

# Faith, priority and preparation (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Collier, Gilbert (1900-1984)

[ 0 : 00 ] And draw attention to a word found in the first book of Chronicles, the 26th chapter and the 18th verse.

First book of Chronicles, chapter 26 and verse 18. At Parbar, westward, four at the causeway and two at Parbar.

This may seem to you, no doubt it is, a strange text to take. And I'm going first of all to explain why I take it.

There is a tendency, which we all undoubtedly are partakers, to neglect some of the lesser known, what we might term, remote parts of the word of God.

We turn to the gospels, we turn to the epistles, or we read some of the great histories of the Bible.

[ 1 : 37 ] But the intermediate parts of God's word, we have to remember that it is all God's word. We are inclined to neglect, pass over, and pay little attention, or little study and consideration.

I want, therefore, to demonstrate this morning, how there is to be found in these somewhat remoter, I only say that from our angle and our point of view.

They are not remote in the eyes of God, who gave us the word, but we in our limited knowledge and frailty sometimes regard them in this light.

I want to demonstrate how important they are. Sometimes there is gems of truth to be found in these parts of God's word that seem, perhaps, to be unnecessary for our consideration.

Let me give you an example. In the fourth chapter, for instance, of this book, which gives us the details of the family of Judah, when we start a chapter like that and think, well, all this means is who came from and were descendants of Judah, we suddenly come upon one of the choicest characters in the Bible.

[ 3 : 39 ] And the Lord tells us about him. His name was Jabez, who had one prayer, one great, outstanding prayer.

And God answered that prayer with the blessings of his grace and his mercy. Now, you see, if we passed over that part of the word and said, well, this is genealogy only, there's nothing for us here, we should have missed one of the gems of divine truth.

And perhaps, undoubtedly, it has been the case. Many a person has been encouraged and helped and perhaps even saved by reading the account of Jabez and his prayer.

Now, that's one instance. Now, we come to a part of the word of God like this, and we read of many things, seem to be repeated again and again.

When we come to this word of our text, at Parbar, westward, four at the causeway and two at Parbar, we ask the question, what is it all about?

[ 5 : 02 ] What does it all mean? What does the word of God intend us to understand by these words? I want, therefore, to try and demonstrate to you this morning that we have here quite a number of things, really, that are very precious and important.

We have here an illustration of the ordered plan of God for the worship of his people.

That's one thing we have here. Illustration. We shall try to follow that illustration through its significant features this morning.

Then we have three great things here, too, which demonstrate the wonderful character of David himself and the mighty nature of his faith and his spiritual experience.

And we shall look at that in three different ways this morning. First of all, in his perception, his informed visualization of something that had not as yet to him been brought about.

[ 6 : 53 ] And secondly, we shall see how he puts a firm priority on the right thing.

And then, thirdly, we shall see what preparations he made for that which he visualized and perceived by God-given faith.

But let us find out what this place is, Parbar and its causeway. Well, you may know, or may not, that where the temple of God was built in Jerusalem, eventually by Solomon, it was built on a mountain, 2440 feet above the Mediterranean Sea, which was really a high mountain, and to which there was no access, no real easy access.

And it was there that God designed and planned his temple to be built. I want to take you and lead you this morning into the wonderful preparation that God made for the building of that temple.

How it was all brought about. Who was used in the planning of it. And what methods God adopted in making sure that his temple was built on this promontory in the midst of Jerusalem, which was almost inaccessible, almost impossible to reach.

[ 9 : 02 ] A strange place to have a house of God built. In a place where it would seemingly be almost impossible for any worshipper to come and worship in that place.

Now let us think, first of all, how did it all come about? Well, we go back, first of all, very early on in the life of man and we find that there was a day when God said to Abraham, Abraham, take now thine only son and offer him up for a burnt offering in the place, mark that, in the place that I will tell thee.

And Abraham, who then lived somewhere near Beersheba, started up early in the morning to go to find that place that God had indicated.

He was to build an altar and offer up his own son, Isaac. And he went and God showed him after three days' journey, he showed him the place.

He could see it there before his eyes. A mountain. And it was called the Mount Moriah. And it was there that Isaac was, the altar was built and Abraham was prepared to offer up Isaac on that altar.

[ 10 : 40 ] Now that's the first mention of this place. Well then, we read how David came in the latter part of his life to have a strong, earnest desire.

He thought of himself as living in a very nice, beautiful house, palace, built of cedar trees.

Very commodious, very suitable for a king to live in. And then he comes to think of this. Where is God's dwelling place?

Where is the ark that God had caused Moses to make? And where, he said, he would commune with his people from off that ark, that mercy seat?

Where is it? And David had to recognize that it was still in a tent. more or less hidden away.

[ 11 : 59 ] And only just visited occasion. And David was greatly troubled about this. He thought of himself, his own comforts, his own commodity, and all the suitable things in which he dwelt and lived and possessed and enjoyed.

And he said, he called God's servant Nathan, he said, I have a great desire, a great wish in my heart, and that is to build a house for my God.

God. And Nathan said, thought indeed at first, that it was a very excellent idea and purpose.

And he said, it's good for thee to have this desire in thy heart. But before very long, the Lord came to Nathan, and he said, go back to David, and say to him, thou shalt not build me a house.

So David's desire and wish that was so prominent in his heart was all brought to nothing by God.

[ 13 : 25 ] God sending a message to him to tell him that he should not build a house for the Lord. And God gave him the reasons for it.

He'd been a man of war, he'd shed a great deal of blood in his lifetime in fighting the battles of Israel. And also David, though God did not mention this, David had many sins upon him, grievous things, blocks in his mind and memory.

But God said, thou shalt not build me a house, but the son that shall rise out of thine own vows, he shall build me a house. I will be with him, I will give him wisdom, and he shall build me a house.

And God went on at that time, through his servant, to speak words of blessedness to David, and assure him that he would have a place among the people of God forever and ever, and the Lord would bless his house forevermore, and he would be with his fathers, and enter into the glory of God.

Wonderful testimony by God at this particular time in David's life, about David's own salvation, and David's future, and ultimate entrance into the kingdom of God.

[ 15 : 12 ] Now what happened? God did not say where his house was to be built by Solomon, but he was to show David where it was to be built, and this is how he showed it to him.

David was left for a brief moment, and in that brief moment when David was left, he had pride rise up in his heart, and he desired to number the children of Israel to see what a great nation he reigned over as king.

And that displeased God, and God sent a terrible plague upon the whole of the people of Israel. And David was so distressed, and he said, I only have sinned.

repented, and he repented of his sin, of numbering the people. And when God saw that David was repenting earnestly so, he stopped the plague.

There was an angel of the Lord, and the angel of the Lord stood on this very mount, the Mount Moriah, with the sword drawn in his hand.

[ 16 : 39 ] And David had to go up to that mount, and he had to buy the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusite, which he did for full price.

And when he had bought it, the plague was stayed, the angel of the Lord put up his sword, and the angel said this, note this, this shall be God's house, this place where thou hast built an altar, and where the plague has been stayed that fell upon my people, this shall be the house of God.

And so God told David, in a time of real trouble, he told David where the house of the Lord would be.

He was not to build it, but he told David where it should be built. Now what does David do? From that very moment, he set as the very foremost thing in his life, and in his heart, and in his mind, the building of that temple.

He knew he would never do it. He would never see it built. he realized this, but he went out as if he was the only builder.

[ 18 : 13 ] He went out to prepare for it with all strength and might and all the powers that he had at his possession to provide for the building of this temple, which was to be built on this particular place.

And David could see this. And this is one of the first things I want to speak about, the wonderful perception of David, the informed visualization of his heart and mind.

Now, I said it was informed because no doubt whatever that God had instructed him, given him a faith to see clearly what would be done eventually, though David would never see it himself.

He had a very clear conception of what would take place eventually. Now, that demonstrates to us something of great importance, a power to visualize.

eyes. You know, my dear friends, it's a wonderful thing when God gives his people such faith to see what will be, what must be, to have a little sight.

[ 19 : 54 ] We shall not have the complete view, like David never had any view of this temple, but he could see it. He could see its formation.

He could see it rising up on this Mount Moriah, on this place which was called Zion at length. He could see it, all the magnificence of it, because he had faith to believe God would fulfill what he had promised.

and this temple of the Lord should indeed be built. Now you know, people have no idea, no visualization, no perception whatsoever of things that God has promised.

And that means to say they do not believe really in his promises. But if you believe in the promises of God, you will have some perception that they will be fulfilled.

You may not know when they will be fulfilled, but you may be sure of one thing, fulfilled they will be in God's own time and way and manner.

[ 21 : 13 ] Now that's a very great thing, it's of mighty comfort to the heart, and it produces confidence in the believer to have perception that God will perform what he promises.

You know there's a very wonderful woman in the book of Proverbs, 31st chapter, and it says this about that woman, she perceiveth that her merchandise is good.

If you look in the margin, you'll see this, for that word perceiveth, there's another word introduced, and that is tasted. she tasted that her merchandise is good.

Now there's something that we need to ponder just for a moment. If we, not just merely thinking wishfully about the future, but tasting.

And the taste is a very important feature or function with our bodies, you know. it has a great deal of effectual consequence in our daily life and in our experience, the taste.

[ 22 : 36 ] And the word of God says, oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Now I believe David, he could perceive, he could really taste the fulfilling promises of God in respect to this temple that he could see.

And why did he want this temple to be raised up so dearly and so earnestly? because it represented the worship of God.

That was the reason. Now, what does this parba mean then and this causeway? Well, the word parba means the precinct.

So David could see then, visualize the precinct, the entrance into this temple. But David realized there was no way to the temple.

How could it be built? You see, round this mount, 2,400 odd feet high, there was a deep ravine, almost unbridgeable.

[ 23 : 47 ] And only those people like Ornan and others who could take their time and use what methods they might, could possibly reach that top, that summit of this mountain.

well then how will worshipers to come to the temple? How is it to be built? No stones could be carried to this great high place.

Well, David could see this, there was a necessity for a causeway. causeway. And this causeway was eventually built to provide an access to this mountain so that the temple stones could be gathered together and the temple itself be built.

and then afterwards it was the main thoroughfare for all worshippers to come to the house of God and enter into the precincts.

You see, David could visualize all this and he not only could visualize the thing being done constructively, but he could visualize the entrance being made of worshippers into the house of God.

[ 25 : 12 ] And consequently he places, and I want you to notice this, we shall deal with it later on, but he places four of these porters at the causeway and two at the precincts.

You see, this chapter is a chapter which deals with David's provision. We're rather anticipating our subject this morning, I won't go further into it than that, but it's a numeration and an appointment of those who should be porters, who should take up a very important position in the final fulfilment of the building of the house, the temple of the Lord.

But I want us just to dwell upon this point, how important it is to really be able to visualise what God promises to his people.

That's a very great thing, very needful thing. When we come to pray, for instance, God's prayer, we do not want just to make a few sentences and express a few words and then forget all about it.

We want to visualise by faith God's answering our prayers. prayers. We want to look for it, as Paul says to the Ephesians, he says, waiting, he says, by all prayer, supplication, in the Spirit.

[ 27 : 02 ] He goes on to speak of the waiting for the fulfilment, for the answers to prayer, those who pray unto the Lord.

That's a very important part of prayer, to wait to see how and when the Lord will answer. That's visualisation, you see.

We believe then that our God is able to do what we ask him to do. We believe he hears our prayers. This morning in our reading, we were reading in the third chapter of Peter, and there comes this word in that chapter, his ears are open unto their cries.

And you know, that struck me wonderfully this morning. His ears are open to their cries. My cries, I thought that my poor cries, the Lord's ears are open to hear them.

They're always open to hear them. And he will hear them, and it's a wonderful thing to visualize that he does hear and will hear, and to believe that he will perform what he, it is his will to do on behalf of his people.

[ 28 : 28 ] Now that's the first thing we have here in regard to David. then God said, through the angel, he said to him when he was on that mount, he said, this is the altar of the threshing floor of Ornan.

This is God's house. Told David that very clearly, and David, as I said just now, knew from that moment that that was the place that God had chosen, selected, for him, for his house to be built.

Now secondly, we have David's priority, his great insistence on priority in his life.

First things, and there's one great outstanding feature with David, in spite of all his faults and failings and sins, there was one thing that was always very prominent with him, and that was the priority of God's worship, and of paying heed to God's holy word, and in recognizing that the first thing to seek after was to do the will of God.

Those were priorities with David. Now, it's an important thing, important thing, this is one thing that comes out of this sort of text, remote though it may seem to be.

[ 30 : 21 ] You see, David could see this, there was one great thing in God's worship, and that was the conduct of people to that worship, and therefore he says there shall be four porters at the causeway, two at the precincts.

He saw then that the first order, first priority, must be the arrival of people to the house of God for worship.

Now, my dear friends, how do we come to the house of God for worship? Do we rush here? Do we come thoughtlessly? Do we think, well, long as we are here, that's all that matters?

We've at least done what we've usually set out to do on the Lord's Day. We go to the house of prayer, we join in the services, we sing the hymns, and we listen to prayer, and listen to the minister preaching, and that is all.

That's not the priority. The priority of worship is to worship God, and to be prepared for that worship. How much do we really seek to prepare ourselves for the worship of God?

[ 31 : 47 ] Do we come here, rush in, sit down in our seats as if we're almost out of breath, glad to be there just in time, and is there any real preparation?

Have we made it a priority in our lives, worship of God? These are very important questions, we ought to put them to our conscience, moments, and we see in the word of God so many examples of priority being placed by God's people as it should be placed in a prominent position, first and foremost, in their minds and in their hearts.

things, and as the Lord Jesus Christ taught us in the words that we read of his this morning, seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

He goes into things that men put so often first of all, their food, their clothing, their health, their wealth, all these kind of things, they stand so prominently in men's minds, and it seems almost as if there's nothing to be considered in their company whatsoever.

But Christ has none of these things. Take for instance the grass in the fields, or the flowers in the fields, the lily for instance, the most beautiful of all God's creative plants and flowers.

[ 33 : 40 ] He said they, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these, and yet these things all owe their beauty, their existence, their continuation to God.

They all owe to him the field, the birds in the air, the beasts in the field. They all owe their subsistence to God, and not one of them can fall to the ground without God knowing it.

Then how much more, he says, are ye more valuable, in the eyes of God that is, than these things? Then how foolish it is for man to make priority out of his daily needs and his trifling things.

Put ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. You know, it's a great principle, it's a principle that works, it's a principle that you will come up against in your lives, undoubtedly, and you'll find that those who pay attention to it, like David did, and regard it as the first all essential thing, the seeking after God's glory and honour, is a priority that we cannot avoid, and we should never seek to avoid for one moment, but to maintain and persist earnestly in our lives.

Then, I see the time has gone, I was going to go, perhaps I can just speak a word or two about the third point, and that is David's preparation for this temple.

[ 35 : 40 ] As soon as David knew that God intended a temple to be raised up where it should be raised up, as soon as David knew that, he began to lay himself out in the preparation for it.

And just let us look, look, if you turn to the 26th chapter, the 20th, I'm not quite sure of which chapter it is, but it's one of these chapters in the book of Chronicles, you'll find what David told Solomon he would do, and was doing, to prepare for this temple.

He was to be laying aside gold, and iron, and nails, and joinings, and brass, and then he was to lay aside also a hundred thousand, just listen to this, a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a million talents of silver.

Now, one talent, and you young people who are right up in mathematics, you can work this out.

One talent is worth something like twenty-five thousand pounds, and David, gathered together a hundred thousand of these talents, talents of gold, as preparation for the building of the temple, and a million talents of silver, and a talent of silver is something like fifteen hundred pounds, things.

[ 38 : 01 ] So, you can see the prodigious preparation of David for this temple. What he virtually did was to impoverish himself in order to provide for the worship of God.

Now, that's a remarkable illustration of a man's devotion to the outward things, at least, for God's honour and for his glory.

He expended himself. He had never a sight of this temple, he never was to see anything of it, but he could visualize it by precious faith, and this is one of the things that come out so clearly in our text, as we look deep into it.

He could see this place, he had it in his eye, so to speak. The plan of it was as clear to David as if it had been already built, a temple, and he could see the temple, and how they would need helping hands, and he places these helping hands in the very rightful place for their assistance and their comfort, at Parbar westward, four at the causeway, and two at Parbar.

Well, my friends, you may see, may think this has been a strange discourse this morning, but my purpose is to show how even in these remoter parts of God's word, there are sometimes wonderful gems of truth, and things that are needful for our observation, meditation, and I hope this word may be for our good, and the glory of God.

[ 40 : 12 ] Amen. Amen. 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.

[ 42 : 49 ] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Praise the Lord, dear Lord, and praise the King of the Lord.

O Lord Jesus, we beseech thee to look upon us in thy mercy. O Lord, grant us help that we may be zealous for thy glory, and seek thy praise, and seek to worship thee with all due reverence and godly fear.

And may thy name be honoured and glorified by our works and our ways. May the grace of the Lord Jesus, will love of God the Father, the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with us now and always.

Amen.