

“Choose You This Day”

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From Glory to Glory



Character development is said to be the most important work ever entrusted to human beings. During the next hour, we will explore both our privilege and our responsibility to become Christ-like in character. Join us now for this powerful time of personal renewal as Pastor Stephen Wallace takes us "From Glory to Glory."

Good evening, good evening and welcome; welcome back... as we continue in our studies entitled "From Glory to Glory," a seminar on the principles of Christian character development. We have been focusing on how we can conquer the opposition factor. Our goal in Christian character building is to govern the mind, to **keep the heart with all diligence. {Prov 4:23}** In fact, to the point where **we are bringing** what? **...every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. {1 Cor 10:5}** That cannot be done except we have a new heart, and then, only by **persevering effort combined with divine power. {LDE 207.3}** Why? Why does it require such persevering effort? Because of the remaining, though no longer reigning, opposition factor called the flesh. **"The flesh lusts against the Spirit" {Gal 5:17}** and we are to overcome this opposition factor by, what? **Fighting the good fight of faith with all our will power. {1 Tim 6:12}** Remember, that's the promise that we've been looking at. **"You will conquer." {5T 513.3}** But all promises are conditional, and what is the two-fold condition? **"If you fight the fight of faith with all your will power."** Now in our last two studies, we focused carefully on what it means to **fight the good fight of faith.**

Starting tonight, and for as long as the Spirit keeps us on the topic, we need to focus on the role of the will. In the words of inspiration, my dear friends, **"everything depends upon the right action of the will." {SC 47.1}** There is no more crucial, key player in the Christian's experience, as far as his own faculties are concerned, than the will. It is so important that we understand how it is to be exercised aright if we are going to overcome the opposition factor, learn to cooperate with the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, and indeed be changed from glory to glory.

Spiritual things, again, are only what? **...spiritually discerned {1 Cor 2:13-14}**, and tonight there is a very spiritual topic; so I covet your prayers in my behalf, and I want to strongly encourage you to pray in your own behalf. As is our practice, would you join me then, for a few moments on our knees in silent prayer?

My Father in heaven, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord our Righteousness, I come rejoicing in the privilege of standing before You in the person of the infinitely righteous Redeemer, Intercessor, Mediator, the Lord who is our Righteousness. We thank You, Father, that You receive us as fully and as freely as You do Your own Son, and we thank You that when You said to Him: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased," You included us in that verdict as we, by faith, are found in Him. Father, we thank You so much for the privilege of studying Your Word tonight, that's what we have gathered to do. But Lord, we want to acknowledge that we have gathered in vain unless You join us and bless us with the outpouring of Your Holy Spirit. Our mental and spiritual faculties are so seriously damaged by sin, especially after 6,000 years, that we don't have what it takes in and of ourselves. So please, by a miracle of grace, quicken and energize our mental and spiritual faculties, and enable us to grasp the truth with the intellect, to embrace it with the affections, and, most importantly, to submit to it with the will. Oh, Father, help us to understand, especially tonight, the role of the will when it comes to experiencing the liberating, sanctifying power of the truth in our lives.

Guide and direct my thoughts and words. May I speak what You want me to speak, nothing more, nothing less. Please condescend to use me, by a miracle of grace, that Christ might be glorified and that His church might be edified. This is my prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Last night, as usual, we ran out of time and there is a statement that I just have to share with you. We were noting that it is imperative to learn how to **fight the good fight of faith**, if we are going to conquer; and Paul tells us in **2 Timothy 4:7-8**, he says, **"I have,"** what? **"fought a good fight, I have finished the course, ... Henceforth there is,"** what? **"laid up for me a crown,"** a crown. Oh, my dear friends, **fighting the good fight of faith**, as you recall, I trust, requires that **we, by faith, reckon ourselves crucified with Christ. {Rom 6:11}** Amen? It is only on the basis of so doing that we can keep sin from reigning in our mortal bodies, and keep from fulfilling it in its lusts; and what does faith do? This is very closely related to our topic tonight, therefore we need to review it. It does four things; you remember those four steps?

- Faith is intimately associated with the Word of God, isn't it? **"Faith cometh by,"** what? **"...hearing."** {Rom 10:17} So first of all, faith hears the Word of God.
- Secondly, faith believes that what God says He has power to make happen. Why? Because God's Word is no ordinary word. **"When He spoke it was; when He commanded it stood fast."** {Ps 33:9} There's creative power in the Word of God to bring into reality that which He declares. Faith believes that God can make happen what He declares, and then faith proceeds,
- step three, to give God permission to make it happen in our own personal lives. It consents to the fulfillment of God's will in us. That's why that Hebrew word that's translated **"believe"** is **"aman"** and we get what word from it? **"Amen,"** which means, what? **"So be it."** Step three, faith, in other words, submits the will, our will, to God's will. That's part of saving faith;
- and then step four, what is it? True saving faith not only submits the will to the will of God, true saving faith makes a decision to ACT on the Word of God, and trusts Him to give us the strength to do so.

Did you follow your way through that? ...and it's those last two steps, my dear friends, that involve the will; and that's why this study tonight is so closely associated with the study on the **fight of faith**. But what I wanted to share with you at the end of last night's study was the **fight of faith** requires us to **reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus**. Therefore, we can what? ...keep sin from reigning, **Romans 6:12... Romans 6:11-12**. It's on the basis of our faith-reckoning of ourselves crucified with Christ, that we can proceed to keep ourselves from being tyrannized by the old man, because he's what? He's dead, and **the dead know not anything. {Eccl 9:5}** A dead man can't rule over you. But that requires dying how often, my dear friends? **"I die,"** what? **"I die daily."** {1 Cor 15:31} Daily we must bear our cross, and it is only as we **fight the good fight of faith, and bear the cross daily by reckoning ourselves crucified with Christ every day, that we can hope to one day wear the crown. No crown wearing without what? Cross bearing {3T 67.1}**, and we touched on that last night, but we ran short on time. **No crown wearing without cross bearing;** and my dear friends, we challenged you, not only to be willing to bear the cross, but to recognize it as your greatest blessing, and to rejoice in **the privilege of cross bearing. {HP 72.2; 3T 481.1}**

Why? Precisely because the suffering of cross bearing is the very best thing God could have devised to prepare us for the glory of crown wearing. Amen? Do you remember that?

Consistently in Scripture there's a direct relationship between suffering and glory. You'll find it over and over again in the Bible. A direct relationship between, what? Suffering and glory; and the

greater the suffering, the greater the glory. That's why the last statement I wanted to share so badly with you. It's found on the bottom of page 56, **Reflecting Christ, page 350: "We will rejoice in tribulation and keep in mind the recompense of reward, the 'far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'" {2 Cor 4:17}** In fact, **the suffering is not worthy to be compared with the glory {Rom 8:18}**, is it? Reading on: **"We will not have a murmuring thought because we have trials... every trial well endured here, will only make us rich in..."** what? **"glory."** Amen? **"I crave the suffering part."**

Isn't that a remarkable statement? When I first read that, I was amazed. This is Ellen White's personal testimony, **"I crave the suffering part."** How can anyone say such a thing? Do you have to be masochistic to say such a thing? No, but you have to understand what the suffering does for you. Listen: **"I crave the suffering part. I would not go to heaven without suffering if I could, and see Jesus who suffered so much for us to purchase for us so rich an inheritance... No, no. Let me be perfected through sufferings. I long to be a partaker with Christ of His sufferings, for if I am, I know I shall be a partaker with Him of His glory."** Amen? You see, my dear friends, no suffering, no glory. The greater the suffering, the greater the glory. No wonder she says, **"I crave the suffering part."**

Not to mention the fact that the more we suffer for the love of Christ here and now, the more we can identify with Him, and appreciate His love for us.

Now, let's apply what we've learned about faith and its four steps to tonight's study. Remember steps three and four both involve the, what? The will. Step three submits the will to God, giving God permission to make happen what He desires in our life; and then step four, the will does more than just passively submit. The will actively cooperates, trusting God to give us the power to accomplish His will, and we used Abraham, again, to illustrate that. When **God told Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation {Gen 12:2}**, he heard the word. He believed that God had power to make it happen because there's creative power in God's Word and even though his hundred-year-old body was as good as dead, not to mention Sarah's womb, He believed that there was creative power in the Word of God; and so believing that, He gave God permission to make it happen. **"So be it, amen,"** he said. **"Let it be in my life,"** and then he proceeded to act on that, and Isaac was conceived... because God had power to give life where there was only death. There's creative power in the Word of God.

Now, with that in mind, let's focus on the role of the will in conquering the opposition factor called the flesh. We title our lesson tonight: **"Choose You This Day,"** and that title is taken from **Joshua 24:15**. I love this; this is Joshua's last sermon to his beloved but stiff-necked and rebellious children. The leadership, of course, of them was turned over to him by Moses, and that in itself is significant. You see, Moses is particularly associated with what? ...the law, and the law couldn't get us to the Promised Land. But **the law is our schoolmaster to lead us to who? ...Jesus {Gal 3:24}**; and you know, of course, that Jesus is simply the Greek version of Joshua. They have the same name. So do you see the profound object lesson there? Moses brings the children of Israel to Joshua, the antitypical Jesus, and he takes them into the Promised Land; and as long as they are fighting under his generalship, they are victorious, aren't they?

But finally, age catches up with him. He, by the way, is one of only two that made the whole journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. Who's the other one? Caleb. All the rest of them have died in the wilderness and his mortality is catching up with him. He's an old man, but he still has a heart full of love for his children, and he gathers them together for one last pep talk, and it's a powerful one. Let's pick it up in **Joshua 24:14**. Picture him there, standing on an outcropping of rock, with thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands - who knows how many? - of Israelites gathered out there on the plain, and he's preaching his heart out to them - without a lapel mike on. That was a man; that was a man.

What does he say? Verse 14: **"Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD!"** He cries out from the depths of his being, with a heart of earnest love and concern. **"Serve the Lord,"** and as his voice echoes back to him from the rocks on the far side of the plain, **"Serve the Lord, serve the Lord, serve the Lord,"** he pauses to realize that if they are going to serve the Lord, they must first choose to do so; and so he catches his breath and he adds these very familiar words. **Verse 15: "...and if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve;"** and to encourage them to make the right choice, he shares with them his own. **"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."** I love that verse... love that verse! **"We will serve the Lord."**

Why will Joshua serve the Lord? Because he wills to serve the Lord, and whatever we will to do, we will do. You know, I insist that it's not a coincidence that you can get the future for any verb in the English language simply by adding the four-letter word W-I-L-L in front of it. We will go home tonight, after the last study and not before. Why? Because we will to, and whatever we will to do, we will do. Why is that the case, my friends? Why is that the case? That's because of what the will is. What is the will? **Education, page 289: "The will is the,"** what? **"governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or choice. Every human being possessed of reason has power to choose the right. In every experience of life, God's word to us is, 'Choose you this day whom ye will serve.'"** Remarkable statement! First of all, what is the will? It's the governing power in the nature of man. It's the power of decision, the power of choice. You see, everything we say, everything we do is determined by what? The will, the governor; and notice the last sentence: **"In every experience of life, God's word to us is, 'Choose you this day whom ye will serve.'"** What does that include? Everything.

Is it really true that in every experience of life, God's word to us is, **"Choose you this day whom you will serve?"** Yes! But why is it true? My dear friends, because of what we've already noted. The Christian, when he or she is born-again, receives a spiritual nature... but still has a what? ...a carnal nature; it no longer reigns, but it still remains; and what is their experience? **Galatians 5:17, "The flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are,"** what? **"contrary to one another."** In other words... and remember that's in the present active tense in the Greek, that word **"lusts."** What Paul is literally saying is that the flesh is continually lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit continually against the flesh; and these are what? These two opposing sets of desires are what? Contrary one to another. Contrary! You see, the flesh, in any given experience, the flesh wants you to respond on the principle of selfishness. Are you following this? Whereas the spiritual nature, the new heart, wants you to respond on the principle of what? Love. Self-sacrificing, self-denying love; and these are what? These two desires are what? Contrary one to another. They are opposite.

That's precisely why Jesus says: **"No man CAN serve two masters."** {Mat 6:24} He doesn't say, *"No man WILL serve..."* He says: **"No man,"** what? **"CAN serve."** Why? Because it's impossible. Why? Because the desires are opposite! There is nothing you can choose to do that will keep both the flesh and the Spirit happy at the same time. Are we all together? Therefore, what must you do? You must choose, this day, this moment, in every experience of life, which one you're going to serve. Are you going to fulfill the lusts of the flesh? Or are you going to fulfill the desires of the Spirit? You've got to make a choice! Do you begin to see, my dear friends, the key, crucial role then, of this governing power in human nature called the will? Everything's at stake here. Everything depends here upon the right action of the will. But there's one very, very serious problem that we must come to recognize, and that is, by nature... ..by what? By nature, on account of the fall, the human will is utterly incapable of choosing aright. Indeed, by nature, on account of the fall, the human will is in

bondage to **sin, self, and Satan {AA 560.3}**; and all it is capable of doing is consenting to the desires of the flesh, at least - don't miss this - at least, in the privacy of the mind. Although, if ego motivation is sufficient, we might be able to grit our teeth and keep from indulging the flesh out here, at the level of behavior. Because, after all, it would tarnish our reputation, or we might get in trouble. Are you hearing what I'm trying to nuance for you here? By nature, the human will, with sufficient ego-motivation, can keep the lid on your behavior, my friends.

But the human will is not capable, by nature, of refusing to indulge the lusts of the flesh in the realm of the mind. Not by nature. Why is that the case? Because it has been sold. It has been sold. Who sold it? Adam did. Listen. **Testimonies, Volume 5, page 515: "But you must remember that your will is the spring of all your actions. This will, that forms so important a factor in the character of man, was at the Fall given into the control of Satan."** Is that clear? It doesn't get much clearer; **"and he has ever since been working in man to will and to do of his own pleasure, but to the utter ruin and misery of man."** 6,000 years ago, my dear friends, in the Garden of Eden, Adam, the father and representative of the race, sold the human will into bondage to sin, self, and Satan. That's the bad news.

Are you ready for the good news? What the first Adam sold, the second Adam bought back and at infinite cost, indeed by His own blood, He has redeemed the human will. Amen? Listen. Next paragraph, same page, **Testimonies, Volume 5, page 515: "But the infinite sacrifice of God in giving Jesus, His beloved Son, to become a sacrifice for sin, enables Him to say, without violating one principle of His government: 'Yield yourself up to Me; give Me that will; take it from the control of Satan, and I will take possession of it; THEN, then I can work in you to will and to do of My good pleasure.'"** Now listen to this last sentence: **"When He gives you the mind of Christ, your will becomes as His will, and your character is transformed to be like Christ's character."**

Do you see the role of the will in the development of a Christ-like character? My dear friends, when alone is our character transformed to be like Christ's character? - only when our will becomes as His will, and when does our will become as His will? - only when we recognize that by nature it's in bondage to sin, self, and Satan, but that by grace it has been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and then personally accept that redemption. Did you hear what I just said? Personally accept that redemption, by going to the foot of the cross and saying,

"Lord Jesus, I thank You that You have redeemed my will. I choose now on the basis of the freedom that You have purchased at infinite cost, I choose now, in Your power, to take my will from its natural bondage to sin, self, and Satan, and give it to You, Lord. You take possession of my will."

And my dear brother, my dear sister, no one - hear me - no one can do that for you. No one can do that for you! Only you can do that; not even Jesus will do that for you. Not even the Holy Spirit will do that for you. Jesus will powerfully motivate you by His love to do it, and the Holy Spirit is ready to energize and empower you to do it, but neither of them will do it for you. Because if they were to do it for you, it would be what? It would be in violation of your free will. My brother, my sister, Christ did not go to the cross and pay the infinite price to redeem your will from its tyrannical bondage to sin, self, and Satan, just to put it in bondage to Himself. He went to the cross to truly set it free! Amen? {Amen} He went to the cross to set it free. Please go the cross; accept the redemption, personally, and submit your will to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. That's the only way that you can possibly have your character transformed to be like Christ's character.

You see, **Steps To Christ, page 47: "You cannot change your heart."** Did you hear that? **"You cannot change your heart."** What's the whole purpose of character development? It's to **keep the heart with all diligence. {Prov 4:23}** It's to **be transformed by the renewing of our minds.**

{Rom 12:2} It's to have a change of heart! ...and yet, what did we just read? **"You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections."** Well, what can we do? Listen! **"But you can choose to serve Him."** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} **"You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him."** Affections and thoughts, what are we talking about, class? Character. That's our working definition, **"thoughts and feelings combined," for character.** {5T 310.1} Oh, please, notice that when we give Him our will, then and only then can He will and do in us... **"work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure."** {Phil 2:13}

Now, here's a very important question though. Please work with me on this. How though, HOW does Christ propose to work in us, **"to will and to do of His good pleasure"** when we give Him our will? Does He propose to do the willing and the doing for you? Or does He propose to motivate and empower you to do the willing and the doing in His strength? Which is it? Little courage... I'll give you those options again. When we give Him our will, He, we are told, can work in us **"to will and to do of His good pleasure."** My question is how does He propose to do that? By doing the willing and the doing for us? Or by motivating and empowering us to do the willing and the doing in His strength? Which is it? Option one or two? It's option two. It's option two; please know that.

Let me give you a couple more options. When we give Him our will, He can work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure, but how? Without our efforts? Or through our efforts? Again it's option two. And bless your hearts, I have a tremendous burden that you very carefully concentrate with me on this very issue. Why? Because there is much confusion amongst us as a people on precisely this issue. You see, there is a very, very popular false doctrine amongst us as a people on this very issue. In fact, I will go so far as to call it a heresy, and I have a very deep concern about it. It has made significant inroads into many people's thinking, and has significantly influenced their Christian experience. What is this false teaching? This heresy that I'm so concerned about? It is born of an over-reaction to legalism, and since this beloved church of ours has had its share of legalism over the years, there have been many who have arisen to throw their weight against the tide of legalism. But sometimes, we tend to lose our balance, and in trying to bring people out of the ditch of legalism, we fall backwards into the ditch of cheap grace.

Now, please understand that part of the problem here, is a failure to recognize that human effort is not categorically legalism, and I hope that we have very clearly come to understand that. We have addressed that issue in previous studies. What makes human effort legalism or not? It's the motive behind it. Amen? If I am putting forth human effort in order to earn my acceptance or salvation, that's what? Legalism, no question. But, my dear friends, if I am putting forth human effort because I love and appreciate Jesus so much for the free gift of acceptance, the free gift of salvation, and I want to do and be all I can to show Him my love and gratitude, and rightly represent Him, and allow Him to change me so that I will be fit to live with Him forever in the presence of a holy God and in company of holy beings. Is that legalism? Of course not, emphatically no. **That's faith that works by love and purifies the soul.** {CTr 220.3} Amen? Please, please don't have a knee-jerk reaction to... to human effort. It's not categorically legalism, it's the motive behind it; and this false teaching that I am trying to warn you about here, has failed to distinguish between that which is legalistic human effort, and that which is love-motivated, response of gratitude to Jesus for the free gift of salvation.

Now, this false teaching is a very passive, sort of a, *"Let go, let God"* theology, where you simply submit yourself to Jesus, and it is acknowledged that you must submit your will to Jesus, but then it teaches that He takes possession of your will, and operates it, exercises it for you thereafter. He exercises it what? For you thereafter. It's as if the will is a glove, and yes, it's acknowledged but there's

a certain amount of commitment required to give that glove to Jesus, but once you give it to Him; He puts His hand in it and operates it for you. My dear friends, is that what Jesus does when we give Him our will? Absolutely, most emphatically, no. That's what Satan does if we give him our will. The will is not a glove; the will is a palsied hand... terribly incapacitated, and incapable of functioning aright on account of the disease of sin. Are you following this? But when we give that palsied hand to Jesus, what does He do? He heals it, so that we can, what? Exercise it in harmony with His will. But who is exercising the hand? We are, but in whose strength? His. Is there a difference there? You better believe there's a difference there. There is a vital difference there, my dear friends. Please understand that when we give our will to Jesus Christ, He does not propose to do the willing and the doing for us, but He proposes to empower and motivate us to do the willing and the doing in His strength.

Note how clearly Paul brings this out. You've got to look at the original language with me. **Philippians 2:12-13.** Verse 12, let's pick it up about the middle: **"Work out your own salvation with,"** what? **"fear and trembling;"** What does that almost sound like? What does that almost sound like? Legalism. Oh, my dear friends, please, please don't jump to conclusions here. Paul hasn't dropped the ball. He hasn't slipped into his old pharisaical mode. **"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."** {2 Tim 3:16} Amen? Including Philippians 2:12. Please notice some very important things here. First of all, he says, **"work out;"** he doesn't say, *"work for."* Is there a difference? Yes. We are not to work FOR our own salvation, but we are to **"work OUT"** our own salvation. In other words, we are to work out what God works in, and are we talking here about justification? No, in the context we're talking about, what? Sanctification. Being saved from the tyranny of sin, self, and Satan.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, which God places within us, we can work out in our experience that liberation of the gospel - that power of the gospel that can set us free. We are to work out what God works in. Now, even in that realm though, what is the only way we can successfully work? **Verse 13: "for it is God who,"** what? **"works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."** Now, please notice something very important here. The Greek verb that is translated **"works in you"** is the verb **"energeo."** "Energeo." Now, if you soften the "g," what word do you hear? If you soften the "g," what word do you hear? Energy, energize. It is from this Greek verb that we get our English verb **"energize."** Please understand what Paul is literally saying. **"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who,"** what? **Energizes you "both to will and to do of His good pleasure."** Is that clear? Does God propose to do the willing and the doing for you? Does He? No. What does He propose to do? He proposes to energize you, to empower you, to motivate you to do the willing and the doing in His strength. You see that's very important to nuance, my dear friends, very important to understand. **Mount of Blessing, page 62: "God does not design that our will should be destroyed, for it is only through its exercise that we can accomplish what He would have us do. Our will is to be yielded to Him, that we may receive it again,"** Interesting. **"purified and refined and so linked in sympathy with the Divine that He can pour through us the tides of His love and power."** When we give Him our will, does He take control of it and operate it for us? No. He instructs it and He empowers it, and He gives it to us to exercise in harmony with His will... for the love of Jesus. Please understand that.

Now, how does this apply? This understanding... how does it apply to overcoming the opposition factor of the flesh? ...and let's don't lose sight of the forest for the trees here. We're trying to understand how we can conquer that opposition factor called the flesh, how we can overcome the lusts of the flesh. How does this all apply in overcoming the lusts of the flesh? **Romans 8:13,** listen closely: **"For if you live according to the flesh you will,"** what? **"you will die; but,"** praise God there's an alternative, **"if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will,"** what? **"you will live."** Oh, brother, sister... please know, **"whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."** {Gal 6:7} If we sow unto the flesh, we will of the flesh reap what? Corruption, death. But we have an

alternative. What is that alternative? It involves putting to death the deeds of the body. But who is it that puts to death the deeds of the body? Who? I hear people whispering the Spirit. Is that what Paul says? Read it closely: **"If by the Spirit YOU put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."** Who puts to death the deeds of the body? We do. But in whose strength? The Spirit's. Is there a difference there? Yes, there is. Does the Holy Spirit propose to overcome temptation for us? No, the Holy Spirit proposes to enable us to overcome temptation in His strength. There's a difference there! Bless your hearts.

And we're back to this false doctrine, this dangerous heresy that I'm so concerned about that has made such inroads amongst us as a people. It would have us understand that when you submit your will to Christ, you don't even have to exercise it to overcome temptation any more. He will exercise it for you. In fact this false teaching goes so far as to say, that if you try to exercise your will to overcome temptation, that's legalism. I can document this, by the way. My dear friends, if you buy in to that, if I buy into that, then under temptation, I've only got two alternatives: either yield or be a legalist. Frankly, I need a third alternative. You see, the only way we can overcome temptation is by exercising our will, and if to exercise your will to overcome temptation makes you a legalist, you've got a problem. Do you understand what I'm explaining here? I need feedback. My dear friends, I insist that WE are to **put to death the deeds of the body**. We can... by the Spirit! **"If BY the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."** {Rom 8:13}

Listen to how inspiration expounds on this, expands on it. **Faith I Live By, page 91: "The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself."** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} Who expels those temptations when they come up to the conscious screen of the thought life? We do, the soul itself! But by itself? In its own strength? Oh, no. Listen, read on: **"The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. In its great need the soul cries out for a power out of, and above itself; and through the operation of the Holy Spirit the nobler powers of the mind are imbued with strength to break away from the bondage of sin."** Do you see how that works? What noble powers of the mind would particularly be involved in breaking away from the bondage of sin? The governing power, the will. But we must exercise that will to expel that temptation. But we can only do so successfully imbued with strength from above. Amen? The power of the Holy Spirit. Do you see how that works? Is that very clear to you?

Now, my dear friends, please understand that if we are going to successfully overcome this opposition factor, we have to recognize our essential cooperative role and the place, the right place, of human effort - love-motivated, Spirit-empowered, yes, otherwise it can't be successful - but there is an essential place for human effort. **Signs of the Times, November 5, 1896: "Man is allotted a part in the great struggle for everlasting life. He must respond to the working of the Holy Spirit. It will require a struggle to break through the powers of darkness, but the Spirit that works in him can and will accomplish this."** Pause. How does the Spirit propose to do it though? For him? Listen: **"Man is no passive instrument, to be saved in indolence. He is called upon to strain every muscle in the struggle for immortality, yet it is God that supplies the efficiency. No human being can be saved in indolence."** Is that clear? We are to **strain every muscle** in this battle, this **good fight of faith**, to overcome the opposition factor of the flesh with all of its lusts. **"Strain every muscle,"** but it is only as **God supplies the efficiency**, that we can fight and win. Our muscles have no strength without the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit chooses to use our muscles. Are we all together on this? Oh, my friends, if you don't think this is important, please think again. Please think again, and we will establish its importance as we move on.

This cooperation of human effort with divine power, is probably most tangibly and understandably illustrated in some of the miracles that Christ performed. And let me just give you a

little background here, that might help you appreciate miracles of healing as types of the plan of salvation. You see, one of the words for salvation in the Greek language, is the very same word we use for healing. Did you get that? One of the words for salvation in the Greek language is the very same word that we use for what? Healing. Therefore, Christ's healing miracles were types of, and illustrations of, that greater healing of the disease of sin, known as salvation. Did you see your way through that? We can learn then, from Christ's physical healing miracles, insights into how He proposes to heal us from the disease of sin. Okay? Let's look at a couple of them quickly.

Matthew 12:13, that's a story that you're familiar with. Remember the man with the withered hand? What did Jesus say to him? **"Then He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.'"** ...and what did the man do? **"...and he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other."** Now listen to the inspired commentary on that remarkable incident. **Signs of the Times, October 6, 1887: "Jesus said to the man with the withered hand, 'Stretch forth thine hand.' The afflicted man might have said, 'Lord, I have not used it for years; heal it first, and then I will stretch it forth.' But instead of this, when Jesus commanded him to stretch it forth, he exercised the power of his will, and moved it just as if it were well. The very exercise of the will power was evidence to Jesus that the man believed; and his hand was healed in the act of stretching it forth."** Do you see the profound insight there? When did he get supernatural power that healed that arm? When? In the act of stretching it forth. Why, dear friends, could he not get that power until he made a choice and put forth an effort to obey Christ's command? Why could he not get the power until he put forth an effort to obey the command? Why? Because **"faith without works is,"** what? **"...is dead."** {Jas 2:20} Because a choice without an effort to carry out that choice is really a non-choice. Are you with me? ...and it was not until there was effort to obey that the man's faith was ratified as genuine, and his choice was ratified as genuine; and when he manifested true faith, and a choice to obey God's Word, he got what? Power to do so. Do you see how that works? Is that clear?

You see, this is precisely because, my dear friends, throughout our salvation experience, the Godhead never violates our free will. That is why at every advance step we must be actively cooperating by faith that makes a choice, and a choice that is acted on because it's genuine, and because we believe that Christ can give us the power to do what He asks us to do. Amen? {Amen} Do you understand that? You see, we're back to our four steps of what faith is. It not only (1) **hears** the Word of God, but it (2) **believes** that God has power to do it. It (3) **submits** the will to God that it might be done, and then fourthly, and most importantly, what does it do? It (4) **acts** on it! It makes a decision and as that decision is acted on, we get supernatural power instantaneously. Now could that man, on his own, have stretched out his hand? Absolutely not; he had to have divine power. But he had to exercise his will before he could get that power.

Here's another one quickly. **John chapter 5** records it; you can read it there. It has to do with the paralytic. **"Jesus said to him,"** by the pool what? **"'Rise, take up your bed and walk.'"** {Jn 5:5-9} What did the paralytic do? Did he say, *"Lord, you can't imagine how badly I'd like to do that. But obviously You haven't noticed that I'm a paralytic. I tell you what; You heal me first, and then I'll rise and walk."* Is that the way the story goes? No. Or does the story go like this? *"Rise, take up thy bed and walk. Oh, Lord, I don't want to be a legalist; and I know that if I try to get up, that's legalism, so I don't want to be a legalist. But I tell You what, I'll let go and let You pick me up."*

Is that the way the story goes? Most emphatically, no. How does the story go? Listen to this tremendous, powerful insight. **Ministry of Healing, page 84: "Jesus bids him, 'Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.' With a new hope the sick man looks upon Jesus."** Watch for a sequence of events here. Millisecond timing, but an important sequence of events. **"With a new hope the sick man looks upon Jesus. The expression of His countenance, the tones of His voice, are like no other. Love**

and power seem to breathe from His very presence. The cripple's faith takes hold upon Christ's word. Without question he sets his will to obey, and as he does this, his whole body responds. Every nerve and muscle thrills with new life, and healthful action comes to his crippled limbs. Springing to his feet, he goes on his way with firm, free step praising God and rejoicing in his new-found strength. Jesus had given the palsied man no assurance of divine help. The man might have said, 'Lord, if Thou wilt make me whole, I will obey Thy word.' He might have stopped to doubt, and thus have lost his one chance of healing. But no," Listen! "...he believed Christ's word, believed that he was made whole; immediately he made the effort, and God gave him the power; he willed to walk, and he did walk. Acting on the word of Christ, he was made whole." Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} Did you get the sequence?

He looks to Jesus. **"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."** {Heb 12:2} He hears the word of Jesus. **"Faith cometh by,"** what? **"hearing."** {Rom 10:17} He believes that word, and what does he do? He makes a decision to obey, and he acts on that decision; and not until he does that, does he receive the power. Why? Because **"faith without works is dead."** {Jas 2:20} A choice without an effort to act on that choice is a non-choice; and yes, I recognize... there's no way the man could have gotten up with his own power. But my dear friends, he had to make a choice to obey. And Jesus knew when he made that choice and the instant he did, Jesus gave him the power; and he went away rejoicing and praising God.

And how does that apply to us? Last paragraph: **"The Saviour is bending over the purchase of His blood, saying with inexpressible tenderness and pity, 'Wilt thou be made whole?'"** Do you hear Him say that to you tonight, my dear friends? **"He bids you arise in health and peace. Do not wait, do not wait to feel that you are made whole. Believe the Saviour's word. Put your will on the side of Christ. Will to serve Him, and in acting upon His word you will receive strength."** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} That's the secret, my dear friends, to faith that reaches the will and finds in Christ the power to obey. Let's stand for prayer.

Father in heaven, thank You so very much that You will energize us to will and to do of Your good pleasure, if we will but give You our wills. We choose to do that right now. We choose to take them from their natural bondage to sin, self, and Satan; and on the basis of the redemptive price paid, indeed the blood of Christ, we choose to submit our wills to the benign, benevolent Lordship of our Redeemer Savior. Take possession of it; energize, instruct it, and we will exercise it in Your strength in harmony with Yours. Thank You for hearing our prayer, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you, friends.