

Being steadfast as one of the Lord's labourers

(Quality: Very good)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 August 2010

Preacher: Crowter, Harold (1923-2011)

- [0 : 00] As I close this morning, I intimated that I was between two considerations relative to this evening's service.
- I feel, looking back, that a key was given to us this morning relative to the Lord choosing the means which he used to enter into Jerusalem on the colt of an ass.
- And that never man had sat on that ass, ass's colt, never had any experience of similar to the experience that the Lord was about to give it as he mounted on the ass and travelled into the city.
- But it was perfectly controlled. It was perfectly controlled. No man had had any connection, as it were, with that exercise in the life of that untrained colt of an ass.
- But under the controlling power of the Lord, it did just what was required of heaven in respect to the Lord's entry into the great city Jerusalem on such a mean animal as an ass's colt.
- [1 : 38] And then when the disciples were sent by the Lord, the disciples were sent by the Lord to go and find the colt.
- The colt was just with its mother where the Lord told him it would be. And they went and found it exactly conforming to the means of conveyance that were to be used.
- But the colt and its mother belonged to some people. And for the disciples to go and just take it and take it away was stealing, as it were, the ass and its colt from the ownership.
- But the Lord had gone before. He made these two, these people, in one of the accounts. And remember, the account is in the four gospels of this incident in the life of Christ.
- It was the owners of the colt subscribed absolutely to the disciples taking the colt for the use of the master.
- [3 : 03] The Lord, he reigns in the hearts of people. He makes people willing to do what he decrees they should do. My friends, he's the king of kings and he's the Lord of lords.
- We see mountains in the attitudes and regular exercises of fallen humanity. But these things are nothing before our God.
- And that history is beautiful when we think of that untrained beast going toward Jerusalem with Christ on its back covered with the garments and so forth.
- And then they were cutting down the branches of the trees in the way. That animal just continued steadily on, steadily on in the way of God.
- Nothing could hinder it. Nothing could upset it. It was under divine control. And my friends, there's a security and there's a capability in the absolute control.
- [4 : 18] You and I sing sometimes. And do we really stop and think what we're singing? Not a single shaft can hit until the God of love sees fit.
- God over all, the hearts of all men, every animal under the sun, so to speak, is all subject to the power and purpose of him who created the earth for his own glory.

And by these strange and devious means, he promotes his glory, especially in the hearts and lives of his people. He led them forth by the right way that they may go to a city of habitation.

The history, it's wonderful to meditate on these things that seem so contrary to nature, contrary to the expectation of our natural mind.

My friends, God's not in bondage to the expectation of our limited understanding. He doeth as he will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

[5 : 40] None can stay his hand or say unto him, What doest thou? Your employers are the servants of God who must act according to the will of God, that the will of God for you personally shall be positively attended to.

Oh, what peace there is when faith is given to us to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and to lean not to our own understanding.

Now I'm coming to the point of this evening's discourse which was laid on my mind and I didn't know how much further to go on with the meditation, but to leave that morning subject with you to prayerfully consider and reconsider because it's a wonderful history of the reign of our Lord over all things causing things to act and decide and do just as he wills in the animal world as well as the human structure of our society or it in and subject to his power.

Well now this evening my mind has been in the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians if you wish to look up in your Bible the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians and the last verse in that chapter verse 58 in the 15th chapter of the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians and it reads thus therefore my beloved brethren be ye steadfast unmovable always abounding in the work of the Lord for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord God it's a wonderful privilege to be used of God what an honour was bestowed upon the

Assis cult what an honour it is to be instrumental in the hand of God to the promotion of the glory of Christ the setting forth of the truth as it is in him while we walk out our life in this world ye are my witnesses we say well yes the Assis cult was a witness a witness the Lord made it do what he willed he caused things to come to pass as he decreed everything was part of the perfect pattern that existed that I mentioned this morning between his conception in the womb of the virgin and the ultimate time when he bid farewell to his disciples when he ascended to the right hand of the father where he now is at this moment of time the world is for the Lord and for his glory he made it and by his glory it will further the promotion of his cause till his work on earth is done but he grants a special place in his councils for his people to do his bidding to do his pleasure and the text suggests to our mind that there is in a personal way life to be lived an exercise of witness to be showing forth and ultimately to come to the end of

[10 : 57] God's decree for us and through us when as those who are blessed with his saving grace shall find their place in his presence in glory and it is essentially a great concern to the people of God that they should live according to the will of him who separates them from the general run of human life mankind and causes them in various ways to be his witnesses in their day and generation and this evening I want to just touch on this theme therefore my beloved brethren be ye steadfast unmovable always abounding in the work of the

Lord the Lord has a special purpose to accomplish in the hearts and lives of his people he sets them apart in the councils of his covenant this people have I formed for myself they shall show forth my praise now we read in our lesson of those three eminent characters who were called upon in a very very terrible way to experience the sufficiency of God to separate them and to equip them with grace sufficient to come into the pathway of trial such as you and

I am almost incapable of conceiving what it must have been to go step by step through that experience under the wretched pride and power of Nebuchadnezzar who created that situation under the permissive will of God to create a set of circumstances that exposed those men to a need of God's help and that they may bear a living and abiding testimony to the sufficiency of God's grace to stand in the evil day and having done all to stand my friends

Shadrach Meshach and Abednego were such men as you and I such men they were mortal life was precious to them is there anything more naturally speaking that is precious to us than life itself all that a man hath will he give for his life says the scripture oh and these men and we know there are others we've got it in our national history how these dear martyrs were made willing to expose themselves in obedience to God in desire for the glory of God they were willing to endure what seems to be an impossible confrontation of the powers of evil to cause them to detract from the narrow path and to rescind as it were their faith and religion and become as it were unbelievers with the rest of lost mankind the trial of your faith which is much more precious than of gold that perisheth if it be tried with fire shall be found unto praise honour and glory at the appearing of

Jesus Christ and my friends I'm here this evening with this subject before me to say if you're a Christian your faith God gives you will be tried it will be tried faith though the smallest shall surely be tried God given faith is a conquering grace this is it which overcometh the world even our faith the the the grace of Shadrach Meshach and Abednego in a foreign land subject to a man who had the world at his feet Nebuchadnezzar at that particular time and he could call all these honourable and powerful personalities in his kingdom to come together and give to them a command that whosoever heard the music was to fall down and worship the idol that he has made and my friends there were masses of them that did it all their life meant so much to them that they were willing as it were to forfeit all honour or respect character and submit themselves but there were these three men strengthened by the good hand of the

[17 : 28] Lord God upon them and they couldn't for any price couldn't for any price fall down at the command of the king and pay obeisance to the image that he had made oh my friends have you ever faced an issue where you've had to say whatever the cost I can't do that conscience won't let me the pressure is great sometimes the issues are tremendous not only in a personal way but in a way that will affect very intimately those that are near and dear to you and that they will hold in jeopardy some of those things that are exceedingly precious in that while you feel conscience before God is the prime consideration well some of your friends are not as loyal as they could be blessed be

God if you're left with one or two that understand you and sympathize with you and pray for you who will stand with you and be identified as a real friend but others they fall away and seem to cool off and the question rises in your mind were they ever real friends despite all their fruits and efforts to be friendly in days that have passed now there have been and there ever will be while the church of God exists under the determinate counsel of God the proving of his people and sometimes makes you shudder almost to think of a probability but it makes you tremble as to think what could be if the

Lord permitted some of those things that you can see exist if he permitted them to come to pass according to your fears you think well however could I stand whatever whatever would be my attitude if the Lord did not hear my cries and strengthen and help me through but look my friends the Lord is the helper of the helpless the Lord hears the cries of the destitute the Lord answers the prayers of his people however far off they might feel themselves to be the ends of the earth if we may use that expression a witness to the power of prayer reaching the ear of God from most unlikely situations and most strange and difficult circumstances you think of

Daniel in the lion's den to still think about the book from which I'm speaking yes just think of that dear man being thrown into a den of lions but the Lord was there and then we think of these three Hebrew brethren the king Nebuchadnezzar was given sufficient vision of the reality of the situation not to just see the three that had been thrown into the fire but he said I see one fourth like unto the son of God and my friends that's consistent with the covenant purposes of God toward his people I will be with that the Israel passing through the fires you may feel this is such a threatening situation that it will be the end of me in some spiritual ways it may be the making of you it may have just the opposite effect because it will give you an illustration as those dear men were given an illustration of God's power over the fire that it couldn't hurt them he couldn't do them any harm at all even the smell of fire was wanting according to the testimony surrounding them it was a perfect and full deliverance and my

God my God my God is able my God is able when he brings his people into the fire it's always always ultimately for his own glory and for their advantage the apostle Paul strikes the note when he says for we know that all things work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to his purpose God is not careless about the situation naturally or spiritually when he brings his children into the experience of the furnace of tribulation my friends it is a calculated experience with limits imposed by a God who is all wise almighty and able to set bounds even to the sea that on the seashore the seas come to a halt and do not pass over the sands do we really believe this do we really believe that this is the

[24 : 20] God we're here together tonight to worship a God in control showing himself that natural the natural familiarity of human reason must from time to time give place to the superior counsels of him who reigns and reigns and reigns forever the Lord God omnipotent reigneth well now let me just put a few thoughts together as the Lord may help me therefore my beloved he says before the but thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ when we're left to ourselves and our own finite incapacities and our manifold fears we see troubles where no trouble is sometimes by the enlargement of our imagination but my friends it has a limit and the limit is controlled by the

Lord himself well now thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory you think of those three Hebrew brethren they knew what victory was didn't they when they were brought by the king out of the fire and the testimony went forward that we've read in our lesson this evening they were as free ultimately of all effects of the fire as they could have been before they went into the fire for everything associated with them the only thing that they had as it were to testify through that which they had passed was that they got an experience of the wonder of God they'd got an experience that King Nebuchadnezzar he never knew anything about and although he was compelled in his witness to testify of the reality of their deliverance yet it didn't mean to him what it did to them oh no it's the personal experience of God's deliverance that makes us rejoice in the

Lord and builds us up in our most holy faith and strengthens us as it witnesses to the gospel as we live our lives here below let me ask a question are you without any experience of the intervention of God have you nothing to look back over life and realise when your fears were slain and your hopes realised what the children of Israel experienced when they went through the Red Sea as upon dry land yes they got personal experience yes unitedly as a nation because God was blessing his Israel nevertheless they all had this in common they could witness the Lord's power the Lord's sufficiency the elements giving place as it were to the determinate decrees of our

God now therefore my beloved brethren be ye steadfast oh hold on looking heavenward living as it were with the scripture very positively in your heart commit thy way unto the Lord trust also in him and he will bring it to pass cast thy burden upon the Lord he will sustain thee he will never suffer the righteous to be moved God is not a historical being that had to do with the ancients recorded in the record of his holy word his holy word is relevant to the present moment of time and will be as relevant tomorrow as it is today if there's anybody in my congregation this evening who's worried about tomorrow who wonders what's going to happen what somebody might say or what somebody might do or what may happen in the family what may happen in the firm or what may happen in the nation or what may happen in the nations of the universe my friends it's not under men's control it's under the control of the

King of Kings and Lord of Lords therefore my beloved brethren be ye steadfast oh the world sinks in to confusion and carries with it all sorts of alarming possibilities things that they fear will happen never will happen because God decrees otherwise you and I have got an imagination you and I have a mind that's subject to a certain degree to temptations from the evil one who seeks to sow discord between our souls and our God who brings in all sorts of considerations as it were to tempt us that the word of

[31 : 03] God is a lie and his lies are the truth he turns the world upside down he's as it were the power from beneath but our God is the power from above be steadfast unmovable there's there's a tenacity in real religion that I was going to use a silly expression it doesn't make people jelly babies does it it makes them strong in the strength of him who is the foundation of their trust and their hope for time and for eternity because he's a God who cares for his people now and will not give them over into the hands of their enemies but preserves this people unto himself here below and in the glorious and eternal hereafter he that hath made my heaven secure will hear all good provide while

Christ is rich I can't be poor what can I want beside be ye steadfast be ye steadfast unmovable this God is our God forever and ever will be our guide even unto death I don't want a religion that as it were deals with the peripherals of human relationship I want a God who I feel is my best friend my best friend who is able to do far more exceeding abundantly than any other friend I could possibly have that's got absolute control over everything sinner and saint and the power of the devil is limited to his permissive will my friends be ye steadfast all faith believes in

God and it believes in God to the saving of the soul that's the greatest difficulty that confronts us at any point of time if God could save our souls from the just penalty of our sins and make a way of deliverance by his own wisdom and power and love and testimony all our sins should be blotting out this God can solve every comparatively weaker problem that confronts us be ye steadfast we need in this day look the pressures are tremendous I just want to touch one or two things I've mentioned the devil you know he's sowing seed by the handful he's throwing it around in high places as well as low places in our society and we're becoming progressively alien to the truth that made our country great it's not a characteristic that we can lawfully lay claim to that we are great

Britain but look at our little portion on the face of the globe and think we became a world and still are to a great degree a world power a world power maintained us in the face of all our enemies the devil using the powers of Nazism in our lifetime look at the awful French wars that there were when Napoleon and others were obviously desiring to overthrow us and you go back to the Spanish Armada and other facets of national history and my friends we appeared to have no real friend did we in the intimate sufficiency to give us any promise of being what we are it was

God that did it the God of the past is what we need in the present and oh if only God would turn the hearts of our nation back again to himself I believe we should witness universally miracles of deliverance from the condition and position that's bringing so much trouble to our national outlook at the present time you say well you're like a voice in the wilderness well I believe I've got an authority for saying what I am saying because God is in heaven and he ruleth among the nations of the earth none can stay his hand or say unto him what doest thou well now the exercise of my mind relative to this evening service was all the need of consideration be steadfast unmovable oh my friends the threatening influences and the threatening attitudes are such that the church of God seems to be like a sinking ship but it never will finally sink because the

[37 : 28] Lord God omnipotent reigneth hold on hold on be steadfast unmovable always abounding in the work of the Lord don't be ashamed of your position and your faith I don't mean to say you want to go out on every street corner and shout aloud what is in your heart to bring comfort and hope to your mind but my friends as an opportunity is afforded to you don't be careless and let it pass God's honour and glory calls upon us with high and present and aptitude of the present situation be steadfast unmovable always abounding in the work of the Lord you never know sometimes what one word from a believing heart will do in the heart and life of another person if God owns it and God's blessed it'll prosper and nothing in that person whatever they've been and however far off they seem to be from agreeing with your judgment if God works through your instrumentality in their hearts they'll have to be changed they'll be a different person with a different attitude and you may find that some of those that have been chief persecuted become real supporters of your belief in the

God of the Bible to be the only God that is worthy of the worship of all creatures including mankind now I must look at the clock oh it's gone let me just repeat therefore my beloved brethren be ye steadfast always abounding in the work of the Lord for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord sometimes a little all all leavens the whole lump I don't think the church is yet so minished and brought low that its influence is negated and there's nothing more we can do but to draw our oars into the boat and go with the tide my friends if God is on our side we've got more for us than ever can be against us and may the

Lord bless his church and all of us that constitute a professing part of it with a spirit of prayer that God will appear for us making the crooked things straight and the rough places plain and give us in future history a testimony that the God of our fathers has risen again as the God of a succeeding generation on which to bestow a deliverance that carries the hallmark of heaven and vindicates the profession of his people though the world around them may despise them and ridicule them now I've said what I've said the only way anything I can ever utter that shall prosper needs the blessing of

God oh that God would bless his word and forgive all that I've said amiss amen had they