if they were being fulfilled, knowing that full possession of them will be his portion hereafter, according to God's pledged word. Promises are not merited but inherited.

LOST AND FOUND

In his book Light on Life's Duties, F. B. Meyer makes this brief observation: "The story of the lost chord has been told in exquisite verse and in stately music. We have all heard of the lady, Adelaide Proctor, who in the autumn twilight which softly filled the room, laid her fingers on the open keys of a glorious organ." Later she wrote:

"I know not what I was playing,
 Or what I was dreaming then;
 But I struck one chord of music
 Like the sound of a great Amen.
 It flooded the crimson twilight,
 Like the close of an angel's psalm,
 And it lay on my fevered spirit
 With a touch of infinite calm;
 It quieted pain and sorrow
 Like love overcoming strife;
 It seemed the harmonious echo
 From our discordant life.
 It linked all perplexed meanings
 Into one perfect peace,
 And trembled away into silence
 As if it were loath to cease."

Meyer continues, "Something called her away, and when she returned to the organ, she had lost that chord sublime. Though she longed for it and sought it, it was all in vain. It was a lost chord. Whenever I hear that story, it reminds me of the lost joy, the lost peace, the lost power of which so many complain."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

FOLLOWING IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS

A father and son were walking along the beach one day. The boy was lagging behind and suddenly gave a joyous shout of satisfaction: "Look, Daddy, I'm walking in your footsteps." This simple statement made the man realize that he had to set a reasonable pace. It also spoke to his heart about giving spiritual leadership to his youngster. An unknown author has written:

A careful man I ought to be;
 A little fellow follows me.
 I do not dare to go astray,
 For fear he'll go the selfsame way.
 Not once can I escape his eyes;
 Whate'er he sees me do he tries.
 Like me he says he's going to be,
 That little chap who follows me.
 I must remember as I go
 Through summer sun and winter snow,
 I'm molding for the years to be--
 That little chap who follows me.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(Even Eagles Need a Push by David McNally)

Pablo Casals, the great cellist, was asked why, at eighty-five years of age, he continued to practice five hours a day. He replied, "Because I think I'm getting better."

p. 3

Great works are performed not by strength but by perseverance.

--Samuel Johnson

p. 160

(Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging
 by Brennan Manning)

Passion is not high emotion but a steely determination, fired by love, to stay centered in the awareness of Christ's present risenness, a drivenness to remain rooted in the truth of who I am, and a readiness to pay the price of fidelity.

p. 137

(The Mature Man: Becoming a Man of Impact by David DeWitt)

Desire is one of the key elements of creative discipleship. In the Journal of Creative Behavior, Ochse emphasizes this:

Few would dispute the suggestion that the most salient characteristic of creative achievers is strong motivation. The literature is now replete with findings suggesting that eminent creative people are typically persevering, conscientious, energetic and dedicated to excellence. Practically every individual in every sample of eminent creators seems to be highly motivated, single minded, persevering, and devoted to work.

p. 190

(Over the Top by Zig Ziglar)

Everyone has individual goals that might be positive or negative, but 97 percent of the people in our society do not have an organized goals program.

p. 160

FACT: You will never realize more than a small fraction of your potential as a wandering generality. You must become a meaningful specific.

p. 184

Important: Until you commit
your goals to paper you have
intentions that are seeds
without soil .
Anonymous

p. 191

That's the reason I love the acrostic for GOALS: godly objectives assure lasting success.

p. 201

(The Leader in You by Dale Carnegie & Assoc., Inc.)

Dale Carnegie articulated the principle. "Patience and perseverance," he said, "will accomplish more in this world than a brilliant dash. Remember that when something goes wrong.

"Don't let anything discourage you," he wrote. "Keep on. Never give up. That had been the policy of most of those who have succeeded. Of course, discouragement will come. The important thing is to surmount it. If you can do that, the world is yours."
pp. 171-2

(First Things First by Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill, & Rebecca R. Merrill)

If we don't translate vision into action, we lose touch with reality, become idealistic dreamers, and lose credibility with ourselves and with others.
pp. 154-5

(The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make by Hans Finzel)

One final piece of advice on goal-setting: When you put together a set of goals for your mission, they should be SMART goals:

S -specific
M -measurable
A -attainable
R -relevant
T -trackable
p. 193

"I am a dreamer. Some men see things as they are, and ask why; I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?"

--George Bernard Shaw

p. 195

(The Complete Book of Zingers by Croft M. Pentz)

Man doesn't plan to fail--he just fails to plan.
p. 67

(Our God Is Awesome by Tony Evans)

A man once went to visit a farmer and noticed something very odd. On the side of the farmer's barn were a number of targets with holes dead center in each bull's-eye. Evidently, his farmer friend was an excellent shot, a tremendous marksman. The visitor said, "My goodness! Every single hole is right in the center of every single bull's-eye! I didn't know you were that good."

His farmer friend said, "I'm really not."

"Wait a minute. I see a hole in the center of every single bull's-eye. How could you not be that good and shoot that well?"

The farmer replied, "It's like this. I shoot the hole into the barn first, then I draw me a bull's-eye."

That's the way a lot of us live our lives. We shoot for riches and then draw the meaning of life around it. We shoot for power and draw the meaning of life around it. We shoot for education and draw the meaning of life around it. Then we go around saying, "I hit a bull's-eye!" We give the impression that we know how to shoot, making our friends think we know what we are doing, making the people we come in contact with think we have been successful, when in actuality we don't know what in the world we are doing. We are as confused as those around us. Why? Because we hit a bull's-eye shooting at the wrong target.

p. 21

(The Life God Blesses: Weathering the Storms of Life That Threaten the Soul by Gordon MacDonald)

No one knows where he is going; the
aim of life has been forgotten and the
end has been left behind. Man has set
out at a tremendous pace--to go
nowhere.

--Jacques Ellul

p. 111

If one's mission is too small, too vague, too parochial, there is the supreme danger of ending up being driven by someone else's mission.

I read how Quixote in his random ride,
 Came to a crossing once,
 and lest he lose
 The purity of chance, would not decide
 Wither to fare, but wished his
 horse to choose.
 For glory lay where ever he might turn.
 His head was light with pride,
 his horse's shoes
 Were heavy, and he headed
 for the barn. (Richard Wilbur)

p. 113

(Acts of Love: The Power of Encouragement by David Jeremiah)

In her book, Fully Alive, Gloria relates the following story that took place shortly after that marvelous experience:

One day in the late fall, we had some men come to pave the parking lot behind our office. They brought load after load of coarse rocks, pea gravel, and sand. They brought huge heavy rollers and smashed all of that down. Again and again they rolled it. Finally came the streaming truckloads of molten asphalt to be poured atop the gravel, then rolled again and again until it was smooth and hard and "permanent."

Very early the next spring, Bill's dad came into the office one morning, and stood around on first one foot then the other, grinning as he does when there's something special on his mind.

"Come out here," he finally said to Bill and me. We followed him out the back door onto the shining new pavement. Right in the middle of it he stopped and pointed, "Look, there."

Up through the sand, up through the gravel, up through the rocks, up from the darkness and through the thick layer of asphalt had pushed a green shoot. It wasn't tough, it wasn't sharp, it wasn't strong. Any child could have plucked it up with nearly no effort at all. But it was alive! And there it stood, bright green in the sunlight, boasting to the world of its photosynthetic miracle: life wins!

There wasn't much to say. We just smiled our message of reassurance at each other; but I couldn't help thinking of the song we had just written after our own personal bout with darkness:

God sent His Son; they called Him Jesus.
He came to love, heal and forgive.
He bled and died to buy my pardon;
An empty grave is there to prove
MY SAVIOR LIVES.

How sweet to hold our newborn baby,
And feel the pride and joy he gives;
But greater still the calm assurance:
Our child can face uncertain days
BECAUSE HE LIVES.
Because He lives
I can face tomorrow!
Because He lives
All fear is gone!
Because I know
He holds the future,
And life is worth the living
JUST BECAUSE HE LIVES!

pp. 40-41

(The Message: Psalms by Eugene H. Peterson)

Psalm 119

I took one look at the quitters and was filled with loathing;
they walked away from your promises so casually!

p. 172

(Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions by
Kenneth W. Osbeck)

Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger men! Do not pray for tasks
equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the
doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle.

--Phillips Brooks

p. 305

John Wesley once said: "Never be unemployed and never be triflingly
employed."

p. 305

(Collected Poems of Robert Service by Robert Service)

CARRY ON!

It's easy to fight when everything's right,
And you're mad with the thrill and the glory;
It's easy to cheer when victory's near,
And wallow in fields that are gory.
It's a different song when everything's wrong.
When you're feeling infernally mortal;
When it's ten against one, and hope there is none.
Buck up, little soldier, and chortle:

Carry on! Carry on!
There isn't much punch in your blow.
You're glaring and staring and hitting out blind;
You're muddy and bloody, but never you mind.
Carry on! Carry on!
You haven't the ghost of a show.
It's looking like death, but while you've a breath,
Carry on, my son! Carry on!

And so in the strife of the battle of life
It's easy to fight when you're winning;
It's easy to slave, and starve and be brave,
When the dawn of success is beginning.
But the man who can meet despair and defeat
With a cheer, there's the man of God's choosing;
The man who can fight to Heaven's own height
Is the man who can fight when he's losing.

Carry on! Carry on!
 Things never were looming so black.
 But show that you haven't a cowardly streak,
 And though you're unlucky you never are weak.
 Carry on! Carry on!
 Brace up for another attack.
 It's looking like hell, but--you never can tell:
 Carry on, old man! Carry on!

There are some who drift out in the deserts of doubt,
 And some who in brutishness wallow;
 There are others, I know, who in piety go
 Because of a Heaven to follow.
 But to labour with zest, and to give of your best,
 For the sweetness and joy of the giving;
 To help folks along with a hand and a song;
 Why, there's the real sunshine of living.

Carry on! Carry on!
 Fight the good fight and true;
 Believe in your mission, greet life with a cheer;
 There's big work to do, and that's why you are here.
 Carry on! Carry on!
 Let the world be the better for you;
 And at last when you die, let this be your cry:
Carry on, my soul! Carry on!

pp. 351-2

(Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions by
 Kenneth W. Osbeck)

I have heard of Your fame; I stand in awe of Your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in
 our day, in our time make them known. (Habakkuk 3:2)

Set us afire, Lord, stir us, we pray--
 while the world perishes, we go our way
 Purposeless, passionless, day after day;
 set us afire, Lord, stir us, we pray!

p. 267

--Unknown

v.13 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles these next verses:

A MODEL TO IMITATE WOULD BE ABRAHAM.

Wiersbe titles these remaining verses:

The immutable (13-20). The chapter ends with one of the greatest statements on security found anywhere in Scripture. God's promise and God's oath assure us that we are His, and God's character backs up His words. Instead of drifting (2:1) we are anchored heavenward where Jesus ministers in the very presence of God, and that anchor will not fail. We are anchored so we can make progress!
p. 817

Delitzsch summarizes the remainder of the chapter this way:

Having thus expressed his confident persuasion on behalf of his readers, that they will through steadfast faith obtain the promised salvation, the sacred writer now proceeds to set before them the example of Abraham, who had also through patience entered into the possession of a promise which God had confirmed to him by an oath upon Himself. They, too, have a hope confirmed in like manner, and one reaching onwards into the innermost sanctuary, into which, as their forerunner, Jesus Himself was already entered, being made (also by the oath of God) High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.
p. 305

WHY IS HE CALLED A WAITER WHEN I'M DOING ALL ALL THE WAITING?

A sad-looking little man had been waiting quite some time for his order to be filled. Finally a waiter appeared and said, "Your fish will be coming in a few minutes now."

The customer brightened up a bit. "Tell me," he asked, "what kind of bait are you using?"

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

GOD, I NEED PATIENCE--RIGHT NOW!

Patience--That which is most often needed just as it is run out of.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

FIVE O'CLOCK MIRACLE

A pastor observed: "We certainly believe in the resurrection at our church. If you doubt it, just visit our offices sometime and watch our staff come back to life at quitting time."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

The difficult we do immediately, the impossible takes a little longer.
<Unknown>

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Let us not burden our remembrances with a heaviness that is gone.
William Shakespeare

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

The only difference between the saint and the sinner is that every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.

Oscar Wilde

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Do not turn back when you are just at the goal.

Publius Syrus

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Joshua 23:14

"Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.

1 Kings 8:56

"Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.

Ira D. Sankey, the hymn writer, says it well,

His banner over us is love,
Our sword the Word of God;
We tread the road the saints above
With shouts of triumph trod.
By faith they, like a whirlwind's breath,
Swept on o'er ev'ry field;
The faith by which they conquered death
Is still our shining shield.

Refrain:

Faith is the victory!
Faith is the victory!
O, glorious victory,
That overcomes the world.

("Faith Is the Victory" by John H. Yates and Ira D. Sankey.

The New Church Hymnal, Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976. #216)

REAL FAITH is why our "IF'S" become "WHEN'S."

"AND THUS, HAVING PATIENTLY WAITED"

He endured 25 years in an impossible set of circumstances and ultimately obtained the promise that God had given.

Jeremiah 32:27

"Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too difficult for me?"

Jeremiah 33:3

'Call to me and I will answer you and I will tell you great and mighty things which you do not know.'

v.16 For men are swearing by one greater [than themselves] and with them an oath [given] as confirmation is an end of every dispute.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out:

At this point Abraham is left behind as a model and **the oath** made to him is treated as for the benefit of Christians generally. . . . An oath **puts an end to all arguments**.

Owen says:

. . . 2. That the promises of God are gracious proposals of the only way and means for the ending of that strife. 3. That the oath of God, interposed for the confirmation of these promises, is every way sufficient to secure believers against all temptations and objections, in all trials and straits about peace with God through Jesus Christ.

p. 106

v.17 In the same way God, desiring even more to demonstrate to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, guaranteed by means of an oath,

"IN THE SAME WAY GOD, DESIRING EVEN MORE" takes us back to chapter 6:11:

"And we are desiring that each one of you be demonstrating the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end"

"IN THE SAME WAY GOD, DESIRING EVEN MORE TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE HEIRS OF THE PROMISE THE UNCHANGEABLENESS OF HIS PURPOSE, GUARANTEED BY MEANS OF AN OATH"

Men take an oath and that ends the dispute that they are going to fulfill their part of the bargain or contract.

God does not really have to but

"IN THE SAME WAY, GOD, DESIRING EVEN MORE TO SHOW TO THOSE WHO ARE INHERITORS OF THE PROMISE"

(who by the way, are the children of God who have come to know Christ as Savior--heirs and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ)

"THE UNCHANGEABLENESS OF HIS PURPOSE, GUARANTEED BY MEANS OF AN OATH."

This is a KEY PHRASE in understanding Hebrews 6.

Whereas it is "impossible" back in verse 4,

we see now why it is here in verse 17.

He is the Lord God and He changes not.

When we get down to verse 18, we see again the word "IMPOSSIBLE":

"It is impossible for God to lie."

Owen says:

God was willing to give a peculiar evidence of the immutability of His counsel; He would do so "more abundantly;" the promise of God is sufficient to give us security; yet, because something further might be useful, He would add a further confirmation to His word; this He did from a superabounding love and care; He confirmed His promise by an oath.

p. 107

Bruce observes:

Our author emphasizes the fact that when God repeated his promise to Abraham after the offering up of Isaac, he confirmed it with an oath. When human beings swear an oath in order to underline the certainty and solemnity of their words, they swear by someone or something greater than themselves. "As (surely as) Yahweh lives" was the supreme oath in Israel.

p. 153

G. Campbell Morgan says:

There can be no doubt that faithful souls, through centuries, had built upon that oath of God. God had given to them not merely the declaration of His intention, but had condescended to employ the method of man, and had sworn by Himself that that intention should be carried out.

p. 75

J. Vernon McGee says:

When God does a thing like this, He doesn't need to take an oath, but He does take one to make it very clear how all-important it is.

p. 549

"IN THE SAME WAY GOD, DESIRING EVEN MORE TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE HEIRS OF THE PROMISE THE UNCHANGEABLENESS OF HIS PURPOSE"

Romans 8:16, 17

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

Proverbs 19:21

Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

Isaiah 46:10

I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

The "UNCHANGEABLENESS OF HIS PURPOSE" is a KEY PHRASE to understanding the book of Hebrews.

Our love may WAX and WAIN;

our hearts be hot and cold.

We may experience:

the UPS and DOWNS,
 the FAT and the LEAN,
 the GOOD and the BAD,
 the FRUIT and the FAILURE

but God's purpose still remains unchangeable.

(Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions by Kenneth W. Osbeck)

"God Moves in a Mysterious Way" was originally titled, "Conflict: Light Shining Out of Darkness." It is thought to be Cowper's final hymn text and a reflection of God's leading throughout his own lifetime. There is even speculation that it was written following a failed attempt at suicidal drowning. Regardless of the original motivation for their writing, these words have since been used to bring much comfort to God's people for nearly two centuries:

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform; He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm.

You fearful saints, fresh courage take: The clouds you so much dread are big with mercy, and shall break in blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace; behind a frowning providence faith sees a smiling face.

Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan His work in vain; God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain.

p. 25

(The Pleasures of God by John Piper)

Her husband Jonathan Edwards had been away from home for some weeks in 1758 to assume the presidency of Princeton College. On February 13 he was inoculated for smallpox; but the cure became the killer, and he died from the inoculation on March 22, 1758. He was fifty-four years old and left his wife with ten children. When Sarah heard of her husband's death, the first letter she wrote was to her daughter Esther:

My very dear child!

What shall I say? A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. O that we may kiss the rod, and lay our hands on our mouths! The Lord has done it. He has made me adore his goodness, that we had him so long. But my God lives; and he has my heart. O what a legacy my husband, and your father, has left us! We are all given to God; and there I am, and love to be.

Your affectionate mother,

Sarah Edwards

p. 63

Someone has said, "If bad things didn't happen to good people, then we would all be good for the wrong reasons."

"IN THE SAME WAY GOD, DESIRING EVEN MORE TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE HEIRS OF THE PROMISE THE UNCHANGEABLENESS OF HIS PURPOSE, GUARANTEED BY MEANS OF AN OATH"

v.18 in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may be having strong encouragement, we who fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

These "two unchangeable things" are: (1) It is **impossible for God to lie**; (2) His ever truthful Word was supported in this case by His oath. These are the **two unchangeable things**, which encourage those who **take hold of the hope**.
p. 797

We can actually say that the "TWO UNCHANGEABLE THINGS" are:

1. HIS PROMISE
2. HIS OATH

"IN ORDER THAT BY TWO UNCHANGEABLE THINGS, IN WHICH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIE"

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

Hewitt says:

God's promise and oath are the two immutable things, the two unchangeable spiritual realities, the two unalterable facts in which it was impossible for God to lie (or deceive). The unchangeable God is faithful, His word is sure and always dependable, but when it is confirmed by an oath it is even more worthy of our trust. In all this the weakest Christian should find strong consolation and comfort.

p. 114

Lange says:

The strongest assurance of our salvation as purposed by God, and the most powerful incitement to a believing maintenance of our Christian hope, lies partly in the reliableness which belongs to those sure promises which God for our establishment has confirmed by an oath; partly in the fact, that Jesus, as forerunner, has already entered into heaven on our behalf, and there mediates forever for our salvation, embodying in Himself not only the Aaronic but the Melchisedek high-priesthood, and carrying the type of that priesthood to perfection.

p. 128

Draper says:

There is at least one thing that God cannot do. It is not within his power, character, or nature to do it. It is impossible for God to lie. God cannot falsify his word. As powerful and omnipotent as God is, he cannot lie to us. He cannot go back on his word. It is impossible for God to lie.

p. 166

Lane observes:

Although the two items remained unspecified in the text, the reference is almost certainly to the promise of God and his oath.

p. 152

English observes:

God's promise in the first place was immutable. Prior to the record of the oath given with the promise (Gen. 22:15ff), the Lord promised Abram seed to number as the stars of the heavens (Gen. 15:4, 5). Such a promise is unailing; it is the Word of God and can no more fail than He Himself can fail. It is stronger than the mountains of earth and more enduring than the heavens. God's promise was the first immutable thing. And the second was this: "He sware by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." Since it is not possible for the truth to be untrue, since it is impossible for God to lie, His promise and His oath are unchanging.

pp. 176-7

The expression, "have fled for refuge," bears allusion in the writer's mind, doubtless, to the cities of refuge of old (Num. 35), symbolic of Christ who is indeed the sinner's refuge. With David we can surely exclaim: "I cried unto Thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living"

(Psa. 142:5). Those who have thus fled for refuge, have laid hold upon the hope set before us, and that hope is Christ Himself, in heaven today, as we shall see.

p. 177

A. T. Robertson points out that the word for:

"Strong encouragement" [is there] by those two immutable things.

p. 378

Owen says:

The "two immutable things" are the promise and the oath of God. Both of these are equally immutable. The promise is not confirmed by the oath because it was weak, and therefore needed the oath to strengthen it. We must carry along with us the infinite and inconceivable condescension of God in this matter. "In which it was impossible for God to lie"--that is to deceive. The highest security among men consists in a promise confirmed by an oath; God uses these in our case, and therefore it is impossible that He should lie. The special design in this was that,

"We might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

p. 108

(Credibility by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner)

Frederic M. Hudson, president of the Hudson Institute and founding president of the Fielding Institute (which provide life/career planning, executive development, and organizational consultation), offers poignant, personal testimony to the power of a supportive relationship in overcoming despair and restoring hope.

In August 1943, when I was nine years old, I awakened one morning in silent terror. I was unable to move any part of my body except my eyes. My muscles seemed frozen, and my voice was silenced. Although I had gone to bed as a walking, talking, wiggling boy, I woke up the next day paralyzed with polio. Neither my legs nor my arms would respond to my desperate efforts to move, and my neck and jaw were rigid as rocks. Breathing was panicked and pain was everywhere. . . .

The next thing I remember was lying on the back seat of my parents' old automobile as they drove me thirty miles from my home in upstate New York to a hospital in Syracuse. That journey was unbelievably painful. I was sicker than I had ever felt in my life, and I knew the seriousness of the journey. I felt a helplessness and fear never experienced before. . . .

At the hospital, they placed me on a very hard bed (with no pillow) in a quarantined ward. I spent my waking moments staring upward at the ceiling--my only option--and feeling totally helpless. . . .

A wise nurse named Susan spent lots of time with me. Quiet and caring, she visited me frequently and told me many things. Her main message went like this: "Your future, Frederic, is hidden on the ceiling, and you can find it if you look very hard. Look for what you will be doing as you grow up. It's all up there. Will you be a track star, a tennis player, a scientist? Will you be going on trips to faraway places? Will you be making model airplanes and flying kites? Will you be going to summer camps and swimming? Will you go to college and become someone special? Will you marry and have a family? Frederic, all you have to do is to study the ceiling. When you see your future it will start to happen!

pp. 218-19

In keeping hope alive, credible leaders demonstrate their faith and confidence by first accepting responsibility for the quality of their lives and for those of their constituents. Even when everything goes wrong or when resounding defeats occur, leaders bounce back by taking charge of the situation.

p. 221

(Perilous Pursuits by Joseph M. Stowell)

The pilgrim song of the redirected pleasure is:

Living for Jesus a life that is true,
 Striving to please Him in all that I do;
 Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free,
 This is the pathway of blessing for me.

If there were a biblical Declaration of Independence, it would declare that every person has the right to find pleasure in God and to bring pleasure to God by obeying Him and serving others.

Strange but true: We maximize our pleasure when we focus it on Him--His glory and His gain--and when we minimize impulses to bypass Him in an effort to find pleasure apart from God.

p. 128

RENEWED HOPE

Joanie Yoder told of reaching a point of despair in her role as a pastor's wife. She cited some of the stresses she faced: sharing her husband 24 hours a day, resenting perfectionist standards, feeling guilty about recurring bitterness and anger, and having no one to share her feelings with. Gradually she became so discouraged that she was ready to give up.

Mrs. Yoder tells what happened next. "One day I opened my sorely neglected Bible to the writings of the prophet Jeremiah. As I read, I watched over Jeremiah's shoulder as the potter worked a lump of clay on his wheel. I began to get emotionally involved when the clay became marred in the potter's hand. Between the lines I assumed the potter would toss aside the lump of spoiled clay to take up another, hoping for better results. For a moment my life was that lump of clay, and I felt the old nagging fear that God, like this potter, might lay aside my disappointing life and take up another to do His work. But I read on to see what the potter really did with the clay: 'and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good for the potter to do!' As if written for me alone, the next verse read, 'Can I not do with you as this potter has done?' says the Lord. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand.'" With renewed hope, Mrs. Yoder realized that God was molding her for His use.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(The Life of God in the Soul of Man by Rev. Henry Scougal)

Oh! the happiness of those souls that have broken the fetters of self-love, and disentangled their affection from every narrow and particular good, whose understandings are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and their wills enlarged to the extent of thine, who love thee above all things, and all mankind for thy sake! I am persuaded, O God, I am persuaded that I can never be happy, till my carnal and corrupt affections be mortified, and the pride and vanity of my spirit be subdued, and till I come seriously to despise the world, and think nothing of myself. But, oh! when shall it once be! Oh! when wilt thou come unto me, and satisfy my soul with thy likeness, making me holy as thou art holy, even in all manner of conversation! Hast thou given me a prospect of so great a felicity, and wilt thou not bring me unto it? hast thou excited these desires in my soul, and wilt thou not also satisfy them? Oh! teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God, thy Spirit is good, lead me unto the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake, and perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever, forsake not the works of thine own hands.

pp. 83-84

(Oswald Chambers: Abandoned to God by David McCasland)

They had just visited their friend Gertrude Ballinger, suffering from typhoid fever and lying near death in a hospital.

Biddy had said, "I wonder what God is going to do."

Between brushstrokes, Oswald had replied, "I don't care what God does.

It's what God is that I care about."

p. 13

The writer is doing everything possible to help the readers understand that they can have strong encouragement, and that they ought to continue to press on.

"WE MAY BE HAVING STRONG ENCOURAGEMENT, WE WHO FLED FOR REFUGE IN LAYING HOLD OF THE HOPE SET BEFORE US"

Titus 2:11-13

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;

v.19 This hope we are having as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and secure and one which is entering within the veil,

This is the 3RD and 4TH TIME we have had the occurrence of the word "HOPE" in this passage.

USAGE #1 was back in verse 11:

"and we are desiring that each one of you be demonstrating the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of **hope** until the end"

USAGE #2 is in verse 18:

"we who fled for refuge in laying hold of the **hope** set before us."

USAGE #3 and #4 are here in verse 19:

USAGE #3:

"THIS HOPE WE ARE HAVING AS AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL"

USAGE #4:

"A HOPE BOTH SURE AND SECURE AND ONE WHICH IS ENTERING WITHIN THE VEIL"

Ephesians 2:12

remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Romans 5:1, 2

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The image suggested in verse 18 by the words "fled to take hold" of hope was that of a fortified refuge. By a swift change in his figure, the writer then suggested the thought of a harbor where **the soul** may securely drop anchor. That **anchor** has been carried to the safest point of all--**the inner sanctuary behind the curtain--by Jesus, who went before us.**
p. 797

Our writer returns to the NAUTICAL METAPHOR. We saw it in the warning back in Hebrews 2:1:

For this reason we must be paying much closer attention to things which we have heard, lest we should drift away from them.

Jackie Deere points out:

The image now shifts to a safe anchorage for the soul. The readers' souls can find stability if they lay hold of this hope. Again the image shifts to entering the Holy of Holies, where he sees the hope going in because of the forerunner Christ. This is a very personal conception. This person carries our hope with him. Note the inclusion with the reference to the oath of or given to Melchizedek. We are thinking here of fleeing inside the veil to God through Christ, laying hold of His resources, thus procuring help and consolation in time of trouble.

Lightfoot points out:

Hope is to the believer what a secure anchor is to a ship. Hope sustains and braces the Christian in the midst of all of his trials. But when hope fails, he is left to drift aimlessly and falls victim to the merciless ocean. The Christian anchor of hope is sure and steadfast because it is based on the two unchangeable things.

What an anchor is to a vessel and its tossings, so the hope is to us in our times of trial, difficulty and stress. The anchor is outside the ship. It is connected with it and keeps it secure.

1 Timothy 1:19

keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

Romans 8:38, 39

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Draper says:

So our hope, our faith, our commitment and obedience to God is an anchor that reaches down into the inner sanctum, into the holy of holies within the veil, and lays hold of God and brings peace in the storm. What a beautiful picture. Our hope is anchored in Christ. We need not fear what the storms of life may do to us, because our anchor holds within the veil.
p. 174

Westcott says:

The stability of hope is twofold. It is undisturbed by outward influences, and it is firm in its inherent character.
p. 163

Lenski says:

The writer says that the anchor of our soul extends into the inner part behind this curtain; it grips the Holy of Holies, the very ark of the covenant, the mercy seat where the atoning blood was sprinkled by the high priest. We know that he is not thinking of the physical Herodian Sanctuary in which the ark of the covenant no longer stood, nor even of the Tabernacle in the wilderness or of Solomon's Temple and Sanctuary. He has in mind the Holy of Holies in heaven, into which Jesus entered with his all-atoning blood.
p. 205

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

This is not just a sheltered mooring for that most precious part of human personality which is commonly called the soul. On the contrary, it is an anchor which guarantees inner peace and security for the whole of life.
p. 116

Bruce says:

The "two unchangeable things" from which this encouragement is derived are (a) the promise of God (for "it is impossible for God to lie"), and (b) the oath by which his promise is confirmed. We are refugees from the sinking ship of this present world-order, so soon to disappear; our hope is fixed on the eternal order, where the promises of God are made good to his people in perpetuity. Our hope, based upon his promises, is our spiritual anchor.
p. 154

Wiersbe says:

However, this spiritual anchor is different from material anchors on ships. For one thing, we are anchored upward--to heaven--not downward. We are anchored, not to stand still, but to move ahead! Our anchor is "sure"--it cannot break--and "steadfast"--it cannot slip. No earthly anchor can give that kind of security!
p. 70

Phillips says:

A vessel, drifting before the wind toward a lee shore, throws out an anchor. Down, down it goes until it grips the unseen solid rock below. The hawser tightens and the anchor holds. The vessel is safe. Our hope is an anchor cast upward to the inner sanctuary of heaven, where it lays hold of Christ and cannot be moved. Life is the sea, the soul is the ship, hope is the anchor, Christ is the hidden rock within the veil.
p. 97

Macaulay says:

On the day John Knox, the "great apostle of the Scots," passed from the conflict of this life, he called to his wife, "Go, read where I cast my first anchor." She understood, and read the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel, which commentators have entitled the "High-Priestly Prayer." We are "within the veil" there, in the Holy of Holies.
p. 87

Let us therefore look to our anchor, and see to our moorings. Then let the breakers roll and the floods swell and the tides lift and the gales sweep; let our sails be torn to shreds and our masts and tackle carried off as driftwood; let our timbers creak and the old ship rock and reel in the storm: we may still enjoy the quiet of the presence of God, and smile at the sea and the wind, for with our anchor fast "within the veil," we are safe, and drawing every day nearer to heaven and home.
p. 88

J. Vernon McGee says:

When Christ ascended back to heaven, He assumed the office of High Priest.

"Entereth into that within the veil." Christ as High Priest entered into the temple in heaven (after which the earthly tabernacle was patterned, Hebrews 8:5). He passed through the veil into the Holy of Holies, into the presence of God, and presented His blood there. Then He "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Now one difference between Aaron and the Lord Jesus is (and I say this reverently) that poor old Aaron never did sit down. There were no seats in the tabernacle--there was the mercy seat, but that typified God's throne. Aaron only hurried in and hurried out. But you and I have a superior High priest. He has gone in. He has sat down. He has a finished redemption.
p. 550

Wuest observes:

This hope which the believing soul has in the Lord Jesus is an anchor of the soul which cannot be made to totter nor break down when put under stress and strain.

p. 124

We have some rich figures here. This present life is the sea; the soul, the ship; the hidden bottom of the sea, the hidden reality of the heavenly word. The soul is seen as storm-tossed on the troubled sea of life. The soul of the believer, as a tempest-tossed ship, is held by the anchor within the veil, fastened by faith to the blessed reality within the veil.

p. 125

Pink observes:

The "anchor" is Christ Himself, sustaining His people down here in this world, in the midst of the wicked, who are likened unto "the troubled sea, when it cannot rest" (Isa. 57:20). Did He not declare, "Neither shall any pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:28)? Certainly there is nothing in us "both sure and steadfast": it is the love (John 13:1), power (Matt. 28:18, 20), and faithfulness (Heb. 7:25) of Christ which is in view.
p. 354

WHERE'S YOUR ANCHOR?

An unknown author made this analogy: "Can you imagine the captain of a ship, driven about by rough winds and desiring to drop anchor, trying to find a suitable place to do so right on board his own vessel? Such a thing seems ridiculous, but for the sake of a lesson let's picture the skipper doing that. He hangs the anchor at the bow, but still the boat drives before the wind. He sets it on the deck, but this too fails to hold it steady. At last he puts it down into the hold, but has no better success.

"You see, an anchor resting on the storm-driven craft will never do the job. Only as it is thrown into the deep can it be effective against the wind and tide. In the same way, the person whose confidence is in himself will never experience true peace and safety. His actions are as futile as one who keeps the anchor aboard his own ship. Cast your faith into the great depths of God's eternal love and power. Place your trust in the infinitely faithful One."

This is excellent advice! Remember, if your hope for riding out the storms of life is anchored on your own capabilities, your confidence has been tragically misplaced. Instead, with the psalmist declare, "In You, O Lord, I put my trust" (Ps. 71:1). --RWD

Though waves and billows o'er me roll
 In crushing floods of ill,
 Within the haven of God's love
 My soul is anchored still.--Anon.

WE'LL BE STEADY IN THE STORM IF WE'RE ANCHORED TO CHRIST THE ROCK.

(From Our Daily Bread, August 10, 1994)

William J. Kirkpatrick wrote the hymn:

"WE HAVE AN ANCHOR"

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
Will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

Refrain:

We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.

("We Have an Anchor" by William J. Kirkpatrick. The New Church Hymnal,
Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976. #46)

(Becoming a Contagious Christian by Bill Hybels & Mark
Mittelberg)

As its truth began to transform my values, a friend made an interesting suggestion. He said I should get a bunch of red stickers, write on them, "Soon To Be Burned," and put them on everything I owned! It would serve as a constant reminder that every car, every motorcycle, every boat, every piece of furniture--everything I had or wanted--is subject to rust, decay, and theft, and will ultimately be destroyed in a great fiery blaze.

p. 33

Another hymn writer put it this way:

In times like these you need a Savior,
 In times like these you need an anchor;
 Be very sure, be very sure
 Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

Refrain:

This Rock is Jesus, Yes, He's the One;
 This Rock is Jesus, the only One!
 Be very sure, be very sure
 Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

("In Times Like These" by Ruth Caye Jones. The New Church Hymnal,
 Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976. #89)

BRIGHT HOPE FOR TOMORROW

To a lamentable extent the church has been infected with the despair and hopelessness of society today. Yet we have a God of hope. Peter the apostle was a man who experienced hopelessness because of his personal failures, but later in his life he shared a powerful message of hope with the beleaguered believers of that day.

~The person of our hope. Our hope is grounded in Christ Himself and His resurrection, which is our guarantee of an inheritance in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-4).

~The permanence of our hope. Peter urges us to fix our hope completely on the grace that we will receive when Jesus comes again. This enduring hope should spur us on to holy living (1 Pet. 1:13-16).

~The place of our hope. The eternal, unchanging God is the basis of our hope--a sure and steady anchor in the turbulence of our times (1 Pet. 1:21).

~The purpose of our hope. Making Christ first in our lives will enable us to effectively answer anyone who questions why we have hope even in the midst of difficult circumstances (1 Pet. 3:15). Our testimony can give them hope, too, by pointing them to God.

("Bright hope for tomorrow" by Owen Fraser. *Interest*, Sep 1992. Pages 4-5.)

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

DOWN, BUT NOT OUT

An old legend tells of an angel who was sent by God to inform Satan that all the methods he uses to defeat God's children would be taken from him. The devil pleaded to be allowed to keep just one. "Let me retain depression," he begged. The angel, thinking this is a modest request, agreed. "Good!" he exclaimed, as he laughed to himself. "In that one gift, I have secured all."

In his book Depression, What It Is and What to Do About It, Roger Barrett describes this condition as "a miserable, wretched experience that leaves you exhausted, uninvolved, and in deep, hopeless despair. There seems to be absolutely nowhere to turn and not one single thing you can do to escape these horrible feelings. You feel doomed, trapped, and at the end of your rope. . . . It's awful!"

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Sometimes we have to let go of the past in order to enjoy the present, and be able to dream of the future.

--A Hallmark Card

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator for Windows 1.0d)

Many people say they do not fear death, but the process of dying. It's not the destination, but the trip that they dread.

John Newton, a one-time slave trader, was converted and became a great preacher and hymn writer in the Church of England. Two years before his death, in 1807, he was so weak that he could hardly stand in his pulpit; someone had to support him as he preached. Shortly before he died, when he was confined to his room and unable to move, he told a friend, "I am like a person going on a journey in a stagecoach, who expects its arrival every hour and is frequently looking out of the window for it--I am packed and sealed, and ready for the post."

You may have heard of Newton; he wrote some words which are sung around the world: "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound."

--Facing Death and the Life After, by Billy Graham, p. 241

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator for Windows 1.0d)

BILLY GRAHAM, in one of his messages just a few weeks ago, was telling the story of the US Air crash when so many lives were hurled into eternity. One of the men who was responsible for overseeing the gathering of the remains after the crash tells the story of finding two arms that were separated from their bodies with the two hands clasped tightly together. We do not know whether those hands were the hands of a husband and wife, a couple of young lovers who were looking forward to life together in the future, but we do know that they were two hands clasped together going out into eternity.

Billy Graham asked the question:

"Whose hand are you hanging on to tonight?"

(from a 1995 televised message)

The hymn writer says it well:

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In ev'ry high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the vale.

His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way
He then is all my hope and stay.

Refrain:

On Christ the solid Rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.
All other ground is sinking sand.

("The Solid Rock" by William B. Bradbury. The New Church Hymnal,
Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976. #54)

John 14:1-6

Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.

v.20 where Jesus entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

The DOMINANT FOCUS of these remaining 3 VERSES are upon 5 THINGS that Jesus is to us:

1. HE IS A REFUGE
2. HE IS A HOPE
3. HE IS AN ANCHOR
4. HE IS A FORERUNNER
5. BY HIM WE HAVE ACCESS INTO HIS PRESENCE

Hebrews 10:20

by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Prodromos ("who went before us") suggests a "forerunner." If the harbor imagery is still in mind it recalls the role of sailors who leave their ship in a smaller craft in order to carry the anchor forward to a place where it can be firmly lodged. So too the Lord Jesus, by His entrance into the heavenly sanctuary where He functions as **a High Priest forever**, has given to a Christian's hope an anchorage from which it cannot be shaken loose. Since, therefore, the reader's hope was sure, they could cling to it tenaciously right to the very end.

p. 797

MacArthur says:

Jesus entering **within the veil** signifies His entering the Holy of Holies, where the sacrifice of atonement was made. Under the Old Covenant it was made yearly by the high priest. Under the New i[t] has been made once for all time by Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Our anchored soul is, in God's mind, already secure within the veil, secure within His eternal sanctuary. When Jesus entered the heavenly Holy of Holies, he did not leave after the sacrifice as did the Aaronic high priests, but "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3). In other words, Jesus remains there forever as Guardian of our souls. Such absolute security is almost incomprehensible. Not only are our souls anchored within the impregnable, inviolable heavenly sanctuary, but our Savior, Jesus Christ, stands guard over them as well! How can the Christian's security be described as anything but eternal? Truly we can trust God and His Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, with our souls.
pp. 168-9

Richards says:

When we trust Jesus fully, we really can forget ourselves, and, launching out in reckless trust, go on to maturity.
p. 65

G. Campbell Morgan says:

An arresting word in this connection is the word "Forerunner." It marks a difference between Christ's passing within the veil, and everything that had preceded it in the ritual of the Hebrew people. Aaron had entered within the veil once a year, but never as a forerunner. He entered as the representative of those who were left outside. But they were always left outside. No one followed Aaron when he entered within the veil to stand in the presence of the ark and the mercy-seat. When Jesus passed within the veil, He went as a Forerunner, which at once suggested that the way was open for others to follow Him.
pp. 76-77

Hession in his book, From Shadow to Substance, says:

He is never going to fall down on the job the Father has given Him to do, that of taking care of the interests of the feeblest saints before His face. No matter how failing they may feel themselves to be, no matter how disappointed in themselves they may become, they will never fail to find a "Friend at court" to represent them, someone to whom they can go in every time of need just as they are. The Father has arranged it that way. My peace with God, then, does not depend on my faithfulness to God; it does not even depend on Christ's faithfulness to me, but rather on Christ's faithfulness to Him who has appointed Him for me. What a pillow to rest the head on!

p. 58

A. T. Robertson commenting on the word "FORERUNNER" says:

[It is an] Old word used for a spy, a scout, only here in N.T. Jesus has shown us the way, has gone on ahead, and is the surety . . . and guarantor of our own entrance later. In point of fact, our anchor of hope with its two chains of God's promise and oath has laid hold of Jesus within the veil. It will hold fast. All we need to do is to be true to him as he is to us.

p. 379

Hewitt says:

He is the Christian's link between the visible and invisible, and a certain pledge that one day the believer will also enter within the veil to share His eternal glory.

p. 115

English says:

So our great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, has entered within the veil before us and for us. His is not a temporary entry, as it were, like that of the high priest of old, but He abides there, our Intercessor and Advocate at the Father's right hand. "Who [therefore] shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:33, 34).
p. 181

Griffith Thomas says:

Perhaps, therefore, the word is an allusion both to the High Priest and to the cities of refuge, as the phrase "fled for refuge" is found here. It seems clear, however, that the fundamental idea is not that of the sinner fleeing to Christ as a refuge, but of the believer finding refuge in the heavenly sphere, whither Christ has entered as "a Priest for ever." It has been noted that we have here three metaphors: the anchor, the refuge, and the forerunner.
p. 80

What a wonderful practical tie there is between this truth of the coming of the Lord and our appearing before Him, and the living of our daily life! "Every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." Let me illustrate that by the life of Martha Snell Nicholson who, for more than thirty-five years, was so transcendently triumphant through those many weary years that she wrote some of the finest Christian poetry which has ever been written. A number of years before she died she wrote about her hope of the coming of the Lord. This is what she says: The best part is the blessed hope of his soon coming. How I ever lived before I grasped that wonderful truth, I do not know. How anyone lives without it these trying days I cannot imagine. Each morning I think, with a leap of the heart, "He may come today." And each evening, "When I awake I may be in glory." Each day must be lived as though it were to be my last, and there is so much to be done to purify myself and to set my house in order. I am on tiptoe with expectancy. There are no more grey days--for they're all touched with color; no more dark days--for the radiance of His coming is on the horizon; no more dull days, with glory just around the corner; and no more lonely days, with His footsteps coming ever nearer, and the thought that soon, soon, I shall see His blessed face and be forever through with pain and tears.

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator for Windows 1.0d)

(31 Days of Praise: Enjoying God Anew by Ruth Myers)

A friend of mine, who serves Christ as a professional in a restricted country, came across a quote from Amy Carmichael that says, "O Lord Jesus, my Beloved, may I be a joy to Thee." She has made this her major and constant prayer request. Above her desire for marriage (she's single and not too young), above her desire for success, above her desire to see friends and loved ones half a world away, she has chosen this supreme desire, "May I be a joy to Thee." That's worship.
p. 148

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Are you in the "beloved" because you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?

LESSON #2: Are people convinced that you are a Christian by the quality of your life and your commitment to the Savior?

LESSON #3: Are chastity, compassion, charity and concern manifested regularly in your life?

LESSON #4: God does not forget your work and the love which you exhibit.

LESSON #5: We manifest our relationship to Christ by being servants for Jesus' sake.

LESSON #6: We are warned not to be lazy, but through faith and patience to inherit the promises.

LESSON #7: Our inheritance rests upon the unconditional promises of God.

LESSON #8: God's sovereign purpose is unchangeable.

LESSON #9: The promise and the oath give us the assurance and the strong encouragement that our hope is secure.

LESSON #10: The anchor within the vale is Jesus Christ our Savior.

LESSON #11: Christ our forerunner has entered into the Holy of Holies and He there intercedes on our behalf twenty-four hours a day.

(Broken in the Right Place by Alan E. Nelson)

The beauty of God is that when junk happens to you, regardless of the junk, He can create something good out of it. He recycles our trash. He can salvage gold from the garbage--if we let Him--by His loving response to us when we call to Him out of our brokenness in the right place, the soul.

I want to reiterate that not everything that happens to you is an episode of brokenness. There are definite times when God tries to prune some of the dead wood that may be stopping the Spirit from producing fruit in your life. However, even small problems have the potential of breaking and making us. If we respond to even silly, minuscule events with an attitude of humility and dependence and submission to God, we can maintain (voluntarily) a spirit of brokenness.

p. 54

(Holiness by J. C. Ryle)

If any reader of this paper really feels that he has counted the cost, and taken up the cross, I bid him persevere and press on. I dare say you often feel your heart faint, and are sorely tempted to give up in despair. Your enemies seem so many, your besetting sins so strong, your friends so few, the way so steep and narrow, you hardly know what to do. But still I say, persevere and press on.

The time is very short. A few more years of watching and praying, a few more tossings on the sea of this world, a few more deaths and changes, a few more winters and summers, and all will be over. We shall have fought our last battle, and shall need to fight no more.

The presence and company of Christ will make amends for all we suffer here below. When we see as we have been seen, and look back on the journey of life, we shall wonder at our own faintness of heart. We shall marvel that we made so much of our cross, and thought so little of our crown. We shall marvel that in 'counting the cost' we could ever doubt on which side the balance of profit lay. Let us take courage. We are not far from home. It may cost much to be a true Christian and a consistent holy man; but it pays.

pp. 77-78

(The Seeking Heart by Fenelon)

Your aim should be to die to all such ambitions by letting yourself be humbled. You must learn to accept obscurity and scornful disregard while you keep your eyes solely on God.

p. 37

(Oswald Chambers: Abandoned to God by David McCasland)

On December 15 Oswald began his final Irish mission in Antrim. He wrote:

My Lord Jesus Christ grows grander and more and more central to my mind and heart and being daily. How much, how intolerably much, we owe to Him, none of us begin to realize it. Such an indignation gets hold of me, such a passion of penitency, when I think of the days I have given over to thoughts and concerns other than Himself. How the prince of this world presses and throngs with clamours, more or less noble and good, but all in order to keep us away from devoting all to Him.

p. 155

(Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions by Kenneth W. Osbeck)

The author of this text, Henry Gilmour, came to the United States from Ireland as a teenager. He practiced dentistry for a number of years and then spent the last 25 years of his life as a gospel musician. He was a gifted soloist and was greatly respected as a choir director. "The Haven of Rest" first appeared in Sunlight Songs, published in 1890.

My soul in sad exile was out on life's sea, so burdened with sin, and distrest, till I heard a sweet voice saying, "Make me your choice!" And I entered the Haven of Rest.

I yielded myself to His tender embrace, and faith taking hold of the Word, my fetters fell off, and I anchored my soul--The "Haven of Rest" is my Lord.

The song of my soul, since the Lord made me whole, has been the old story so blest of Jesus, who'll save whosoever will have a home in the Haven of Rest!

O come to the Savior--He patiently waits to save by His power divine; Come, anchor your soul in the Haven of Rest, and say, "My Beloved is mine."

Chorus: I've anchored my soul in the Haven of Rest; I'll sail the wide seas no more; the tempest may sweep o'er the wild, stormy deep--
In Jesus I'm safe ever more.

p. 195

Dear Ann Landers:

The enclosed appeared in the Schenectady Gazette. It was written by a teenage boy who died from cancer. His parents were divorced and he and his sisters were being raised by grandparents. Please try to find room for this farewell message in your column. We went to school with Kevin, and he was truly one in a million.

A Very Special Thank You

If I were back on earth, I would want to express my thanks:

To the doctors and nurses at Ellis Hospital who attended me and made sure I did not suffer any unnecessary pain during my illness.

To all my school friends for your concern and kindness; for the many visits you made to the chapels and churches to pray for me; for the many hours you spent at the hospital helping to cheer me up and lift the spirits of my family. For the memorial services you held on the steps of Draper High School the day I left this earth.

To all who came by the funeral home to pay their last respects. I stopped counting when the number reached 400.

To all who sent cards and sympathy letters. They were so helpful.

To you dear friends and neighbors who cooked all that delicious food and baked those wonderful pastries. Your goodies just about covered every flat surface in our home. How I wish I could have tasted some of them.

To the thoughtful friends, relatives and neighbors who sent donations to charities in my name--and, oh, those gorgeous flowers! What a beautiful array! It was almost as if I was back in the Hawaiian islands again--a place I truly loved. Many of the plants and flowers are now in our home, being tenderly cared for by my grandmother.

To those who made up the funeral cortege. What a sight that was! There were over 30 vehicles--one after the other, all with their lights on. What a great send off. I loved it!

To my family--Kelly, Celia, Gina and Katie. I am proud to have been your one and only brother. I'm sorry I had to leave you, but I know you will all grow up to be good citizens and a credit to our grandparents.

To Gram and Grandpa. Thanks for everything. Too bad God called me just when I was reaching the age when I could have been of help to you. I realized a long time ago that you were exceptional people. I was a lucky guy to be your grandson.

To all: This isn't the end. We are sure to meet again. I'll be on hand waiting when you arrive, and we'll take up where we left off.

--Kevin Dolan, 1964-1981

Dear Friend in Schenectady: Thank you for sharing that extraordinary message. For those who may be wondering how Kevin knew the number of vehicles in the funeral cortege and the fact that more than 400 passed his coffin, his farewell message was written several days before he passed away. He left blank spaces for his older sister to fill in after his death.

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator for Windows 1.0d)