

Dependence upon God for our instruction (Quality: Average)

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[0 : 00] The prophecy of Isaiah chapter 28 verse 13. But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little, that they might go and fall backward and be broken and snared and taken.

It is a wonderful truth that the poet speaks of, God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.

He plants his footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm. And because of this, so often as the psalmist tells us, his footsteps are not known.

But at the same time, the people of God are led, as we read in the book of Deuteronomy, are led about and instructed.

And we find, in the words of our text, that following on from the precept upon precept, and line upon line, there is here a little and there a little.

[1 : 40] We might look at this in respect to some geographical scene, where in one place there is a little gleam, and in another place there is something more of instruction is sealed upon the heart.

Here a little, here a little, here a little, often the people of God become discouraged because they do not know it all.

Young converts are sometimes foolish enough to think that they know it all. Maybe some of us can go back to those earlier days when we were so filled with the love to God and the scriptures that we thought that we knew it all.

Now part of God's way has been to instruct us in this that we know very little.

Very little indeed. And this solely goes to show us the immensity of God's love. What we may experience here of the love of God shed abroad in the soul by the Holy Ghost, there is nothing to be compared with that which is to be known in heaven.

[3 : 21] One as well put this point forward, if such the sweetness of the streams, what must the fountain be where saints and angels draw their bliss immediately from thee?

And yet, as there is a walking through, as well as a walking up and down, of the verse before us, but the word of the Lord was unto them, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line.

And as we came to the end of our discourse this morning, that these lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places. They may have been painful places, but God is able to make the painful places pleasant places, because they are places where you feel the visits of the Lord himself, and the awareness that he is with you.

I am with thee, Israel, passing through the fire. And now, you see, there is a benefit in all places.

Here a little, and there a little. Here and there is an idiom in our language to describe being in this place and in that.

[4 : 54] In a word, to cover almost every place. Here a little, and there a little. Now, we find that God teaches us little by little.

We find, too, that we're not capable of learning any more at a time than that he gives us grace and ability to learn.

And furthermore, there is a retracing of our steps at times to learn more fully and more deeply the sight of our weakness in order that we may value the glory of Christ and the strength that is in him.

So then, the word of the Lord in the soul, the word of the Lord, Christ, in us the hope of glory, the word of the Lord that directs our steps and guides us always into the ways of peace and righteousness.

It may be through difficulties. It may be through a thorny path. But the end will be peace and righteousness. Are we not witnesses of this truth?

[6 : 15] We are, and if we are led by the Spirit of God, why through darks and paths we go, we may know no reason. But we shall hereafter know each in his due season.

And what shall we find? We shall find this, that the Lord hath done all things well through the path of sorrow. And that pathway alone leads to the place where sorrow is unknown.

That, of course, often has its direction pointing to heaven. But, you know, we do know on this earth, sometimes, if we're the children of God, sorrow leading us to the place where sorrow is unknown.

And that is when we're absolutely surrounded with the love of God. And we're shed abroad, indeed in our souls.

And we see none but Jesus only. And sorrow is gone. Whatever burdens may be upon us, distresses may cast us down, yet the Lord appears.

[7 : 29] And when the Lord appears to your soul, you will know it, because you will only have eyes for one place and one person. And that is the Lord himself. All your troubles and trials, distractions, they will have to go, because they will receive from your sight.

Christ, because there will be one horizon, and that horizon will be Jesus Christ. And it will be a risen Christ. And it will be Christ, who speaks to you, and says, Lo, I am with you always.

It will be Christ, who will set forth that great word of prophecy that we have in the Acts of the Apostles, and the first chapter.

This same, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Now, we've got two words here. Lo, I am with you always. Hear a little. And then, a little time after, this revelation of the Christ that has gone into heaven will come again.

[8 : 48] And there is little. And so it is. In the pathway of God's people, that they discover these incidents.

Hear a little. And there a little. The fullness and glory of Christian experience. So it must be where the word of the Lord is, must be, was.

Now unto them, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line. I remember reading some years ago a sermon that must have referred to this verse.

And here a little and there a little had this attachment of helps by the way. Now you see, there are certainly helps by the way.

A Christian doesn't go on all his life without having helps by the way. And if you're in the pathway of tribulation and trial, you will not be able to get on.

[9 : 59] Unless you have helped by the way. And those helps by the way are those precious words and promises that God may speak to you.

We have mentioned the precept. We have mentioned the line. The line which goes out through all the earth of Christian experience. But now you may say, how should I go through?

It is true. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places. But the way is rough. Only when the way is rough and our coward flesh will start, then what do we need?

A help by the way. And so it is. Here a little. And what is here a little. Let us look at it in this way first of all.

Answer to prayer. Now, the people of God get answers to prayer. And they are not isolated.

[11 : 07] You may say, well, I have not had an answer for a long time. Well, there is something wrong with your religion. Let me put it this way. I pray every morning for that we might be watched over, given wisdom and help.

and if we go on journeys to be taken out and brought home again. Do you? Do you ever have an answer to the prayer?

Do you watch it on one side and say, I have never had any answer to prayer for years. I have answers to prayer every day, friends. And if you don't, there is something wrong with your religion. How can you go out in these dangerous days and come to the end of the day and say, well, I have had no answer to prayer.

The angels of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and have hope in his mercy. Their answers to prayer play a very important part in Christian experience.

Right here. And so it is here a little in answers to prayer. And maybe we just go from here to there.

[12 : 24] prayer. And there are little songs of praise unto the God of heaven. And if we have answers to prayer, then shall we not sing praises unto God?

praise God. I have sometimes asked in our morning worship that we might come to the end of the day to sing the doctology at the end of it.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

And so, when we've got the precept before us, and then we've got the old nature to contend with us as we go and desire to keep the precepts.

And maybe during the day we enter upon this experience that they might go. The precept says go. And we go. But then, we're not gone very far before we meet with an enemy.

[13 : 34] And we fall backwards. Not fall forward, we're moving forward backwards. And then we're broken.

All our endeavors are broken. All our determination to keep the precept in the flesh is broken. And then we're slared.

We're taken in the devil's net. And what else? What happens then? They fell down. And they're absolutely helpless.

You know, friends, one of the most difficult cases to deal with is when a person goes limp. And when you go limp spiritually, falling into the arms of Jesus Christ, you know, the devil will not be able to do much with you.

And neither will people. Because they will say, well, what do we do now? This person's just limp. And we say, you must help yourself.

- [14 : 43] And there they are, they're not helping themselves. naturally speaking, of course, this council could be well advised.
- But spiritually speaking, the only help that you will ever rejoice in is that help which comes from God.
- You may hear people saying to you, when you do fall backwards and you are broken and snared and taken, you must help yourself.
- But that's not what God says. Oh no. And the Lord will never support that universal lie. God helps them that help themselves.
- when they were bereft of help, when no men could help or give assistance, then they cried unto the Lord Most High.
- [15 : 50] The psalmist was in deep distress when he cried unto God Most High. He says, hear my cry, O God, attend unto my prayer, from the end of the earth when I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
- And then he speaks of a past visit to hear a little, when he says that thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.
- Can we look at this phrase here a little? looking back upon it as those places where God was our helper and God was our strength.
- And he did help us. Help us when the lines were cast forward before us. Now sometimes we might be instructed to follow a certain course.
- We might follow that line. Now where is that line? Just coming back to this point. Where does that line lead to?
- [17 : 14] That line leads to heaven. And what's the end of the line? The end of the line is Jesus Christ. The line may be said to be, I am the way.
- And what is the end of the way? The end of the way is Jesus Christ. Indeed, the way itself is Jesus Christ. Line upon line, learning continually by the Spirit's leadings to Jesus Christ.
- Casting our whole dependence upon him. Hoping in him. Looking to him. real religion consists in living upon Christ.
- The reason for the present death is because there are so few people that live upon Christ. But if we live upon Christ, that is, if we feel that we are united to him, and that the only life that we know is when we feel the power of that life coming down from heaven into our soul.
- Oh, how precious are the occasions, here a little, when the Spirit of God comes upon us, and we feel a liberty in prayer.
- [18 : 41] And when we feel a liberty in prayer, we feel an access unto God in prayer. prayer. We shall not forget those occasions, here a little.
- Well, now, we can look at this word here a little as being in the valley, and there a little as being in the hills. You know, one of the heathen kings mentioned in the Old Testament taught the children of Israel in the valleys.
- I think it was in the valleys first, and the children of Israel conquered. And then he said, well, if their God is the God of the, I think it was the hills first, their God is the God of the hills, but he will not be the God of the valleys, so we'll fight them in the valleys.
- But you see, God is the God of the valleys, as well as the God of the hills. And you may look over there, and you may remember your hill miser, and you may say, yes, God was the God of that hill miser.
- My soul rejoiced in God my Savior, and I lifted up my head for thanksgiving. There was a sabre of Christ upon my spirit. there was victory in my heart.

[20 : 13] A conquest had been gained through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. There, a little. And then the enemy says, but God is not the God of the valleys.

Now, the enemy may come in like a flood, and when the enemy comes in like a flood, remember this, that it must be in the valleys. If you're on high ground, you will never know anything about the floods.

But when you're low in your spirit, and in the valley, according to your feeling experience, then it is that the floods might come along. And for this reason, the word of God is expressed in beautiful terms.

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, then the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. and in that, you will prove that God is not only the God of the hills, but he is also the God of the valleys, because in the valleys, the spirit of God sets forth Christ as your defense.

Here and there can never be the same place. They may sometimes be quite contrasting places, and may be.

[21 : 38] In here and little of the valleys, you may discover more of the latter part of this verse, they might go and fall backward and be broken and snared and taken.

we find in the scriptures the Lord Jesus Christ taking his three of his disciples to the Mount of Transfiguration.

and that was a never-to-be forgotten experience. Peter was fixed with such clarity when he recalls this experience in his second epistle.

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made no unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ that were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

For he received from God the Father honor and glory when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

[22 : 53] Now then he says and this voice which came from heaven we heard we heard when we were with him in the holy mount. now that was a wonderful blessing.

When the Lord spoke to Saul of Tarsus the others heard the voice but they didn't hear what was said. But when this voice came from heaven the voice of the father speaking to his son the three disciples they heard it as well.

And they heard what was said. what a privilege what a blessing that was to those three. And we might look at that then of being there a little in that wonderful revelation of Christ to them in his glory.

And then they come to another place here a little and if you read the chapter you will find that they came down to trouble.

They came down into a lot of confusion. There was the man there with his demented son.

[24 : 19] You see all that quietness of isolation was suddenly replaced by an area of confusion that there was teaching in it.

Now you may prize your secret isolated experience as it were on the high hillside. Then you may say well like Peter did it is good for us to be here.

Yes that's true. but it would not be good to be there all the time. And in consequence whilst we might refer to that as there a little now we must come to here a little and we must come into this confused world.

Well is there anything that we that we may speak about and rejoice in in this confused world?

Yes. The same power of God that was exhibited on the Mount of Transfiguration was made known in all the confusion and the Lord Jesus healed this poor man's son.

[25 : 43] Now you see we prize those blessed experiences which shall we say are given to us in the quiet.

But let us not think that we must be in the quiet to have profit. There was a lot of teaching for these disciples and this is what they had to learn that those miracles that Jesus did came not forth but by prayer and fasting.

So we come down from our lofty experiences at whatever stage we may refer to them down to all the confusion that is in the world to find this that if we are to progress grow in the things of God there are two things which are necessary prayer and fasting and what does fasting mean it doesn't mean going without food many people have gone without food thinking that God will answer them but going without food is a comparatively easy thing to what fasting really is fasting is abstaining from the appearance of evil not just evil but abstaining from the appearance of evil and now if it is so can you trace my perhaps you've got in your spirit those things which seem to be come which come from the devil himself and you can't seem to deal with them and you say to the

Lord why could I not cast him out well this is the answer because this cometh forth by nothing except by prayer and fasting now fasting is living unto God and abstinence from that which is of the world and principally the spirit of the world I do not have to tell you that we're in the world and we have to deal with the world and we have to deal with the people of the world but if we get mixed up with the spirit of the world do we not know what an effect that has upon us and we become barren and we become distressed or because we're not fasting now the word of

God says when ye fast be not as the hypocrites be not as the Pharisees but when ye fast wash your faces that ye appear not unto men to fast a siege living unto the Lord abstaining from all appearance of evil in the things of this life is brought about by the grace it is given the grace it is given that will make us quite happy to let others go on their way you know we're bound to come in contact with people who will tell us what they're doing and what they're going to do maybe we might find a covetous spirit arising in our hearts and we say well

[30 : 12] I wish I was doing that and I wish I had that and immediately you've lost any contentment but you know if God brings you here a little a low place a valley experience perhaps in your soul yet you have Christ in your heart and you can freely say without any covetous desire and without any unkind feeling I'm content with such things as I have the world may pursue this and they may pursue that and they may seek after the satisfaction of this ambition and the other ambition I'm sure some of us will know what it is to be so content with

Christ in our heart that if we were to be offered all the world we should say no thank you no thank you I'm more than all this world can get and they may say you're miserable but you will know that you're not miserable because you have Christ in your heart and this will make fasting an easy thing yes it will you see we go back to the days of Daniel Daniel was very concerned about doing those things that he was called upon to do in the new situation after he had been carried down into Babylon now Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not define himself with the portion of the king's meat nor with the wine which he drank therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not define himself now God has brought

Daniel into favor with and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs and when Daniel made this request you see the eunuchs was greatly troubled I fear my lord the king who has appointed your meat and your drink for why should ye see he see your faces worth liking than the children which are of your sort then shall he make me endanger my head to the king then said Daniel to Melzah whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel Ananiah me Mashaal and Azariah prove thy servants I beseech thee ten days and let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink this was virtually fasting there was all there were all the bainties and nourishment that the eunuch had been instructed to give these men that they might have a good countenance and we can see the parallel in Christian experience if you do this and do that then you'll have a good countenance and the king will look upon you the world will look upon you but if you fast if I do what you say and give you fuzz and water then my life is in danger now this eunuch he agreed to prove these men for ten days then let our countenances be looked upon before thee and the countenance of the children that are that eat of the portion of the king's meat and as thou seest deal with thy servants so he consented to them in this matter and prove them ten days and what was the result and at the end of ten days their countenance says appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat now you see we may think that we must go along with the people that with whom we are and they will say you must have this now I'm not speaking in a natural way just now

I'm speaking in a spiritual way now these people Daniel and the few that were with him he was concerned about the glory of God he was concerned not to do evil the good may come and so we see the faith of Daniel when Daniel said now prove us prove us have we that kind of faith have we the precept before us have we the line before us that directs out unto Jesus Christ and as we keep our eyes fixed upon him we may have that humble confidence to say yes prayer and fasting absent abstaining even from the appearance of evil will make my flesh fairer and fatter than all that may be gained with my bearing down and agreeing to suggest to the suggestions of those that fear not God so then here a little and there a little of gracious instruction our life is to a large extent a life of instruction the Lord the Lord the Lord

God in the word of God says this I will instruct thee and keep thee I will guide thee with mine eye and so you see we're not instructed in one place but we move from place to place here and then there and if we should be instructed in one place with a gracious revelation of Christ we should be instructed in another place in regard to the importance of praying and fast in order that this instruction may be sealed home upon us this last part of the verse will be an experience that will be known that they might go and fall backward and you may say well why is this well this is the reason in order that we might know upon whom we lead

[37 : 55] I think it was this morning I mentioned those words I will go in the strength of the Lord God and that's the way we have to go now you know what men say we will go in our own strength we will pursue this course with our own wisdom but you being a follower of Christ will have to learn what it is to pray and fast and in your fasting will learn by that experience sometimes especially if you should break your fast that you will fall backward and soon be broken and spared and taken but to pray and fast that is depending upon the strength of God depending upon the wisdom of God you see if in the course of our life we have mixed with people in business and we know what they are you see their whole living is a life of lies for the most part and what is a

Christian going to do well he's got to live a life of fasting fasting and of praying praying that he might be kept fasting delivering himself from the refuges of lies that so many people may endeavor to take refuge in fasting will bring us to the truth and we shall be ready to think upon the truth and our prayer will be unto God most high what shall I do now and sometimes God will say keep silent and sometimes he will say speak now it is good when you're in God's hands to that extent and I feel I can say I know what I'm talking about here when God tells you to keep quiet and then the Lord says now speak this is the time to speak and that's all because of this abstinence from all appearance of evil you're seeking unto

God depending upon God day by day you see real religion is not something that is just taken up on Sunday morning real religion you go through day and night every day seven days a week 24 hours a day and it's a religion of fasting and it's a religion of prayer and it's a religion of walking close with God it's a religion wherein the precept is followed line upon line of direction is given and our eyes are focused on Christ and when we come to this place and then we go to that place here and there and we learn a little each time and very often we learn more in the moments when we fall backward and are broken you see if you fall backward then your pride is broken and you're cast down in a moment all your boasting has to be done away with cast aside and snared and taken but not taken absolutely in the wars that have been fought in the past there have been some that have been killed but there are others that have been made prisoners of war but prisons of war must be released when the war is over the prisons of war may undergo some very trying treatment and of course even these may sometimes die but with the children of god they may come under some severe treatment of bitter persecution their bodies may die but their soul will go to heaven here a little and dare a little the sari says this a little that a righteous man has is better than the richest of many wicked we can follow one who made this confession both not ye sons of earth nor look with scornful eyes above your highest mirth our saddest hour we prize for though our cup seems filled with gall there something secret sweet and all how harsh so e'er the way dear saviour still lead on nor leave us till we say father thy will be done at most we do but taste the cup for thou alone hast the drunty cup now in order to gain this sweetness in a time of our bitterness we shall have to know something of that tree that is cast into the bitter waters and makes those waters sweet and that tree is a tree of righteousness otherwise our lord jesus christ in his holy and pure life and in his holy and victorious death when you get a view of christ you'll be willing to pass won't be any difficulty there for you to leave the world's

deceitful short and leave it to return no more when timeon held christ in his arms he wanted to depart to go to heaven he had no desire to stay he had seen christ he had christ in his arms and whatever the lord's purpose might have been for him or for others you know christ in our arms by faith will bring us to that place it may be here a little it may be there a little and thus it will as it were be loosing the band of this time state we shall begin to think upon heavenly things i have not seen nor heard nor have entered into the heart of men the things which god hath reserved for them that love him these things are revealed unto us by his spirit and these things reveal here a little and there a little sometimes we learn a little more of our depraved nature here a little and then we learn there a little of the riches which are in christ jesus the power of it in his blood to take away sin the righteousness which is in his life to present us without spot or blemish any success when we come to the end of our journey but we learn a little as i have already said a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked now do you know what that is because if you do then there is something to tell the sinners round what a dear saviour you have found and here again we should remember this word little little we do not have to wait until we go along experience you see there is a great mistake in the present day which is quite different from the teaching of scripture when the disciples heard the preaching when men heard the preaching of peter and those in the days of the apostles they believed on jesus christ and they were baptized and they came into the church there was no question of them waiting to be able to tell of some remarkable experience that would take them an hour or so to speak for we need to have a care

I know and we need to have wisdom and perception to see that that is real and that which isn't but nonetheless if the apostles couldn't keep out the hypocrites no more shall we we remember from the act of the apostles that there were those despite the scrutiny and the wisdom and the grace that the apostles had that got into the church now let us not think that if we delay a little longer then it will be made more clear that we are not a hypocrite how do we feel about Jesus Christ what think if Christ is a test to try both your state and your scheme has he given you that desire that we mentioned last

[49 : 04] Lord's day of thirsting after Christ as newborn days desire the sincere milk milk of the word do we do that well if we desire the sincere milk of the word then we sincere people and we're not hypocrites and we should desire to know what the precepts are and what we should do and we should desire to know the lines and how they're laid out for us and how we should go and we should desire also to know these tips by the way these words of instruction and of counsel and that we should desire to learn also from our foolishness and our mistakes which will cause us to cleave more fully to our Lord Jesus Christ may the Lord give us grace if there be any virtue if there be any praise think on these things
Amen Amen from