

Signs and exercises from the Lord (Quality: Good, quiet)

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- [0 : 00] I had to look it up my friends. You see, as tries me, the Lord comes at the eleventh hour often.
- Sometimes it seems like the twelfth hour. But the words that have just come to me are to be found in Judges 6.
- And verse 39. Judges 6, verse 39. In complete dependence upon the Lord.
- I have to put that in. We have venture with this verse. And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me.
- And I will speak but this once. Let me prove, I pray thee, that this once with the fleece.
- [1 : 13] Let it now be dry only upon the fleece. And upon all the ground. Let there be dew.
- What actually came to my mind was the proving by Gideon.
- Or the proving by the child of grace. You see, the child of grace. God of grace. Because they come into spots and places where they ask the Lord for a sign.
- A sign that it is from the Lord. God of grace. Now, you will prove as you come into these trials.
- That there are so many voices which say, Lo here.
- [2 : 22] And lo there. And there are so many things within your own heart. Where whilst you are praying to the Lord.
- You say, work this way Lord. Work that way. You see, you work it all out. Am I a stranger to you?
- Do you know what it is to come into vital, experimental exercise before the Lord in the things you walk in in this life.
- And also, and more important, in your spiritual life. But here we are.
- We've got this text. And I don't know why it's come. I do hope. I do pray to the Lord that there's a purpose in these things.
- [3 : 29] And, you know, the beginning of Gideon's exercise was when the Lord spoke to him, wasn't it?
- And if I can just turn on this, you see. He was going about his ordinary affairs of this life.
- And he was working for his living like you and me. And then suddenly the Lord came unto him.
- And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.
- And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And he goes on and he speaks to the Lord.

[4 : 35] The Lord hath now forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the Lord looked upon him and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites.

Have I not sent thee? Now, have you in your life come into a place such as Gideon came into?

I'm not speaking on terms of, as in Gideon's case, but you see, the vital experience of the child of grace.

Can you go back to a spot and a place in your life where the Lord spoke to you? You say, I would that I could.

I can't see at times, I just cannot see, says the soul, where the Lord has ever spoken to me, to me personally.

[5 : 57] Let's have a look at that case for a little while, if the Lord will help us. Now, there's a secret in vital godliness.

And I, you know, in the preaching, there are times when I fear to declare that which is in my heart.

Why, you say, because of the fear of man. But I hope, I didn't realize it, it was in that hymn which we just sung.

God is love.

God is love. Not as is often being spoken of with no reverence, with no concern.

[7 : 29] God is love. But you see, here in Gideon's case, you see, he looked upon the children of Israel suffering under the hand of the Midianites, and how they felt that the Lord had forsaken them.

Now, why am I saying this? Because so often, in the experience of a child of grace, they feel that the Lord has forsaken them.

And they feel, they feel that God is not a God of love. For the Lord has gone out, the hand of the Lord has gone out against them.

But you see, in that case, in that affliction which they're under, whether it's a bodily affliction, I'll deviate a little while, a news reached me concerning some of the people, the young people that attend chapel, that they've got a desire in their heart to know the Lord's seeking souls.

I know it from the conversation I've had with them, seeking to know him.

[9 : 19] And I know of one particular case where they bought a house and they hoped, they prayed to the Lord, they sought the Lord, earnestly that he would direct them to a home.

And they hoped the Lord chose a house for them. Why am I on this? I do not know. But you see, in this, they hoped, and they actually told me that they hoped the Lord found a house for them.

I wanted to say to them at the time, beware. Why? Because everything, I would say everything, I've walked in, in vital godliness, or vital exercise between myself and the Lord.

There has been a balance. There has been a ballast. There has been a ballast. There has been a ballast. And you see, it says in Proverbs, doesn't it?

I think it's in Proverbs anyway, or in Ecclesiastes. We'll leave that. But you see, that you'll find here the day of prosperity and the day of adversity.

[10 : 59] When they told me these things, they were in the day of prosperity. You see, they'd trusted in the Lord. They'd sought the Lord.

And so may you. And receive an answer to your prayers. You see, the manifestation in your providential trials that the Lord has appeared for you.

And what is the reaction? You rejoice in the Lord, and you say to your friends, or you say inside, I will not mistrust him anymore.

And here you see, you come into a trial upon that which the Lord has done for you.

And what is the trial of these poor young people? They don't know whether they'll be able to manage to buy food because of the mortgage increase.

[12 : 22] Now look, now look at it. Now look at the questioning within the heart. Was this of the Lord? You hope the Lord directed you here?

You hope the Lord spoke to you? May not be in word, but the answer of the prayer in the circumstance.

Do you know what it is? Do you know what it is to come into such a case as that? And then to walk in a path of adversity in the very trial of your faith.

Can you wonder the overwhelming vision of Gideon? The Lord would appear for him.

The Lord had raised him up. He was the one chosen by the Lord.

[13 : 34] Can you see a similarity in this case of Gideon as in Moses? I am not eloquent, he said.

And what did Gideon say? I am the least of my father's house. Isn't it? Wasn't it? Oh, my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel?

Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh. And I am the least in my father's house. You see, whatever the Lord brings before you.

Now, we do not find anything concerning, I don't believe you do, anything relating to Gideon before the time he spoke, the Lord spoke to him.

But you see, the Lord prepares you. The Lord prepares you for a blessing.

[14 : 43] And the Lord prepares you for that which he has in mind for you.

Now, don't think for one moment that it's only ministers of the gospel or deacons or someone in office in the church.

Yes, it is so, but not only that, the poorest child of grace. Even one that is a nobody, if you understand my language, if it's plain to you, one that hasn't got any accomplishments or one that is not able to perform these great things, nor is anyone able to perform these great things in and of themselves.

But let's come down to the poorest. Now, the Lord may direct you to go and give one a cup of cold water.

Now, that's not beyond any of us, I hope. And what is in this cup of cold water may be many things.

[16 : 27] I'm speaking of small things, but they are great things. I visited an old person, and before I visited this old person, I made all manner of excuses.

Now, you see what I mean. I don't want to visit this person. I've got this to do. I've got that to do.

And my whole, apparently, 24 hours a day, I have to do this. Now, I've got to do this. It's necessary.

The necessity is laid upon me. And how can I spare time to go and visit this old person? And if I go and visit this old person, what will be the reaction?

Anyway, the time came, despite of all the opposition within me, that I've visited this old person.

[17 : 45] What did they say to me? I sit here lonely all day, longing and looking for a visitor.

And I hope in our conversation, this person touched something that I had walked myself in days gone by.

Not a great person in the house of God. Just one of these small ones.

And you see how the Lord may speak to you and tell you to do some menial thing.

Something which is not great. Something which has no great honor with it. But you see, now you say to me, how do I know?

[18 : 59] Now this is it. How do I know, says the soul? Whether it's of the Lord or not. We read here, we read in Gideon, how the angel of the Lord came and how he spoke to him.

You see, but you say, I haven't had anything like that. Now I tell you this, what you may have, just a prompting within.

It may be a desire springs up in your heart, just a desire, in the middle of your busyness.

Now do you understand me? In the middle of what you're doing, you have a thought concerning one, an afflicted one, and you spring up in you, in your heart, a desire to visit them.

Now if you have this, do not disobey that prompting in your heart.

[20 : 26] You see, often the Lord does not use any great manifestation.

Often he will just speak in a feeling in your heart. You see, you've taken notice.

I can tell you this, that, that carnal mind, that nature, that old nature of yours, may say immediately, yes, but I can't go today because I've got to do this and I've got to do that, I've got to do the shopping, there's something, the house needs cleaning and all of these things.

Anyway, I've got an appointment to go somewhere and everything. That, you see, now, there's a hymn somewhere that if we take not heed, we may unkindly quench the same, we may indeed.

Now, the hymn is concerning another person, but let's have another look at this, you see. I hate the sins that made thee mourn and drove thee from my breast.

[22 : 05] Do you know what I'm afraid of in my own case? I greatly fear this because, you see, the time comes if you don't take heed to these inner promptings of the Spirit, you will find that he won't speak to you.

You may, you may disregard that inner prompting of the Spirit directing you to do such and such a thing.

and out of the very hardness of your heart, you may turn around and say, I can't do it.

You see, there's nothing to be seen. You follow me, there's nothing to be seen outside. You see, when the Lord speaks, if we can come closer into this, when the Lord speaks, you know, immediately, your old nature will turn against it.

Why, if yours doesn't, mine does. You know, you find here that your nature does not like the work of God in your heart.

[23 : 53] Why? You have to make sacrifices. But you see, immediately, you turn around to me and say, well, look at Gideon in this text.

He wanted the fleece dry, dry, didn't he? And also, he wanted the fleece wet to know if it is the will of the Lord or whether the voice of the Lord, whether the Lord had spoken to him and yet he had had an open vision, still doubted.

and you, poor soul, you may come, you may come into these things where you feel now you've had this prompt, now you had that prompting, that prompting within.

You know, I use the illustration going to visit someone, but it may be something else.

You know, the Bible is full of these cases. My mind went to Ananias, you see, when Paul, look at Paul, he's persecuting the church and the Lord said to him, go and speak to Paul, go and visit him.

[25 : 31] And what did he say immediately? I've heard much of this man. He's come here to persecute thy people.

And what did the Lord say to him? He's a chosen vessel unto me. And so on and so forth. You see, you do not know, poor soul, you do not know when the Lord speaks to you, and I'm not, I'm not saying any great person.

We don't read any more of Ananias, do we? We don't read that he was a great prophet or any of these things. He may speak to you this very morning, one of the least in the chapel.

Speak into your very heart. God, you know, I sat in the chapel sometimes, and the minister has come into cases which have got, it's got very close to me, very close to me, and I said in my heart, don't go in there, don't go in here.

something you don't want, you see, something you don't want naturally, and your flesh doesn't want it.

[27 : 24] But here we are, you see, and in these things, where is a case of giving that which you do not want to give?

But the Lord, I can tell you this, the Lord will bring you willing to give of your time, to give of your substance, and not knowing, and not seeing the outcome.

there comes something else to you, you know, and what is that? Prayer. You know, you may be on a bed, you may in the night season, literally can't sleep, and it may, the Lord may come and lay in your heart someone to pray for.

Now, bear in mind what I've said to you. He doesn't say, come, he doesn't come to you and say, pray for this person, pray for that person.

He lays a weight within your, within your soul. soul. And as he lays a burden within your soul, your very, your very heart goes out to this or that person.

[29 : 27] And you may not even be aware of their need, that you may not even be aware that they are in trouble. But, you see, you feel in your heart to pray for them.

Now, we need wisdom, don't we? Great wisdom, how to pray for those in trouble.

And why? Why do you need such wisdom? I tell you, the Lord may lay his afflicting hand upon them.

And I'm not only speaking of affliction in the body, affliction in circumstances and those things. it's all in the Bible, you know.

Remember, I told you at the beginning, concerning those young people, you would feel that you could put your hand in your pocket and give to them.

[30 : 48] But, what good would that do unless the Lord directed you to do it? You see, I've proved in my life that you may be in a trial, and I'm speaking of sanctified trials.

I haven't forgotten the text. All of these come in it, you know. In the sanctified trials, where you have been in your hearts, so full of the goodness of the Lord, he has delivered you, he has appeared for you, and you come into a path of proving of that very blessing.

blessing. Now, are we going to put our hand to the work of God in the day of adversity, and say, shield them, Lord, keep them, keep them from that path, keep them from the path of prayer?

Now, these things, they need wisdom, and we haven't got wisdom enough to know.

Do you know, they come so close, doesn't it? You don't know, you don't know how to pray, do you?

[32 : 38] You don't know how to pray in these cases, because as you come into them, as you see other suffering in them, your first reaction is to keep them away from the suffering paths.

and I'll go a step further, and that is this, if you alleviate their suffering in your own strength, against the purposes of God, you will find this, that they will go into another trial, trial, the same trial, because the Lord is determined to bring them into that place where they will have a blessing indeed, and what about you?

Stand on one side. Our God is a consuming fire, and I tremble at times.

I have witnessed of it, I've witnessed it, even a short while ago. Hands off, know when to forgive, when to give, and when not to give, but you see, prayer, we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit helpeth.

Pray according to the Lord's will, and that's hard, because you don't know the Lord's will.

[34 : 56] And what does it mean vitally? to put the case into his good and gracious hands. That's what it means.

You say, well, if I could only do that, but I can't find him, says the soul. You see, I seek to find him, but I can't find him. What, whilst we're on this, what is it, that you've got in your heart relative to this case?

Now, you see with Gideon, when the Lord told him what to do, now, the Lord didn't tell him what to do. the Lord told him that he would be, he said here, the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valia.

And he says somewhere else, go in this thy might. But you see, the Lord said he would be with him.

have I not sent thee? That's right. But you see, the Lord, he had to come in his case, and this is where you will have to come in your case.

[36 : 26] In these things, I've touched these little things, as it were, but they are great things, but in this case, you see, you may look at the circumstances in which you're in, or another may be in, and you come in your heart before the Lord.

Oh, that I knew thy mind and will in this matter. Have you ever come there? Have you ever come there in your past life, if you've not walked in, if you're not walking in it now?

Have you come, you see, in the circumstances of it, in the impossibility of it? Have you got things in the word of the Lord to you personally, which are absolutely, completely impossible?

Come into these paths ways, where you feel that if only I knew the Lord's will in this matter. Have you come into such a case as this?

You don't know, you see. Now, you've got that which you've had in the beginning. meaning. Now, let's have a look at this persuasion.

[38 : 12] Carrying an exercise before the Lord. I know what's just come to me, but I'm not going to speak of it. You may have come into your heart an exercise laid upon you by the Lord himself.

And in this exercise which he has laid in your heart, you may say it's completely impossible.

There's nothing to be seen outside whatsoever. Look at the circumstances. look at all this and look at all that. Look at the poorness. Look at the poverty stricken.

Look at the smallness of me and all of these things. And you, the Lord says to you, or the Lord's laid an exercise in your heart, it's impossible, says the flesh, it's impossible.

And you know this is how the child of grace, this is how they pray to the Lord. You see that the impossibility of it, within and without, that they feel in their case that it can't be of the Lord.

[39 : 47] Now you can see where we're getting closer to the text, can't you? And bear in mind this, I think I'm right in saying that it was he did it in the night, didn't he?

You see, these things that the Lord lays in your heart, you know, you keep it very, very quiet within your heart.

You keep close to the Lord. Now bear in mind that there's so, you read of it, and you see it, and you know it, through the paths which you've walked up to this time, that how easy it is to be deceived.

I notice the time's nearly gone, I haven't even got into it yet, but you see, here, as we come into this path, poor soul, you may receive a blow upon it.

and as you receive a blow upon these things, you recede into your shell, but what does it do?

[41 : 27] I'll tell you what it does, it keeps you close to the Lord, and that's where the purpose of the trial is, for you to come to him with it, poor soul.

You see, Gideon didn't go out to anyone else, Gideon came to the Lord himself, the author of that exercise.

Now, that's it. Whatever you do, don't go to any man. I speak to you as a people, do not go to any man whatsoever, even the greatest one in the gospel standard, because they are but men.

I've proved it, I know what it is, to go to a minister of the Lord with my exercise, with my concern, unless you think it's the ministry, it wasn't the ministry, I can assure you of that.

I ran as far as I could run from the ministry. But, you see, he gave me what he thought, and that thought was the wrong advice.

[42 : 58] Now, you see, they are but men, so you've got to come to the Lord. Now, he will answer the prayer. Now, what is this, you see?

he prayed to the Lord for a confirmation, and so will you, of that exercise within your very heart, which the Lord has laid in your heart.

And he said, I will put the fleece of wool in the floor, and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know, and you may come to him likewise.

You may say, then shall I know, if the Lord does this, and you may work it out, and in all the impossibility of it, I came into an exercise once in the house of God, and I had to, I needed, I needed out of the very depth of the concern within me, to have a word from the Lord.

And to my shame, I looked at the ministry he was having that day, and I said, it wouldn't be any good going to him. He's not the sort of man that would go into my path.

[44 : 31] You be careful. these things, you see, these things make you very, very careful. When you ask of the Lord for a token that he has spoken to you in your exercise, whatever it may be, don't tell him who you should receive it from.

To look, not look to any man, because this is what Gideon did, he looked to the Lord alone, and if I can leave that with you this morning, look to the Lord alone in the exercise, poor soul.

what happened? He took his text and he preached in my very case the whole service, and didn't know a thing about it.

you have to come, you see, and look to the Lord alone in your exercise, poor soul.

Now, the time will come, if that's of the Lord, if the Lord has laid the exercise in your heart, when he will give you a token, poor soul.

[46 : 10] Then what? And then it came to Gideon, didn't he? You see, you want another token. An opposite way, an opposite token, I'll leave you on that note, an opposite token.

You see, you want the, you want it to be doubly sure, doubly certain in your case that it is of the Lord. Amen.

Thank you.