

# Hope For Today

Selected Radio Sermons  
Series A

*Prologue...*

## HOPE FOR TODAY

In response to the many requests for such, we are sending out this booklet with a prayer that it may be a blessing to our many radio listeners and their friends. We have not thought to present these messages as homiletical masterpieces, but rather just the simple thought for the day as it was sent forth over the air. Will you pray with us that these words may bring comfort and hope to many needy hearts.

Your Herald of Hope  
Brother H. J. Smith

*(This booklet is respectfully dedicated to my good friend and co-worker, Brother James Cheek, founder and Editor of the Herald of Hope publication, whose consecration and whose burden for needy humanity has been a great inspiration to me.)*

## A MORNING PRAYER

We thank you this morning, our Father, because we know that you hear us, and since we know that you hear us we know that you will answer these petitions we make of Thee just now.

My Father, I pray thee, be very near those who are aged and afflicted and forsaken and lonely this morning. Oh my Father, encourage them. Impart life, Lord, and healing, and grace and mercy to every one of them. Go far beyond the bounds of this broadcast and touch those needy ones everywhere. Oh God, in these days of wrath remember mercy, we pray Thee.

My Father, I ask in the Name of Jesus that you would be with those on their way to work. Lord, hold your hand upon the wheel, be very near them as they travel, let them feel the presence of God, and let them have the assurance that God is not only with them but that He goes before them and that He will order their steps today.

Dear Lord, we pray for the man or woman, who may be listening in just now, who does not know you or may have wandered astray and gotten off the "beaten track." Somehow, Jesus, I pray thee in mercy deal with that soul today. Draw them back to your side, Lord, and bring them back to that place of spiritual satisfaction where they can know Christ and understand that they are known of Him.

Father, we pray, bless our young people too with the blessing that make rich and add no sorrow. We pray that somehow you will help them to realize the follies of this world of sin and the great realities of the diving kingdom of life.

Oh my Father, I pray thee, send a revival upon us. Send a moving of the Spirit of God in our midst. Grant unto us today, oh Lord, the strength to enter into the very presence of the divine. Let Jesus become real to every one of us.

Lord, may Thy blessing be upon this broadcast for certainly it is our great desire, Lord, to glorify Thee, and we want to help men. For that reason, Lord, we stay on the air. We rise at this hours, we come here to this place because we want to bless men. That is our ministry, that is our life. Oh God, I pray Thee, grant us that sense of divine fulfillment in this ministry to which you have called us. Again we thank you Lord, for your presence just now. We feel You as we sit here before this microphone. We feel You are very near to us. We know that You are very near to those out there who are listening. Oh

God, keep us conscious of Their presence all through this day. Yes, Lord, and all through our lives. We ask it in Jesus' dear Name. Amen

### **“THE SPIRIT THAT NOW WORKETH”**

Our Scripture reading for today is found in Ephesians 2, the first two verses, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Our text is found in the latter part of verse 2, “the spirit that now worketh.”

There is a spirit in this world that motivates and controls those who walk in disobedience to the divine commandments and contrary to the admonitions of God. It's the spirit of our adversary, Satan, the arch foe of mankind, the enemy of all righteousness. This spirit manifests itself as it did in its father at the beginning. It exalts itself above the knowledge of God. It refuses to recognize a supreme authority. It chafes under any restraints we would subject it to. It exalts the will of man. It denies the rights of God in the lives of men. It is the spirit of anti-Christ, the spirit of the end-time, the spirit of the last days. It is a stubborn spirit, a willful spirit, and an intemperate spirit. At first it deceives men, then possesses them, finally controls them and eventually destroys them. It originates in the pit, exercises itself in this earthly realm, and is ultimately consigned to the regions of darkness from whence it came. This spirit will brook no interference, resists correction, makes fools of its servants, and ridicules its opposers.

This spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience is the spirit of the prince of the powers of the air, Satan, the arch foe of mankind. This spirit cannot be destroyed with carnal weapons, cannot be controlled by human reason, and resists every control or limitation placed upon its activities. It is the enemy of all righteousness. It is a hater of God. It is no friend to man.

This spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience is permitted to exist because evil men desire such and God permits unregenerate man to choose his own course in this life. This spirit is permitted to operate in the world because the righteous need to be subjected to its testings and its adverse influence in order to bring out the best in them and causing them to discern between right and wrong, good and evil, God and the Devil. This spirit tries the patience of the saints, challenges their godly activities, but if resisted in the Spirit of the Lord, must give ground and flee.

Yet, there is another Spirit that worketh in this world also. He is the Spirit of God. He is the enemy of all unrighteousness. He opposes the works of the Devil. He exalts the law of God. He blesses and encourages the righteous. He convicts the sinner. He gives strength for the journey. He encourages the weak. He brings order out of chaos. He brings calm out of the storms of life. He is the promise of the Father. He was sent by the Son. His Name is the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit of God. Now He has come to abide with us. The period of His comfort is forever. He does not speak of Himself, but glorifies the One who sent Him. His ministry here is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. His ministry is to comfort, to inspire, to bless, to quicken, to prepare the church for the coming of her Bridegroom. He is meek, easy to be in-treated, the direct opposite of the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. “To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.” Thanks be unto God for this heavenly gift. We need no longer fear the spirit of this age. We need no longer be controlled by this power of evil. Christ hath gotten us the victory. Though I may be subjected to evil influences, I need not be controlled by this influence. Though I am in the world, I am not of the world. My citizenship is

in heaven. The spirit of that heavenly realm is today my life and my strength. I shall overcome the spirit of this age, for great is He that is in me than he that is in the world. Thank God for this glorious hope. I shall be victor. I shall not be defeated. Jesus Christ is mine today.

Oh, I'm so glad because I have Jesus, and I know that, listening to me out there, are hundreds who know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Aren't you thrilled to know that your enemy, the enemy of your soul, is a defeated foe. Aren't you thrilled to know the Lord is on your side and His Spirit had come to you, that one time, though you may have been possessed by the spirit of this world, the spirit of this age, the spirit of your adversary, your enemy, today you've been freed from that evil control and you've yielded yourself to God. *God has come to you of a truth. Though you may be subjected somewhat to the forces of evil around about, yet at the same time thou shalt overcome for the Lord is thy portion. He it is who keepeth thee in all thy ways and shall direct thy paths and cause thee to be victorious because that is His promise.*

Oh, I'm so grateful because the promises of the Word of God are my promises. These are mine and I claim them. There may have been a time when I was subject only to the judgments written in this book, but now the blessings that are written in this book, but now the blessings that are written here are my everlasting portion for I have accepted God's way, His way of escape from the spirit of this age, the spirit of this day, God's way of escape, Jesus Christ the righteous. One day He suffered the onslaughts of the enemy, but He rose from the grave triumphant and He is now seated at the right hand of the Father on high, and because of that He is my Saviour, my High Priest, my Mediator, my divine Intercessor, and I shall be conqueror because He has decreed it to be so.

You may feel like you are bound and you are suffering and you are weak and you are sick, but I want to tell you that your adversary is a defeated foe, and though you go through many things down here you shall triumph gloriously, for the Lord is your portion. Oh, let us hope in the Lord for we may walk through a dark vale for a while, but the light is shining brightly just ahead and God shall bring the victory.

### **“WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT”**

I would like to read a selection of Scriptures found in the 105<sup>th</sup> Psalm. “O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord, and his strength: seek his face evermore. Remember his marvelous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth; O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen. He is the Lord our God: his judgments are in all the earth. He hath remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant...Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. And he increased his people greatly: and made them stronger than their enemies. He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtly with his servants. He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen. They shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness, and made it dark: and they rebelled not against his word. He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish. Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings. He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land....He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night. The people asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of Heaven. He opened the rock, and the waters

gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river....And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness:...that they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws.”

After reading all this I am reminded of a Scripture in Numbers 23, a portion of verse 23 which reads thus, “What hath God wrought?”

David was a man who loved the great outdoors. He was a friend of the mountains and trees and saw in all of these the great hand of an all-wise God. One day after looking up into the heavens and beholding all these wonders he cried out, “When I consider the heavens the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou has ordained, what is man that Thou are mindful of him?” As David’s eyes looked up into the starry heights the greatness of it all overwhelmed him. He saw in the great starry dome above him the wonderful works of God. As he considered the magnitude of creation he suddenly felt very small indeed and cried out, “What is man that thou art mindful of him?” I have read the Psalms many times, those inspired songs of a man after God’s own heart and have been thrilled again and again as David, no doubt under the movings of God’s Spirit, spoke of the wonders God had wrought. What hath God wrought? Marvelous indeed are the works of our Creator. Wondrous indeed is the work of His hands.

I have stood upon the shore of mighty oceans and watched the waves beat tirelessly over the sand, watched the tides come and go and have said, “What God hath wrought.” I have stood on the peaks of majestic mountains and have tried to comprehend the mysteries of the valleys beneath, I have watched a lone cloud sail serenely across that great blue expanse above, and said in my heart, “What God hath wrought.” I have stood in a sheltered place and watched the forked lightning streak across the angry backdrop of the storm and marveled again and been forced to exclaim, “What God hath wrought.” I have watched the gentle zephyrs change into gales of tremendous force that uprooted trees and carried all before it, and again I had to cry out, “What God hath wrought.” I have lived long enough on the earth to have seen several wars when men hated one another and murder was in their hearts, and then watched the time come when the dove of peace hovered gently over tired, broken flesh, and men who hated and killed and vowed complete vengeance and destruction would sit with their one time enemies, would shake their hand and pledge to work together for the common good. Again I had to say, “What God hath wrought.” I have read in God’s Word, “He maketh wars to cease.” yet after all these things we have only begun to observe the great works of God. I have looked into His Word and there saw the picture of a sin-cursed world, a world doomed and damned, a creation that had forgotten its Creator. Then I read of great decisions in the courts of heaven. God the Father speaking to God the Son said, “Who will go and whom shall we send?” Without hesitation the only begotten answered, “Here am I; send me.” Down He came to a world that was made by Him, to a world that knew Him not. Here He took upon Himself the form of sinful flesh and by His coming and living and dying, forever condemned sin in the flesh. Is it any wonder I feel constrained to cry out with David of old, “What God hath wrought.”

One day I was lost, a sinner without a Saviour, a discouraged, unhappy soul, wandering alone on the barren mountains of sin. Then I saw something, something that stopped me in my tracks, something that changed the course of my whole life. I saw Jesus, the Lamb of God, the One who takes away the sin of the world. I saw Him dying upon the cross of Calvary, and I realized that he was dying there for me, and because I realized that, I turned to Him with my whole heart, and cried out in my despair and sorrow, “Oh God, forgive me. I have wandered away, I have wandered astray. Lord, I ask you to forgive me and pardon my transgressions.” I am so glad that time came when Jesus washed my sins away, when the blood of the covenant was applied to my heart and soul and I was made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

No longer is there any need for man to wander alone for God wants to be with him. No longer does man have to perish in darkness for the light has come. No longer does man have to wander alone on these barren mountains of sin and despair for Jesus one day came and paid the price with His life for the sins of this poor old world. Today you can be saved and I can be saved, and praise God, I am saved this morning by virtue of the shed blood of the cross of Calvary. Oh, I'm so grateful this morning and I'm forced to cry out again and again, "What God hath wrought, what God hath wrought." Today I see His wonders everywhere.

### **"BE STILL"**

I've always loved the Psalms. There's something beautiful, inspiring, and restful about them. To be sure some of them speak of war and trouble but usually a note of praise is found and the singer ends with thanksgiving for God's great mercy and provision. This is true also of the 46<sup>th</sup> Psalm. I want to read just a portion of two verses. Psalm 46, verses 9 and 10. "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God."

The last words I read is my thought for today. "Be still and know that I am God." To be silent is quite a difficult task for most of us these days. There are so many voices in the world and all of them cry out for recognition. Sometimes the one who shouts the loudest may get the greatest hearing, and of course the human desire is to be heard. We all feel we must present our case so we add to the general confusion of the day by adding one more voice to the babble already being heard.

A number of years ago while I was pastoring in the deep South there was attending the services a young man of doubtful mentality. In fact, he was considered by most to be practically an idiot. After an exhortation by the pastor in which he encouraged the congregation to enter into a period of witnessing for the Lord this young man felt constrained at last to speak. He rose deliberately and after a few moments of silence spoke just three words. This was his testimony. Here's what he said. "Silence is golden." After this contribution to the testimony service he sat down. I couldn't help but say to myself, "This fellow isn't so dumb as we may think." Others may have poured out words just to use up time and exhaust the listeners, but this young man had nothing to say so he gave this reason and he sat down. I believe the Scripture mentions the fact that even a fool if he holds his peace is considered to be a wise man. May God help us to be silent if we have nothing edifying to say rather than to give the sacrifice of fools.

"Be still and know that I am God." you know there is more in this Scripture than just an admonition to refrain from much speaking. Our spirits should be quiet before the Lord. Many speak much because of a restless spirit. We have never been able to get quiet before the Lord. When we go to prayer we must talk and talk. On and on we go pouring out words, words, words. Oh, if we could become quiet before the Lord, and while sitting at His feet in stillness be able to hear His voice. I am sure that God the Lord has things to say to His people, but we cannot be still long enough to hear His voice. It seems that in these days of increased responsibility we cannot remain still for any period of time but we must be saying or doing or going. No wonder so many end up with nervous disorders, ulcers of the stomach and all kinds of ailments in this physical body. To be still and to wait upon God is health for the body as well as the soul.

You will note that this Scripture instructs us to “be still and know.” Much knowledge is not acquired by becoming noisily and actively engaged in seeking after it. Knowledge comes to us when we wait, we we meditate, when we cease our strife of words. God has said, “Be still and know that I am God.” I am sure that your great desire as well as mine is to know God better. Increased activity is not the answer to this need. To find a quiet place and there wait upon God until rest and peace, wisdom and understanding comes to us seems to be the need of most men today. I believe we can find God anywhere. I believe too we can pray as we walk, pray as we work. I believe this Scriptural for we are exhorted to pray without ceasing. Nothing, however, can take the place of our entering into that quiet closet and there in the stillness, with the world shut out, find God. The great depths of spiritual experience, the great riches of spiritual treasure, are found in that place of stillness in the hour when our spirits become quiet before our Maker.

Oh, when I think of the great need of men today, when I realize the emptiness of so many hearts, it seems to me that this Scripture takes on new significance this morning. “Be still and know that I am God.” Oh, I do want to know God better today. I know that you want to know God better. There is a cry within every one of our hearts to enter into that place where we might come to know God, whom to know is life eternal. Oh, that we could enter into His presence and there hear Him speak and there feel the touch of His divine hand, and experience the comfort that our soul so greatly needs, but we will certainly no find Him in the confusing voices of the day in which we live. We will have to find a quiet place. Oh, I believe that the greatest need of every Christian life is to have a time set aside in the midst of our day’s activities. Sometimes the best time of all is early in the morning before we meet the world, before we meet the people in the world. If we can just find time and place to wait upon God, we will certainly find strength for the day. We will certainly take on the life that is necessary for us to meet the responsibilities of the days ahead. Be still and know that God is the Lord. Oh, to be still before Him till in the secret of His presence we find that strength that is so vitally necessary for our day’s living. May the Lord help us to be wise. You know we study to make ourselves adept at most everything in this day. We are very careful about the way we conduct our business. We are so careful about the way we conduct our affairs, the people we meet, and the things we say many times. Sometimes we are careless and haphazard about this business of seeking after God, but I believe this Scripture gives us a great secret that in this we may find a great treasure for our soul’s need. To be still and know that He is God is something that we must learn.

Oh, I’m sure that many of you are restless, you are tired, you are weary, and you are troubled. If you will enter into that secret place of prayer and there with the world shut out, you will wait upon Him, not just storming the gates of heaven, not just uttering words, not just pouring out great multitudes of expressions – this is all right in its place, I am sure – but after we have done all this, let us wait upon God. Let us not be hurried in leaving that quiet place. Let us wait upon God until the breath of heaven comes to us and until the sweet fragrance of the eternal is wafted into our very souls, and then we can face the day.

### **“THE TOUCH OF HIS HAND”**

I would like to read you two verses in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Esther, verses 11 and 16. “All the king’s servants, and the people of the king’s provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live:----- . Go, gather together all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.”

Queen Esther's people, the Jews, were threatened with annihilation by their enemy Haman who did not know that Queen Esther was also a Jew. She dared to go before the king and plead for her people, though it may have meant her death unless the king would hold out to her the golden scepter. But as the account goes, he held out the gold scepter. and she asked and received the answer to her petition. How unlike our king was this king Ahasueras. We do not fear death when we come before our king. We are assured of life. We do not need to tremble and shake, for on scriptural authority we can come boldly to the throne of grace and find mercy to help in time of need. We who know our Lord do not fear Him for we have received of His mercies many times. He has not held out to us a golden scepter. but has gone beyond this and touched us with His hand. Have you ever felt the touch of His hand? Have you know the fear of death? Have you seen destruction coming? Have you feared the breaking of the storm you saw gathering in the western skies? Fear is a terrible thing. It has torment; but just one touch by the hand of Jesus and fear takes wings and is gone; Peace enter and joy abounds. Just one touch of His hand the the sick are made well, the blind are made to see, the lame are made to walk, the dumb are made to speak; yes, even the dead come to life when touched by the hand of Jesus. If I would wish for anything for you, my friend, I would wish for God's touch upon your life, for I know that just one touch would work a miracle within you, conditions would immediately change and all would be made right.

Yes, the touch of His hand is the miracle touch. A poor, lonely Mother dressed in mourning, walked a lonely road with a group of friends who were accompanying her from her city to the cemetery where she was about to lay away her only son. Perhaps her eyes, so filled with tears and red with weeping, did not readily see the one who stepped to her side and quietly joined the procession, but suddenly a voice of authority called for the mournful procession to stop and quietly He stepped to the side of the young man who was dead. Drawing back the dark clothes that covered that still form, He took him by the hand and without further delay spoke into that lifeless frame the word of life. Death could not stay in the presence of the author of life and springing up he embraced his mother, wiped away her tears and again assumed the responsibilities of his home. All it took was just one touch by the hand of Jesus.

In the New Testament we find account after account of those who have been touched by the hand of the man of Galilee. That hand that was later bruised and torn by cruel nails to bring to the world eternal life, joy beyond compare, peace that will reign supreme and rest, eternal rest. Tired one, sick one, needy one, lift up your eyes; standing by your side is the captain of your salvation, the Lord of your estate, the answer to your prom, the joy of your life. Standing by your side with His hand outstretched is the prince of peace, the eternal one. He desires to touch you, to change you, to heal you. Will you not yield to His hand and taking a firm grip upon his hope of eternity, march forward into a new day without fear? His love, that perfect love, will keep you and help you live above the torments of mortal fear. Confidence shall possess you and the sun of righteousness shall once more rise above your darkened world of despair. Just a touch of His hand and weakness shall disappear, while strength, yes a strength that is truly diving, shall flow through this wasted frame. Then looking up into the face of the Christ who loved you and gave Himself for you, you will smile through your tears and say, "Jesus I thank you".

I am so glad for Him. I am glad because that happened to me. One day when I was lost, He found me. One day when I was lonely, He came and cheered my heart. One day when I was alone, He came to me and He has been with me all these years. He is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother and what He has been to me and what He has been to many, He can be to you friend, today. Perhaps you have lost sight of Him somehow through the shadows of this life. Perhaps it has been a long time since you have been conscious of the touch of His hand, but I want to assure you this morning that He who is

more willing to give than you are to receive, stands by your side with out-stretched, nail scarred hand, wanting to touch you, willing to help you, earnestly desiring to lift you. Will you yield yourself to Him just now regardless of what your need may be? Will you take a firm grip upon His hand, look up into His face and thank Him because He has made such ample provision for your needs and then trusting in Him, march forward into the challenges of this day? Though you may have to suffer and you will know that God is with you. The Lord Jesus Christ himself walks with those whose trust is in Him. Thank God for such a glorious hope as this. Thank God for the touch of His hand.

### **“MOUNTAINS AND PLAINS”**

I would like to read you two verses of the 125<sup>th</sup> Psalm, the first two verses. “They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever. “

You know, our life is made up of mountains and plains of experience. Man has always been one to chose the path of least resistance, and therefore he has built, worked, fought, lived and died in the plains of life. I wonder if we cannot look for a little while this morning at the mountains. The Psalmist says, “I will look unto the hills from whence cometh my help.”

After the flood, after that great time of destruction had come upon the earth and all the inhabitants had been destroyed, everything had been changed. After that flood was over and the judgment day had passed, the ark, in which Noah and his family had been protected and kept safely, landed upon a mountain top. Yes, it landed high upon a mountain top, high above any of the destruction on the plains of life. You know, when Abraham left his country and journeyed forth to the land of promise, he took with him Lot, his nephew, and they traveled together just as long as they could until their herds and their families increased to such an extent that they felt it was necessary for them to separate. Abraham gave Lot his choice and Lot chose the plains, the watered plains of Sodom. Abraham was generous in giving Lot his choice for surely he thought the young man would make the wise choice, but since Lot chose the plains Abraham had no other choice but to choose the hills. So Abraham moved up into the hills and there he began his great work of being the father of many nations. We know what the story is. Lot, who had chosen the plains, finally lost all he had while Abraham who had tented back into the hills was saved and remained a friend of God. So much sin sometimes is found in the plains of life but in the mountains, you know, the air is clear, free and pure and there you can find God.

I remember reading when Elijah had had that great experience with God and fire had come down and consumed the sacrifice on Mount Carmel and the prophets of Baal had been destroyed and a great revival had come to Israel, afterward his life was threatened and he fled from the face of Jezebel and went up into the mountains, and it was there in the mountains, after he had done this great work for God, that he found the Lord, and the Lord gave him a great revelation and a great call and encouraged his heart. Yes, when he fled from the plains and when he fled from the lowlands of this life and went up into the mountains, he found the Lord there. He took a new lease on life. He took a new hold on God and he was encouraged to go on.

David was a man who was familiar with the mountains for he lived there when he was fleeing and hiding from his master, Saul. To David the mountains meant protection, protection from his master, closeness to God. David knew the value of the mountains. You find many times in the Psalms he talks about the mountains. In fact when I was looking in the Word of God I didn't find much about the plains, but oh if you look in the concordance you will find there chapter after chapter of mountains. So much reference is made to mountains but so very little to plains.



When Jesus after dealing with the multitudes and meeting the world and ministering to the needy found a time that He needed some help and some inner strength and something more to face the tasks of life, we find that Jesus went up into the mountains for prayer and to meet His Father, to commune with Him.

You know, the mountain experiences speak of hardships and weary climbing, of hard work and of loneliness. You know, there are not many people who want to go that way. Most folks like to live down in the low plains where the people congregate, where there is joy and mirth and laughter and fellowship and all these things, but the mountains speak of loneliness. Yet it is up there in the mountains sometimes, in the mountain-top experiences of life, where we meet God and where God meets us, where we find His presence to be more precious than gold. In life we have to make choices. I sometimes feel that we will have to choose between the mountain experiences with all their loneliness and their rugged living and their plain paths. We will have to choose between that and the well favored plains of this life. I believe this morning if we are wise we will go in the mountains. If we are wise we will flee into these hills and there find our strength and there find our help. Up in those heights above the noise and confusion of this life, in this secret place you are bound to find God. Now I'm not just talking about physical or geographical location – I am sure you understand that – what I'm speaking about today is spiritual experiences, and I trust that you will realize that God is calling you up into a higher plain. Perhaps we've lived too long in this lowland of strife. Perhaps God is beckoning us to a higher place in Him where we can lay aside the cares of this life, lay aside the pleasant associations, and the joys and the pleasures down here, and come apart with God and there find strength and new vision, yes and even revelation. God will meet us there and help us walk with Him.

### **“SINCERITY”**

There are a few verses of Scripture I would like to read to you found in Psalm 145, verses 14 through 18.

“The Lord upholdeth all that fall and raiseth up all those that are bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon thee and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.”

There's something about that last verse that caught my eye as I was reading it. “The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him in truth.” Calling upon God in truth speaks of sincerity. Yes, sincerity, for that is our theme for this morning. Webster defines sincerity thus: “To be sincere is to be true, honest, genuine, frank, upright, pure.” Yes, sincerity is freedom from hypocrisy, freedom from pretense.

You know this sincerity is so much lacking in the world about us today. It's lacking among nations. When I think of all the pledges and all the treaties and all the agreements that have been made, made just for one purpose, for convenience. How quickly these are broken whenever they feel it is to their advantage. Oh it seems that you can't trust men these days when they meet at these conference tables. When the nations meet together they look at each other as scamps and don't trust one another. I'm thinking about these armistice talks that were going on and now the political talks that will go on in Korea concerning conditions there and how already we're saying we doubt if the opposite side is sincere and probably they say the same thing about us, but whether right or wrong it just seems there is such and insincerity among men today that no one wants to trust one another very far.

You know this insincerity is also evidenced in the family life of our nation, the relations between the husband and the wife, between the children and the parents. You know when a person is married they make certain vows, they make certain promises before God, but you know many times marriage vows are taken just for convenience sake and because they desire a certain thing and oh how easily they are broken. They think nothing of going into the courts and braking that which they have promised to do. Yes, insincerity is so evident in our family life today. Sometimes you know we parents – I’ve known of parents doing this – will tell a lie to the children and the children in turn will tell a lie to the parents and they think it’s just all right. Why tell the truth if a lie will do just as well? The wife says to the husband, “I did thus and so“, and she knows it’s not so. The husband says to the wife, “I was such and such a place tonight“, and he knows it’s not so. Oh, how much lying, dishonesty, insincerity we find everywhere.

So many it seems today are living a lie, and you know it’s not only in the home. It’s in the church also. Dishonest methods are being used to gain certain ends, and insincere motives on the part of some religious leaders today are so manifest just to reach a certain desired goal. Oh may God help us all. Selfish desire I think many times is the real purpose for much that goes on, not really for God’s glory. You know, Jesus one time said unto the scribes and Pharisees, “Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and afterward you make him twofold more the child of hell than ye yourselves.” May God grant that we may never be deserving of such a condemnation as that. Oh, the words that are spoken today too in the name of the Lord. The statements attributed to God are shameful indeed. May God help us to be sincere. Let us not deceive ourselves. Let us not desire to deceive others. Let us not say, “The Lord said this or the Lord said that” unless we have heard His voice speaking these words. Let us not be guilty of insincerity in representing the will of God to those who come to us for guidance. Some professing Christians by their conversations imply that the voice of God among us is a common thing. God grant us real sincerity in representing God to the world.

Now I have something else I would like to speak to you about – that is God’s sincerity. God’s Word is true. Oh, I’m so glad we depend upon that. In this day when there is such insincerity aren’t you glad that God is sincere and that He’ll stand behind His Word? Aren’t you glad that His promises are faithful? Not one good thing will fail of all that the Lord has promised to us. Aren’t you glad that His judgments are true and honest? In fact as this 17<sup>th</sup> verse states, “The Lord is righteous in all His ways.” Do you notice that? The Lord is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works. Oh let us endeavor to emulate this sincerity, this godly sincerity. May it become a part of our daily life. Let us realize that Christianity means honesty, truthfulness, and sincerity, and anything short of that is not real Christianity. Oh may God help us in these days when a challenge is being sent forth to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to prove their God, to show their God to men. May we accept this challenge and by our sincerity present Christ as He really is. Oh I pray that before this day goes by you will drop down on your knees and say, “Oh God, make me to be a sincere Christian. Make me to be an honest believer. Make me to be a real representative of the Christ that I claim to love. Don’t let anything dishonest, or untruthful, or unreal, don’t let those things possess me, but let me be the man that God called me to be. Let me be the woman that the Lord intended I should be. Make me sincere oh God, make me sincere.” That should be our greatest desire. That should be our daily prayer. The world is filled with so much that is false. Let the world see the truth within us. May God help us.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

My Father, I thank thee for the promise of they continue presence. God grant that we may continue to walk in the light of they grace until we see thy eternal glory.

In Jesus' Name,  
Amen.

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