

NOW, TRY GOD

"My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him." Psalm 62:5.

Years ago Mary Pickford, the noted movie actress, wrote a book entitled, "Why Not Try God?" This book enjoyed a great popularity and was for a long time a best seller. In that book Miss Pickford described a great secret, but it was not a new secret. In fact, it was a very old secret. The Psalmist knew about this secret in the long ago and wrote about it. He said: "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him" (Psalm 62:5). With a child-like faith the Psalmist had expected God to do for him what he needed to have done, what he could not do for himself, and what no one else could do for him.

The words of our subject, "Now, Try God," and those of our text are directed to us with a remarkable force, especially in these days in which we are now living. All about us in the world today are men and women whose hearts are heavy, whose sky is clouded with the storms of doubt, and whose souls are oppressed with some great grief. All of these need to be arrested and challenged by this subject and this text.

The text begins with the words, "My soul." Here is a man communing with his own soul. He is deliberately addressing himself, and calling himself to attention. We must challenge our souls, too, and arouse them to the contemplation of the things of God. The primary and all-inclusive condition of spiritual blessing is that we set our eyes upon God and keep them fastened upon Him.

Two statements in the Bible are unique in the range of their meaning and appeal. Unconsciously we pattern our lives on the basis of one or the other. The first is recorded in Job 3:25 and says: "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me." Here you see life attuned to fear. The second is recorded in Psalm 62:5 and says: "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him." This verse, by way of contrast, points the way to faith, confidence, poise and power. We live by fear or by faith, and our lives get made up accordingly.

For illustrations or examples of the fear and doubt attitudes we need only to look about us. The most tragic waste is not to be found in the realm of industry but in the realm of human lives. Lives that were meant to march on to a climax of achievement are often tripped up by fear, doubt and cynicism.

Three centuries ago Thomas Goodwin made the statement that Jesus was the greatest believer who ever lived. Christ Jesus turned the quality of faith loose in the lives He touched. By means of its magic alchemy He made nobodies into somebodies, and transformed defeats into victories. When, at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration, the father of the afflicted boy said in effect, "If you can, help us," Christ replied in substance, "What do you mean, 'If you can?'" Everything is possible to a man if he will only believe." There were no "ifs" when it came to the power of Christ. That is why that, when people let His power come into their lives through vital and expectant faith, there is no limit to what they can become.

When the early disciples of Christ saw the mighty signs and wonders and miracles which He performed, they were filled with wonder and exclaimed, "Lord, increase our faith." It is noticeable that they did not ask for their burdens to be lightened, but they did ask for a vital and a victorious faith.

We would do well to say with the Psalmist, "My soul, be thou silent before God." By that he meant, "Make God thine only object in life. Make God thine only dependence and never trust in anything else. Have no care but to please God. Cast all thy cares on Him; for He careth for thee. Let thy great concern be to love and to serve God, and to wait only upon Him."

"Wait thou only" (or exclusively) "upon God." The primary condition of spiritual blessing is that we set and keep our eyes fastened upon God. If you will do that, it will banish from your heart that spirit which is antagonistic to the reception of blessing from God. The self-right-

eous spirit, the flippant spirit, and the critical spirit will disappear, if you keep your eyes steadily fixed upon God, and that will be such a blessing to you. If you wait only upon God, He will give to you a reverent, humble, teachable and devout spirit. This spirit will cause you to have an unutterable hunger and longing of heart for the very richest blessings that God is willing and waiting to give. Do not be content with less than God wants you to receive and to enjoy. We need the spirit of intense longing which broke the heart of Robert Murray McChesney, and caused him to cry, "Oh, God, make me as holy as a saved sinner can be!"

If you wait exclusively upon God, your chief concern will be God's will for you. It is a question between God's will and your will, your personal, conscious, unquestioning, unreserved surrender to God, and then God's personal possession, mastery and use of you, and then that hallowed, soul-satisfying fellowship between God and you which comes as the direct result of God's possession and mastery of you.

Wait upon God and expect. If you read the Old Testament, you will become aware of the fact that all the prophets and writers were men who paid special heed to waiting upon God. How often they emphasized the fact that it is well to wait upon God, or, as they sometimes put it, to keep silence before Him. And that waiting upon God, and their expectation from Him, was really the true source of the prophetic inspiration and message. It is evident that to these men silence is essential to revelation. They are all alike convinced that God has His secrets which He is prepared to reveal to those that fear Him. They are all quite sure that, if only they will sit and wait long enough for the counsel of God, He will speak directly to them. Our real difficulty is that we have failed to practice the art of keeping silence in the presence of God.

If prayer is to be vital, it is not so much your petition to God, as a holy conference with Him. Prayer is not so much what you say to God—that may often be quite unimportant. Prayer is a matter of giving God a chance to speak to you. Yes, practice the art of being quiet before God, if you want your quiet hour to be fruitful.

"Speak, Lord, in the stillness,
While I wait on Thee:
Hushed my heart to listen
In expectancy."

The law of creative expectancy functions in our human relationships. You can walk in the midst of others with your fist clenched and ready to strike or with your hand extended to greet and bless. You send out vibrations of love or hatred, of good will or of animosity. And what you send out comes back to you in some way sooner or later.

"My expectation!" How the words ring down the centuries, out of the Psalmist's troubled life! For here was a man who might easily have become a cynic or a pessimist, at least with regard to men, after his treatment by King Saul. But happily he had learned the useful habit of getting his eyes off men and circumstances, and on God. The result was that he could remain not only unmoved by present distresses, but positively expectant of relief and deliverance and final blessing.

Such expectation as this is an attitude of soul toward God which is neither easy nor natural, but which needs to be deliberately cultivated, for it is both God-honoring and God-compelling. Such expectation is more than passive trust, is deeper than honest desire, and higher than hope in the abstract. It outruns all of these, for it is positive, aggressive, and divinely ambitious. And I am sure it is a quality of mind, an attitude toward God, which must be deliberately cultivated and steadfastly maintained by all of us.

Perhaps our present and rightful expectation in God might well be summed up in the declaration of J. Hudson Taylor, at the last annual meeting of the China Inland Mission he attended before his death. His emphatic words were these: "There is a living God. He has spoken to us in His Word. He means what He says, and will do all He has promised."

I want to challenge and invite you to wait upon God. After you have sought balm for broken hearts and shattered hopes but all in vain, "Now, Try God." After you have come to the end of your own strength and are absolutely powerless to penetrate the somber gray of the clouds above; after your own feeble strength has failed to lift the burden which presses upon your soul: after you have sought relief in all of these things, "Now, Try God."

After you have tried the vain philosophies of antiquity which pose today under the guise of new thought, and after all of these have left you empty, then try God. It is quite an interesting experiment to take some of the religions of today which pose as being very modern and streamlined and compare their principal tenets with the philosophies of a dead past; when this has been done it will be discovered that there is not anything new about them. They have gone through a sort of "face-lifting" process, but at the core they are but the pantheistic heathen philosophies of another day. After you have tried these, and they have not brought any relief, "Now, Try God."

After you have tried some ritualistic ceremony and religious "grandstand display," why not try God? You have found that mechanically conforming to the externals of religion does not give you either change of heart or peace of mind. Your heart is still as heavy and as burdened as it always was.

You have not had any inward cleansing of your soul. Since that is the case, "Now, Try God."

After you have tried grasping and getting of money, prestige and fame, and still do not have peace of mind, "Now, Try God." The things that you have made your god instead of blessing you have turned out as curses, so now for peace of mind and heart, try God.

After you have tried the gaudy, tinsel show of pleasure and still do not have any lasting peace, "Now, Try God."

Today of all days, in this hour when hopes have been blasted, when lives have been saddened, when homes have been broken, when the bloody monster of war is stalking roughshod over our civilization, we should "Now, Try God."

You who have a great burden upon your heart should try God. Today we see as never before the fulfillment of the old Spanish proverb which says, "There is not a home in all the land but what sooner or later will have its hush." No doubt there are mothers and fathers listening to me who have heavy hearts. Let me challenge and invite you to "Now, Try God."

Those who really think are convinced now more than ever that this is a day described in the Scriptures as one when men's hearts are failing them for fear." Many are asking serious questions which imply doubt. They are asking, "Is God able to cope with the world situation?" Some are placing big question marks after all the promises of God. Out of heavy hearts some are asking, "If God is good, why does He allow wars?" Well, we need to reassure ourselves that God does not make wars: men make wars. If the forces of evil which are responsible for wars had let God have His way in their lives, we would not have had the terrible bloodshed. Is God equal to our day? By many affirmations from His Word, and from countless testimonies from His people, the answer is "Yes."

May I ask you frankly and honestly, Have you really tried God? Have you actually put Him to the test? Have you given God a chance? Have you cast your all upon Him? Have you gone to Him in the hour of sorrow? Have you left your broken heart with Him? Have you really tried God?

Many do not get help from God in their hours of trial because their faith is weak. They do not in their hearts really trust God. If you would really try God, or put Him to the test, then you must yield your heart fully to Him.

God longs for us, yearns for us, and waits for us to put Him to the test. When God's children think that He does not love them anymore, the kind, loving and gracious Heavenly Father in tenderness and gentleness says, "But, my child, you have not really tried Me, you have not

really trusted Me yet." Beloved, today, of all times, do try God. Trust in Him fully, implicitly and completely.

Lay hold upon God in a personal way. When we do this He will not fail us. Men often fail to trust God and to try Him because they do not realize that He is beside them, that He is closer to them than life itself.

Yes, take God beside you day by day in reality and in truth. Leslie D. Weatherhead, in one of his excellent books, tells of an old Scotchman who was very ill. The old man was a very devout Christian. One day when his minister came to see him, there was an empty chair beside his bed and the old man explained that years before another man of God had told him to pray by visualizing Jesus as sitting in that chair; and when he did this in his praying, he talked with Jesus as with an old-time friend. A few days later one of the old man's daughters came rushing to see the minister, saying that her father had been found dead and that his hand was resting peacefully on the chair. Ah, beloved, there it is. It is as one said, "Practicing the Presence," knowing that God is with you day by day.

But someone timidly asks, "Can I do this?" "Will He help me?" The testimony of millions is that He will help. They have tried Him and they know. This cannot be disproved, and no sneering skeptic or scoffing critic can take this assurance from us. Yes, God and His presence are real.

When you are subjected to the temptations of Satan, then try God. When the hour of death approaches for a loved one of yours, or when you walk with that one to the brink of the icy waters of death and there bid him farewell, in that dark, lonely hour try God. When the hour comes for you to depart this life say with the Psalmist: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."

During the days of depression, a man and his wife were defeated. They were out of employment, did not have any money, and were without friends. They had talked it over between themselves and decided to go down and jump into the river, taking their three small children with them into the watery grave. As they went down the street the baby got cold and began to cry so pitifully. They stopped in a church to warm themselves. And somehow in that service God touched their hearts. They saw how foolish was the way of escape which they were trying to take. The Spirit of God gently wooed them and they trusted in Christ for salvation. Their lives of sadness were turned into happiness, as has happened with so many. God can and will make the same thing happen in your case, if you as an unsaved person will really trust Christ as your Saviour. Why not try God?