

God's watchful care as we pass from year to year (Quality: Average, incomplete)

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Date: 30 December 1992

Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

[0 : 00] Thank you so much for me, the Lord's merciful and gracious help. I venture this evening in directing your thoughts to the prophecy of Isaiah, the 45th chapter and reading verses 2 and 3.

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I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass and cut in thunder the bars of iron.

And I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

Prophecy of Isaiah, the 45th chapter and verses 2 and 3.

[1 : 39] We have come, as you would all know, to the last evening service of this year. And the Lord knows just how each one of you have come.

I often feel so thankful for that as I stand here or wherever it might be, that the Lord knows just how each one of you have come and all that is in your life.

And the Lord knows just how each one of you have come and all that is in your life. And the Lord knows what lies before every one of us here.

But I am sure of this too, that if we are among the Lord's people, one of you have come and all that is in your life. One of the evidences of this, and there are many, but one evidence of being among the Lord's people will be known in this.

You will be deeply concerned that the Lord will mercifully go before you in your life and indeed in the coming year.

[3 : 06] Maybe those here that are carrying some especial burden. It must be at least 30 years ago, when the late dear Mr. John Farley read this second verse in Stone Chapel one Lord's Day evening.

And then with myself, I was carrying the solemn exercise of the ministry. And I've been reminded of this today.

And although he knew nothing about me, and as far as I can remember, it is indeed something that I never told him.

But how the Lord so directed him that evening that he entered right, as it were, into the very exercises of my soul.

And as I look back, over many years in this, I can sincerely say that in the way that the Lord would have it to be, he has fulfilled this word in my own heart and life.

[4 : 34] And perhaps the Lord would have us to consider this or these truths in this way, this evening, as well as if he will mercifully speak these wondrous promises to, I was going to say, to every one of us here.

For the Lord knows what night before us. But surely, even in reflection, we would have to say from our heart, Lord, thou hast fulfilled these promises thus far.

I feel he has. And it has been in his own way and in his own time. But he has fulfilled them.

Well, may the Holy Spirit then descend upon our hearts. Oh, how I feel to need it. And dear friends, we all need it.

We need the descent of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts. I think again of those wondrous words that were spoken to Mary.

[5 : 53] And how often one has to plead them when the dear woman said concerning that which had been spoken to her, how can these things be?

How will they be, Lord? And you may be there this evening. It might describe your very feelings in that which the Lord has spoken to you.

And yet you know in your heart that the fulfillment of it with men, it is impossible. Now you know that it can never be only as the Lord fulfills it.

But what did the angels say to her? He said this, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee.

Oh, that it could be so. On this last Wednesday evening service in 1992. Now let us then come at once to these two verses.

[6 : 58] First of all, what more can any one of us need in the coming year than these opening words? I will go before thee.

As I said, I believe a moment or two ago, if we're really exercised, if we really fear God, if we're really concerned before him, this is our concern.

Why the very thought of another year, if our lives are spared? We know this, that unless the Lord does go before us, what hope is there for us?

What hope is there for us? We know this, that we need this, and it is one of the wills of Jehovah, the Almighty God, the Creator, and the Sustainer, both of Heaven and of Earth.

And when poor, trembling Moses, told his God that he was unable to go, oh, how he answered his God, and really he said this, Lord, send by whomsoever thou wilt, that I'll do not send me.

[8 : 23] Let me just read it, as it is recorded, in that particular chapter in the book of Exodus. You see, Moses' fear was, that if indeed he did go, the people wouldn't believe him.

And it's just like that with God's servants. And it is indeed like this, with those whom the Lord moves, to venture, to tell what the Lord has done for their souls.

And poor Moses, you see, when his God spoke to him, he said, this, they will not believe me. But what did his God say to him?

Who hath made man's mouth, or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind, hath not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou should say.

And how does he answer his God? And he said, O my Lord, send thy praething by the hand of him whom thou wilt say.

[9 : 38] And the anger of the Lord was kindled against most. Oh, you know, dear friends, there are times when we can go too far in what we may say to the Lord.

Oh, we need to be very careful that we do not go too. We need to be aware that we do not dictate to the Lord. And yet when, what I feel particularly in this moment about Moses is this, you see, the Lord, the Lord was so merciful to him in spite of how he felt.

and hasn't the Lord been merciful to us in spite of how we felt? And I feel I can say this to you this evening that he will be merciful to you in spite of how you feel.

And when Moses asked his God what he was to say to the children of Israel, he said this, tell them that I am has sent thee.

I am has sent thee. He was told to say this. And you know, dear friend, whatever might lie before us, there may be those here tonight with some particular exercise or burden.

[11 : 05] But if the Lord has said to you, I am has sent thee, then you have this divine will of Jehovah and God is speaking and he says, I will go before thee.

And you're going to need it. Oh, we need to be we need to be preserved from trying to cry between the folded leaves of divine problems.

If your heart is anything like mine, we're very prone to this. We are so foreign and so sinful that we would like to know what is going to happen tomorrow and in the days to come.

The thought comes to mind in my late dear father-in-law's home and as I began to go into it in regard to the dear lady that was to become my wife that I shall never forget seeing this verse that had been if you like written on a piece of wood with a red hot potion and it was this whatsoever the future lies let it rest God God who rails it from thine eyes he knows best now if you should go home with that this evening you'll go home this Sunday you'll go home with a word from God what so what so air the future hold and you're very concerned about it you wonder perhaps where the scene will end but what so air the future hold let it land oh you need help to do this you need grace to do this cast thy burden upon the

Lord and he will sustain you'll never suffer the righteous to be known this great I am he's saying in his word this evening to us I will go before them and then the promises that follow here first of all is this and make the crooked places straight well do you have crooked places in your heart's experience you do you have those things you cannot understand your life I think of the word in the book of Ecclesiastes and it is spoken by God's servant and he was God's servant soren and the Lord brought him to this point consider the work of God for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked now we shall only understand such truth as this in our life as grace is given you see left to ourselves we cannot understand man's goings are of the

[14 : 14] Lord how then can a man or a woman or any young person or any child how then can a man understand his own way man's goings are of the Lord how can a man then understand his own life the old preachers used to speak about the crook in the lot and we certainly have them you may have things in your life and your path at the present time you cannot understand but think of what Solomon by the spirit declares here consider the work of God for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked but I can tell you this you never will you shall never be able to make that straight which our God has made crooked and so he goes on and he tells us why in the day of prosperity be joyful but in the day of adversity consider

God also oh think of this dear friend in your life today God also this great I am God also set the one over against the other and why to the end that man should find nothing after him you know the Lord's dealings with his people from the beginning to the end is to this end so that we shall be brought over and over again to say not unto us only not unto us but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth sake now when the Lord really brings things to pass in the lives of his people and his servants they know this and they have to say what have God rules are you there this evening if we look back over the past year in our life in the past years in our life and in that which the Lord has done for us and he has ruled us he has been merciful there are those things which we must acknowledge he has done so then the Lord says

I will go before thee and make the crooked places strike in the chapter that we read together in chapter 40 the Lord speaks in a very similar way to this every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain and then what and the glory of the

Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it and then there's another word in this same prophecy in the 42nd chapter and I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not what does that describe your case and I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not I will lead them in paths that they have not known I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight these things will I do unto them and not forsake them now in these two verses we have five words of promise the first is I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight so dear friends you're going to see this presently you may not see it this evening you may even go home and say well you said these things and you brought

God's word before us that I cannot understand the way the path that I'm in but you see the Lord is saying I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight and then there's this I will break in pieces the gates of brass I think of dear Peter God's servant in prison here you remember how Herod moved by the devil had slain James with the sword he apprehended Peter and he put him in prison though he thought that he now had God's servant but what did the Lord do for him in a different context the Lord came to him in the prison this change fell off he was told to rise up he was told to bind on his sandals and he did so and he was led out of that prison what what I was just thinking of was this they came to the iron gate that led out of the city and what happened it opened to them its own court but you but you know something more than that and so do I the

[20 : 26] Lord opened that iron gate and iron gate still yields to the touch of all mighty God surely this word here speaks like this I will break in pieces the gates of grass and do we not find in our life that from time to time we have as it were gates of grass in front of us it speaks surely of things that are impossible it speaks if we think of a gate and surely we might well think of it as being locked and yet dear friends our Jesus still has the key of David and let me remind you of this that he opens and no man can shut and he shuts and no man can open and so you see he says in his word here

I will break in pieces the gates of grass so if you feel in your heart's experience and in your life that this again describes your case the Lord says I will break in pieces the gates of grass these gates that are in the way that have struck your way the Lord is saying to you this evening I will and notice how it's worded I will go before thee and make the crooked faces straight I will break in pieces the gates of grass then he says this and surely I believe we may rightly consider in a sense that each of these words divine words of promise speak of deeper things they speak of deeper things and you may be wondering whatever lies before you you may have in your heart things this evening and truly you have to say you may well have been saying it today neither know we what to do and surely these bars of iron they speak of even greater structure and yet

I venture to put it like this your God is saying to you this evening that he will cut in sunder the bars of iron he is going to do it for you he is going to cut him some of these bars of iron you may be trembling indeed regarding this new year you may be a companion to Elisha's servant that young man and as he saw they were surrounded with that mighty host how full of fear he was what did he say to his master Elisha well he said this alas my master how shall we do and you may be there this evening but what was needed to change the scene in that young man's life well first of all this was needed prayer was needed prayer prayer was appointed to convey the blessings

God designs to give wrestling prayer can wonders do bring relief in deepest breaks prayer can force a passage through iron bars and raise gates in answer to prayer we read this the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw now if the Lord should do that for any one of us here this evening if our eyes should be open to see this that we are surrounded by the Lord's house we have found you surrounded by the Lord's house but what more can you need in this new year so the Lord says through his word this evening I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight I will break in pieces the gates of grass and cut in sunder the bars of iron but then what does he say in verse three and how is it preface and this little word and that joins verse two with verse three and

I will give thee the treasures of darkness now maybe those here this evening that are feelingly walking in darkness you may feel to be shut up in prison and let me just remind you that when the Lord came to be a Peter in that prison what do we read that a light shine in the prison let me just have it as it is recorded in that twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostle because there we have the very word of God himself and behold the angel of the Lord came upon him and a light shined in the prison you know sometimes the Lord sees fit that his servants and his people must walk in darkness and isn't it recorded concerning

[26 : 17] Abraham that one particular time in his life he was enveloped with darkness and it was darkness that could be found how you may feel to be there this evening may feel to be shrouded in darkness and that darkness is found now when any of the Lord's people walk in darkness and sometimes it is darkness that is found I'm sure that all of us in our life I have known what it is we have gone out of our house and I think of it like this on a very dark night there's no moon and oh how dark it is and when we go out of night into darkness how dark the darkness is indeed for a few moments we cannot see anything until our eyes become accustomed to the darkness but what is the

Lord saying this may be a word for the future it may be a word for the coming year but it may also be a word of reflection in considering this past year or even the past years of our life and so the Lord says and I will give thee the treasures of darkness how can we rightly consider the treasures of darkness well in the precious words of promise that were spoken concerning Joseph the Lord said they're not only concerning the precious things brought forth by the sun but I know I haven't got it just as it's recorded there but also the precious things that are put forth by the moon and I'm sure of this

I feel I can say this from my heart that there have been times of darkness you may be in it tonight and yet the Lord is saying to you and I believe you're going to prove it I can hope perhaps the day might come when someone here tonight will come to me it may never happen but I feel this you know it might it could be there may be someone here tonight that is going to come if my life is spared and they'll say this and they may may put it like this pastor you were the servant of God to me on that last Wednesday evening service in 1992 oh I can only hope it might be so but I do know this that this is the word of God and I will give thee the treasure of darkness what does it mean the Lord is going to turn your darkness into day the night into day and out of this darkness there is going to come forth that which will glorify his holy name there is going to come out of this darkness that which you would never have known or felt only as you've been in the darkness and in the distress and I will give thee the treasures of darkness oh our

God is a sovereign in how he works we've often sung have we not God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform he glances his footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm he fearful saints fresh courage take the clouds ye so much dread are thee with mercy and shall break with blessings on your head I do want to come to this final word of promise here that is emphasized by the closing words and I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places surely one can rightly speak of this as secret exercise secret exercise did you know what I mean the

Lord knows how many of us here tonight have secret exercise that no one knows anything about not even those near and dear to you know the secret exercise of your soul you may have been carrying it for years but Lord knows these secret places and hidden riches of secret places though surely this comes to a point in the service this evening speaks to our very silence do you have secret exercise do you have that that is yet to be fulfilled have you been favoured in believing have you known a little of what dear Hannah knew in the temple on that day in her life when she wept before her God oh how she wept she was in bitterness of sorrow because there was that that she was carrying well her husband had said to her hang on

[32 : 20] I better to thee than ten sons but he didn't understand Hannah's exercise did he and you know dear friends regarding secret exercise it is something that no one else is going to understand because it's secret it's been carried before God and yet you know Hannah didn't leave the temple that day without the word of promise she didn't leave the temple that day without first embracing her Samuel in her in the arms of faith and I could only hope and pray that might be those here tonight and you'll go home like this that you might go home as it were embracing the fulfillment of this secret exercise in your very soul and that's what Hannah did and what did it do for her and what would it do for you why we read that her countenance was no more sad and if you're a favor this evening in believing whatever you may be carrying so then the Lord is saying and I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places hidden riches of secret places you know my thoughts have gone down today to the last

Wednesday evening service of 1987 and the Lord knows how I came at Eden and the Lord knew the secret exercises of myself and there is that that is yet to be fulfilled if indeed the Lord was in but what did the Lord send me with on that evening the last Wednesday evening in 1987 well he sent me with this then Laban and Bethel answered and said the thing proceedeth from the Lord we cannot speak unto thee bad or good now the Lord has taken me back today to that last Wednesday evening in 1987 and there was that secret exercise that I had then and I still got it to die but the thing proceeded from the

Lord we cannot speak unto thee bad or God and I believed I still believe but the thing proceeded from the Lord oh sometimes we have to wait to see and sometimes it may be a long time but you see the thing proceeded from the Lord now think of it then like this and I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places and why will the Lord do this and I must leave it why will the Lord do these things because of this that thou mayest know that I the Lord which call thee by thy name am the God of Israel and there you have it there you have the very secret of the whole thing these five distinct words indeed the six really in these two verses the first is I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight

I will break in pieces the gates of brass and cut in sand of the bars of iron and I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places and then there's this final word of promise that thou mayest know that I the Lord which call thee by thy name am the God of Israel and what did the Lord say what does he say as the great shepherd of his sheep he says this my sheep hear my voice I know them and they are well that may be a word for someone here tonight when the Lord found Matthew at the receipt of custom bear with me when I say this he only had to say to Matthew follow me and he left all and followed him amen in nine nine hundred and eighty nine be captive souls in fetters bound who fear your misery the way the liberty is found the son shall make you free in nine hundred and eighty nine will have five...

to thousands and hundreds of others Thank you.

[38 : 47] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[41 : 03] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you, Thank you. Oh, we feel in our heart, Lord, that thou hast spoken, and thou knowest to whom thou hast spoken.

Oh, Lord, thou hast said in thy holy word, my word shall not return unto me void. We plead that, Lord, to bless every one that he is.

[42 : 12] In the way that thou seest is needed. Lord, there are those things that we carry. There are those secret places.

And, Lord, thou knowest that there are those here tonight that have these things. And, Lord, we wait for thee to appear, to set the captives free, Lord, to bring out the prisoners from the prison house.

Oh, Lord, hear us. Do be merciful to us, as if our lives are spared, we enter into a new year.

And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be blessed. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.