

Dec. 4, 1939 (Radio)

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Pastor W. H. Offiler

Hosea 6:1,2 "Come and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn and He will heal us; He hath smitten and He will bind us up." "After two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight."

These words received my attention as I opened my bible this morning. Verse 6, "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." Here the Prophet of the Lord is speaking to the people of Israel and extending to them one of those oft repeated invitations. They had wandered away from the Lord and in many cases had gone into idol worship. If they had not done this, they had become formal, dead and quiescent with regard to sin and to the righteousness of Almighty God.

Here He sends out that wonderful word, "Come and let us return unto the Lord." I just wonder how many of our friends in Radioland this morning need an invitation like that?

Those, who years ago loved the Lord and walked with Him in the ways of God, but today, for some reason that only their own heart knows, and is aware of, they have wandered away from the fellowship and love and service of our Lord Jesus Christ...and no heart with memories like that can ever be happy in the enjoyment and pleasures of this world.

Always, in the consciousness of them, is the memory of brighter and better days when they loved the Lord and walked circumspectly before Him. The Lord expects something different from men and women who have become Christians. It is not His pleasure that He must say, "like men of the world they have transgressed my covenant." God is calling all men everywhere to a higher standard than that.

I am sure, as we meditate in our bible (and all Christians experience that) we have come to know that every step of progress, in holy things, that you and I have been able to take has set for us a new standard. Every foot of progress brings to you and to me a new and added responsibility. We never can satisfy our heart with the things we have enjoyed as we passed them by on the Christian way. God looks to you and to me, as soldiers of the cross, who have had a standard set up before them. He does not desire that you and I stop by a wayside to contemplate things that we view and experience in passing. No! There is always higher ground. There are higher spiritual objectives that you and I always reach in the power and spirit of God. As we press on into the secret place of divine communion and experience, and as the years roll by, our responsibilities increase more and more before God. He has no pleasure in those who fall by the wayside. He is always ready to lift them up and restore them to His love. "Come, let us reason together," saith the Lord.

This morning may I say to you, those experiences you have enjoyed and have brought responsibilities that you had never anticipated before, have caused you to view the Ensign that has been lifted up. When the Son of God was lifted up from the world He said, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me."

Just now I am sure our friends feel the wooing and call of the Lord Jesus Christ, that again they may forget the things behind and enter into the enjoyment of those things that make for lasting and eternal peace. Could we but realize the importance of the days in which we live and the stern necessity that is upon us to make a decision in eternal things. The men and women who find themselves in a place where they must make a decision are always in danger. There is always the possibility, because of events and conditions, that in the stress of these times we might make the wrong decision.

It is a wonderful thing to get eternal things settled in your heart and mine and then we can say with the Prophet, "The danger is over and we can rest in the power and presence of the everlasting God." Amen.

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Isa. 41:10 "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Our human make-up, many times, is subject to fear. There is an undefined something about fear when it touches the soul and spirit life of mankind that robs them of all their peace and takes away from them the joy and confidence that faith brings the heart as we put our trust in the Lord. Here is a promise of the Lord almost 3000 years old. 3000 years since God, through His Prophets, sent this message of cheer and confidence unto us .."Fear thee not, I am with thee." This verse brings to your attention and mine, the fact that God is with us.

No doubt, in the services that shall follow this week, we shall hear the scripture read many times which tells us that when Jesus, the Son of God, should come they should call His Name "Immanuel", which being interpreted, is "God with us." "Fear not, I am with thee." This brings a direct personal message to every heart as concerning the presence of Almighty God. If God is with us and is for us who can be against us.

Consequently, the Prophet suggests to us that we shall have no fear. As I remember the scripture concerning the Christmas season, I remember the visit of the Angel Gabriel first coming to Zechariah, the father of John, and then to Mary in that humble home in Nazareth, and then to the shepherds as they watched their flocks by night, and this same Angel prefaced his message to Zechariah with, "Fear thee not." When He came to Mary and spoke to her, He prefaced His annunciation with the same confident words, "Fear thee not, Mary..." And with the Glory and brightness of God shining around the shepherds as they watched their flocks that night, suddenly above them, in the Heavens, came the same message of the Arch Angel Gabriel accompanied by the Heavenly choir, His announcement to the shepherds as they quaked in fear was "Fear not."

So friends, God does not want you and me to be weighted down with doubts and fears of any kind, "Fear not, for I am with thee." Be not dismayed for I am thy God." What a blessed thing to have God and His Christ on our side, to make our friendship for us with our Lord Jesus Christ; then God's presence shall always be with us and when God comes it is always with a blessing in His hand. As He abides in the Holy place of our heart, He comes to us in the night time and He brings to us the revelation of God's wonderful will. He brings the desire of God's heart to you and for you and me.

As He brought it to me in the quiet hours of last night, something prompted me to be up and doing for God. The time is short and God needs everyone of us to be up and at work in the vineyard of the Lord. He said, "I will strengthen thee"...furnish our physical strength and impart the strength of God to us. "I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee." What would we do without the strong arms, the everlasting arms of God underneath and about us, when the tests and trials and afflictions come to our body and our heart and our home? Where would God's people be were it not for the realization of that glorious truth.. "underneath are the everlasting arms; I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

In the right hand of God is contained every blessing of the gospel; every promise of God; every good thing as it shall come from the world above, to this world, to your heart and mine. "I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." We feel the need of that support and strength. May we note the words of the Prophet -- though 3000 years have passed, yet the power of God is the same yesterday, today and forevermore. Always we feel the strength of God; we realize the help of the Lord in our everyday life and then we understand that our Christian experience is upheld and continued and carried on by the righteousness in the right hand of Almighty God.

What a wonderful scripture He gives to you and to me this morning. He tells us He has chosen us from among all the Nations and peoples of the earth. We have become members in the great family of God. He becomes responsible for our well-being, physically and spiritually, because He has loved our soul. Day by day, as you and I labor for Him and endeavor to walk with God, let us banish every fear and doubt. Hear the voice of the Prophet, of the Arch Angel, and the Son of God saying to you and to me and to all men, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee."

WHO:MH

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