



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Exodus 13: 17-22; Numbers 9:15-23

“The Pillar of Cloud and Fire”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee again for the Scriptures and for the way in which in the Old Testament, Thou hast made known the Lord Jesus Christ in illustration and by anticipation. We thank Thee for the greatness of the Son of God and we thank Thee for the marvelous inspiration manifested in Scripture, revealing Thy Hand in the writing and composing of the Word of God. We thank Thee for the encouragement that we receive and especially too, Lord, we thank Thee for the examples of responsiveness to the truth of God which are meant for our edification and growth.

We thank Thee for the way in which the apostles have given us light on the Old Testament and we pray that we may study tonight in the light that has been given us in the New Testament. Enable us to interpret correctly and fruitfully and pleasingly to Thee. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] We are continuing our series of studies in the general theme From Egypt to Canaan, and the subject for tonight is the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, and we are turning to Exodus chapter 13 and verse 17 through verse 22, will be the first of several passages that we will look at. As said, we are following Israel from Egypt to Canaan; and we are

looking at it typically in the sense that the story of Israel from Egypt to Canaan is really a picture in pageant form of the way in which God deals with us.

We sometimes forget that the Lord Jesus Christ has told us that the Old Testament Scriptures are they which testify of him. F. B. Meyer in one of his books says some time ago, one of his friends went out with a little boy who was leading him across a common of an English city from the railroad station to the home, where he was going to be staying; and the friend said to the little boy as they were walking across to the home, "Do you go to Sunday School?" And the little boy said, "Yes."

"What did your teacher talk about last Sunday afternoon?"

And Britain's Sunday School is often in the afternoons, he said, "Oh, he was talking about Jacob."

"And what did he take the Sunday before that?"

"Oh, he was talking about prayer."

"Well, did your teacher talk about Jesus?"

"Oh no," said the little fellow, "that's at the other end of the book."

Well, it's true that in one sense at the other end of the book. We do have the full revelation concerning our Lord and his ministry, but it is our Lord himself who has told us that, in the Psalms and prophecies and in the things that Moses wrote, we have a revelation concerning him.

So, we turn to Exodus chapter 13 verse 17 through verse 22, and we will keep in mind the ministry that the Lord has to us in this illustrated way. We have seen in our studies Israel delivered from the bondage of Egypt, which is designed to represent for us illustratively, our deliverance from the bondage of sin. We have seen them delivered finally by the Passover and the deliverance from the destroying angel. It was designed to represent the fact that salvation through our Lord is based upon the shedding of the blood of an animal; he being the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.

And then, last week, when we looked at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which began the first night of the Passover, we looked at that feast as illustrative of the Christian life and we turn to Paul's account in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 and read the passage where Paul says, "Even Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us; therefore let us go on keeping the feast." And then Paul set out the moral details that were to guide the Christian in his Christian life, illustrated by the fact that Israel in the Old Testament observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread for one week, a cycle of time. All of our lives are lived either on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, or Saturday, and we saw that there was to be no leaven in the house, that was specifically stated. And leaven in the Bible is generally an illustration of that which is sin. And Paul evidently thinks that to be so because he uses it in that sense right in that passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 5, for he says, "Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

And so, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was a general way of looking at the believer's life. It's to be a life of holiness, and it is to be a life that is grounded in the knowledge that the Passover Lamb has been sacrificed. There is no point in trying to live with a Christian life if we do not know Christ as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. The Christian life begins with the recognition that we are lost and that Christ has made a way of salvation for us; and then after the Feast of the Passover has been observed, and by faith we put the blood on the door post and the upper door posts, signifying our faith in him as the Lamb of God slain for our sins. Then we begin the Feast of Unleavened Bread which is illustrative of the Christian life.

So, if you remember, it was specifically stated not only was there to be no leaven in the house but also they were to do no work, which I suggested to you, was intended to represent the fact that the Christian life is a life of grace, God doing something for us. So many people think...I was talking last week to my class at Trinity in the last week of

the session on sanctification. So many Christian people think that we are saved by grace and then we live our lives by good works as Christians. That's not true. We are saved by grace through faith. We live our Christian lives by grace through faith. Of course, good works are to be the issue of the Christian's life and they are the issue of a genuine Christian's life. But they are not works done in the sense of our doing it. There are things done through us by the Holy Spirit who dwells within. All of the works are works of God if they are pleasing to him. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," Paul said to the Philippians, but then he added, "For it is God that worketh in you, both the will and to do of his good pleasure."

So, we work because God works in us, and he works in us not simply to do things but even to will the things that are pleasing to him. So, the Christian life is a life of freedom. It is a life of grace. It is a life of enjoying the things that God does through us. So, when you talk about salvation by grace, you can extend the word salvation to cover all the kinds of salvation that we experienced. Salvation from the penalty of sin, salvation from the presence of sin, ultimately in the future, salvation from the dominion of power of sin in this present life; that salvation is a work of grace through faith. So, no servile work was to characterize the children of Israel in that week of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Now, Israel was journeying to a land which God had promised to them. He describes it here as the land that was flowing with milk and honey. And he speaks about how he is going to bring them into that land. So, they needed guidance, and we need guidance. In the Christian life, we need guidance. I don't know whether you ever noticed this or not, but the Epistle to the Galatians is a very interesting book in that, in the first 2 chapters, remember Paul defends his apostolic authority because that had been challenged. And then in chapters 3 and 4, he unfolds his doctrine of justification by faith and shows that men are justified "apart from the law." And so, the natural question for a Hebrew familiar with the Old Testament would be, "Well, if we are justified by faith apart from the works of the law; and the law is not therefore something under which we are as

a code, then what is to be our God in our Christian life, if we are not guided by the Mosaic law?"

This is a problem that many covenant and covenantal theologians have today. Unfortunately, that's a problem that we naturally have in the Christian life if we have ever grown up in an environment where you at one time were told that the 10 Commandments have a great deal to do with your salvation. And so, it's difficult for such individuals to really realize that we are not under the law as a code.

But the natural question is, well if we are not under the law as a code then who is to be our God in the Christian life? And in chapters 5 and 6 of the Galatian letter, Paul points out that it's the Holy Spirit who has come to take the place of the Mosaic law to be our God. He talks about the works of the flesh and then he talks about the fruit of the Spirit and when he describes the fruit of the Spirit he says, "Against these things and against this fruit, there is no law." In other words, the Law of Moses tells the fruit of the Spirit as produced by the Holy Spirit and the law can find no flaw in the fruit produced by the spirit in the Christian life. So, I am not surprised that in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, that feast was a feast in which they were to do no servile work. That is what the Christian life is. It is a life of grace under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Now, Israel needed a guide and so God provided them with a guide and I am going to begin reading now with verse 17 of Exodus 13 and we read through the end of the chapter for our first Scripture passage on which we will devote about 10 minutes, I hope. "And it came to pass when Pharaoh had let the people go that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near." The Hebrew text here says, "Because that was near," for God said, "Lest peradventure the people repent," that is, "change their mind when they see war and they return to Egypt."

And by the way, that's, of course, precisely what they did when they got into difficulty after going into the Kadesh-Barnea, going into the land. One thing they wanted to do immediately was to return to Egypt because they didn't like the chance in the land

that they saw there. But God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea and the children of Israel went up harnessed or fully armed out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him. Isn't that interesting? He took the bones of Joseph with him. Scripture is so surprising. It's very interesting to read it.

"For he had straightly warned the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you and he shall carry up my bones away hence with you. And they took their journey from Succoth and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. And the Lord went before them by day on a pillar of cloud to lead them by the way and by night, in the pillar of fire to give them light to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people."

Well, we said that the children of Israel needed guidance and of course, we need guidance. So, God gives them the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. He says that he did not take them into the land the straight way because if they had gone in the straight way they were totally unprepared for war. If they had gone straight from Egypt into the land that had been promised to them, they would have to pass through the Philistine territory. And there is every indication that the Philistines would have attacked them. And mind you, this is a people that had been in bondage to another people for 400 years and were thoroughly unacquainted with questions of warfare.

I would have no problem at all if the Israeli Army were with the children of Israel as they went into the land. I would have perfect confidence in that Israeli Army. In fact, to tell you the honest truth, I would feel a whole lot safer if the Israeli army were fighting for us because I have a whole lot less confidence in the United States Army than I have in the Israeli Army. They know how to conduct the campaign and particularly, if we get one of our generals to have a patch on his eye, that will make it even better, but anyway

obviously they were unprepared in these days and so the Lord very wisely had them go a roundabout way.

Someone has said he wanted to bring them to Mt. Sinai first, and that may well have been, of course, in our Lord's intention as well but the text says simply that after Pharaoh had let them go, the Lord led them not through by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near, for God said, "Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." But God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea and the children of Israel went out fully armed out of the land of Egypt. So they knew something about what they might face, but they just didn't really realize what would be involved and the proof of it is, as I say later on, that they were thoroughly unprepared for what they saw in the land and wanted to turn around and go back, and had it not been for Joshua and Caleb, then things might have been quite a bit different.

Now, I think there are some illustrations of some important truth here and one of them is this: That the shortest way is not always the surest way. In fact, I think that often you will find that in evangelicalism some errors are made right at this point. Here is a man who is unusual man and is converted and so what is the tendency of immature Christians? Well, the tendency of immature of Christians is because they are so delighted over the fact that some well known person has been converted, they organize a campaign in which he goes about giving his testimony and teaching the Bible. How foolish that is.

I can remember in Dallas here some years ago, a Jewish man was converted and he was a man who had had very little understanding of the Bible, but evidently had made a decision that seemed very genuine. And so he began to grow, attend some meetings. It became known that he had become a Christian. He fell into the hands of some who wanted to put him up and have him give his testimony constantly and to speak in meetings and that kind of thing. Well, within a year, he already had a tremendous

experience of backsliding and at the present day, to my knowledge, that man is of no significance whatsoever in fruitfulness for the Lord who he said had saved him.

So, at times, we can really do harm to a believer by having them assume a position they are not yet qualified for. And so the Lord took them up on a roundabout way to prevent this very thing from happening to them. That detour was for instruction to give them some years by which they would learn things about the Lord God. They would also learn some things about themselves because their experiences that they would have would be divine discipline for them and they would be delivered from the danger of falling into the hands of the Philistines, who surely would have made a quick work of them at that time.

Now in verses 19 and 20, Moses describes the march from Succoth to Etham and the only significant thing about it, for us, is the fact that the bones of Joseph went along with them and Moses took the bones of Joseph with him for he had straightly warned the children of Israel saying, "God will surely visit you and you shall carry up my bones away hence with you."

You may remember that in Genesis chapter 50 and verse 24 through verse 26, Joseph had said something about this to his brethren. We read in verse 24 of Genesis 50, that is the last chapter of the book, "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land into the land which He swear to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel saying, God will surely visit you and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." So Joseph died, being 110 years old and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Now Joseph believed that the land that was going to be given to them was the land of Palestine; that is the land in which into which they were going. And so having confidence in the promises that he had made to Abraham, and to Isaac, and to Jacob, he said, "Take my bones up with you and bury them in the land," because when the time of the resurrection comes, he wants to be resurrected from the land. It was a magnificent

exhibition of faith on the part of Joseph and in fact this is the incident that is described in Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 22 as the great act of faith on the part of Joseph. Here we read, verse 22 of Hebrews chapter 11, "By faith, Joseph when he died, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel and gave commandment concerning his bones." So that was an expression of faith on the part of Joseph.

There is another passage that bears on this in Joshua chapter 24 and verse 32, that is the last chapter of the Book of Joshua. We have referenced again to this, I will read it for you. Joshua 24 verse 32, "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of silver and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."

Now that is a magnificent expression of faith on Joseph's part. I know the promises that God has made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are going to be fulfilled and I want to be there when the resurrection takes place and we enjoy the blessings of the possession of the land. I want to be resurrected there. And I say the writer of the Epistle of Hebrews regarded that as a great exhibition of faith in the word of God.

Now we come to the pillar of cloud and fire in verse 21 and verse 22. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them by the way and by night, in a pillar of fire to give them light; to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day nor the pillar of the fire by night from before the people. I suggest to you that this was really one pillar. That was one thing that this afternoon I thought to myself, "Now, when you say 'pillar' tonight, don't say 'pillow' because they have a tendency to sleep enough already; but if you keep talking about pillow and blankets and things like that, they will surely go to sleep." So this is a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud. Anyway, I suggest to you that this pillar was one: that is in the daytime, the thing that they saw was the pillar of cloud. But inside that pillar of cloud, which looked like a pillar was fire and the fire of course, was symbolic of the presence of God and the

judgment that characterizes holiness. So the pillar then was a picture of the presence of God.

Now, Jewish people like to think of this as an anthropomorphism; that is, there was not really any pillar of fire and pillar of cloud. But this is just an anthropomorphic way of speaking of the presence of God. Well, I think it was really more than that. There was a pillar of cloud and there was a pillar of fire. One pillar which at night you could see the fire but in the daytime, you saw as a cloud.

Now this was designed to represent the judgment and the mercy of God. If you put all of this passages together, you will find that Israel was led by this pillar of cloud and fire in order to give them light; and the fire; it was to give them a shelter from the sun and the pillar of cloud, that said out in Psalm 105 and verse 39 and then also it was to be their guidance. In other words, as we will read on a moment, that pillar then was to give them light, it was to give them protection and it was also to be their guidance into the land.

Now, you can also sense in Israel's experience that God dealt with them by this pillar of cloud in some very distinct ways. For example, when Moses was on the mount and the children of Israel built the idol and began to worship the idol. And then Moses came down and was so disturbed over the fact that they had constructed this golden idol and that God was so upset over that he said he was going to destroy Israel and Moses had offered his intercessory prayer and God then listened to Moses' prayer and did not destroy the children of Israel.

At that particular time, the pillar of cloud moved off from the encampment of the children of Israel, illustrating the fact that while the sin of the children of Israel may cause the withdrawal of the cloud, it did not cause its departure. In other words, the way God dealt with Israel is the way He deals with us. When we sin, there is a break in communion. No break in union once we have believed in Christ, we have eternal life. But it is possible for us to disobey the Lord, and when we disobey the Lord there is a

break in communion. And therefore, if there is not confession of sin, discipline will take place in the Christian life.

Anybody who has ever been the child of a father who disciplines knows exactly what that means. You are in good graces with your father or with your mother as long as you are submissive to them; but when you are not submissive and when you disobey, there is a distinct change of atmosphere and in my case, as I have often said to you, it not only provoked a distinct change of atmosphere but also some distinct physical changes as well like a warm seat. When my father would discipline me and bring out the old razor strap or the belt later on. I have experienced quite a few means by which my father exercised discipline and I am thankful now for those things and when I get to heaven I will be able to tell him I thank you for those hours of discipline because they meant a whole lot for me in the time while I was down here on the earth.

Well the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire guided Israel all the way into the land. It is the Old Testament picture of what our Lord said when he said: "Lo I am with you always even to the end of the age." Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has the Holy Spirit indwelling them, and the Holy Spirit indwelling us is the one through whom the presence of the Lord Jesus is made real in our lives. He is with us through the Holy Spirit.

I am going to ask you to turn to another passage, Numbers chapter 9 because here we have the law of the cloud. We could call that Exodus passage, the gift of the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire, but now we have the law by which Israel was to be governed though this cloud in Numbers chapter 9, verse 15 through verse 23. This is marvelous section and I am going to read all of the verses. There is a lot of repetition but we need it. Verse 15, Numbers 9,

"And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle

as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was always: the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the Lord, the children of Israel journeyed; and at the commandment of the Lord, they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not. And so it was when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the Lord, they abode in their tents; and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed. So it was when the cloud abode from even until the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning then they journeyed. Whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it were two days or a month or a year that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the Lord, they journeyed: they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses."

Now, simple instructions, are they not? They moved when the cloud moved. That is important. They moved when the cloud moved. Their movements were determined by the movements of the Lord God. Did you notice how many times we have "at the commandment of the Lord?" They moved when the cloud moved. In other words, they did not sit around and reason, now, when do you think we ought to move? It is getting cold or it is getting warm; or there is a place up ahead that will provide us with this or that. All of those things that have to do with human rationalizations were things that they were to pay no attention to. The whole question was, when did the cloud move? If the

cloud moved, they moved. So it is all very simple, they just wait for the cloud to move. Isn't that an important principle? That is pretty easy to follow to, isn't it? That is point number one.

Then the second point, this becomes very deep. Some of you probably will not get this. They had tarried when the cloud tarried. In other words, when the cloud did not move, they did not move. Takes a lot of theological depth to grasp that doesn't it? They moved when the cloud moved. They stayed where they were when the cloud stayed.

Third principle, even deeper. They had tarried as long as the cloud tarried, it says at verse 22. Now, whether it were two days or a month or a year that the cloud tarried upon the Tabernacle, remaining there on the children of Israel abode in their tents and journeyed not but when it was taken up, they journeyed. Now, we often say sinners need a Savior, and pilgrims need a God. And that is what we are. In the New Testament, more than once we are said to be pilgrims and soldiers. That is what we are here. We are on our way to the city of God. We are pilgrims and we need a God.

Now do you notice that the children of Israel did not have any plans at all? Other than those plans that were told them by the Lord God that is what He was going to do with them. They had no plans. No plans of their own. No series of prospectuses that they drew up from which they had decided what they were going to do. They did not even have responsibility of checking out which was the best way into the land from where they were. They had no plans of their own.

Now, that is the Christians' position too. He does not really have any plans of his own. His responsibility is to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. For when we start making plans of our own, then of course we introduce our human reason into the divine principles, into the divine plans of the guidance of his children. So much simpler is it to wait upon the Lord. So they had plans of their own. As one of the commentators says,

"To move without testimony would be to move into the dark." If for example, it were night time and they decided well there are some Philistines over there or there are some Midianites over here and we better move because they are nearby. If the cloud did not move, to move was to move off into the dark.

On the other hand, if the cloud did move and they said we do not want to move, we want to stay where we are for a while because the water is nice and then the weather is good and then various other things that we would enjoy here. If the cloud moves and they stay where they are, then the dark comes again. So to move when the cloud does not move is to move into darkness. To not move when the cloud moved, is to enter into darkness as well. So the key thing is, and it said over and over again, I wish I had time today to... well it did not occur to me to tell you the truth, to count how many times this text says "at the commandment of the Lord." You can, just by reading it through once, realize that the Lord has emphasized this over and over again. They were to move at the commandment of the Lord.

Now, I am going to ask you, since we have about 7 or 8 minutes left, to turn to the New Testament and we will turn to the Epistle of the Galatians, the Epistle we referred at to in the introduction. Remembering that the cloud has to give enlightenment, it is to give sheltering, and it is to give guidance. Now we could look of course at John 16 and there the Lord says that through the Holy Spirit, he is going to teach us the things that we need to be taught and we know that in Ephesians chapter 4 we read that there the Lord has sealed us with the Spirit to give us protection. But in Romans chapter 8:14 we are told if we are truly the children of God, we are led by the Holy Spirit.

Now, you know that has been sometimes misunderstood. Paul said, "As many as are led by the Holy Spirit, they are the children of God." And so they are some people who say, "Well sometimes I am not led by the Holy Spirit." But if you are a child of God, you are always led. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. So one of the characteristic things true of every believer is he is led by the Holy Spirit.

That is not a test of a believing Christian. That is a description of every Christian. Every Christian is led by the Holy Spirit. Now, however, every Christian does not necessarily follow the leading of the Holy Spirit but the Holy Spirit is always guiding every one of us. There are obviously times when we do not follow his guidance.

There are times in the New Testament in which individuals did not follow his guidance in departing from the Apostle Paul. That is evident. There are other times when believers did not follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit but he is always guiding us. Our responsibility is to find his guidance.

Now, in Galatians 5, we read in verse 16, "This I say then, Walk by the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." And then in verse 25, the apostle says, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." So, every Christian is guided by the Holy Spirit, and the Christian life is as simple as walking by the Holy Spirit.

Now, I know I have been around long enough. I know that what some of you maybe thinking is, I will be a whole lot better off if I had a little pillar of cloud and fire hanging over my head. If I just could walk around with a little pillar of cloud and pillar of fire, then, I would probably obey. Is that true? Don't you think you would? Well now, if you read the Bible you know that is not true. Israel had the pillar of cloud, the pillar of fire, they frequently disobeyed the Lord. They wanted to leave the cloud in the wilderness and go back to Egypt. Then leave the cloud there and the fire too. They wanted to go back to Egypt.

I would like to say to you that you have something better than the cloud. Do you know what it is? You have the Holy Spirit indwelling you. You have not only a cloud above you. You might not see it. It might be up above the building here. They have one down there on my church but that is not the kind I wanted. That will not do you any good. But if you were in this building like this and you would have a fire up there you could not see it. But how much better it is to have the Holy Spirit dwelling within? You

have the one who made the fire, who made the fire, the cloud and the fire. You have the Holy Spirit indwelling you.

Do you really think that God can give you guidance? Do you think it is impossible for him to lead you? Let me put it in another way. Do you think it is impossible for him if you desire to be submissive to him, to give you the clear sense of his guidance? I do not think it is. I think he can give you guidance, and he can give you guidance now that is more significant better and more fruitful in the end than he gave the children of Israel. The redemption has been accomplished now. The Holy Spirit has come to permanently indwell every Christian.

But you, as a Christian, have got to learn how to see the pillar of cloud, the pillar of fire, within. You have got to learn from your personal experience as a Christian how to hear the voice of God through the Holy Spirit. We are not talking about anything audible. If a person talks about hearing audible things then of course, he is a kook. But we are not talking about that. We are talking about what it is to know that and sense the guidance of God, the Holy Spirit, within the inner man.

I have often used this illustration, but I do not know of any other better one. If I could find a better one, I guess, I would use that. To learn to walk is a matter of experience. It often laid the point that no child, sitting on a highchair that I know of, ever took a triumphant highchair up over the heads, slipped down on the floor and walked off. You could sit there, and you can reason it all out and say, "All you have to do is put one foot forward, transfer your weight, put another foot forward, transfer your weight. Thus, walking is simple."

And Martha's little grandchild and we are watching and she is just at the stage of walking and she is very bright. She is very quick and very intelligent, but she is not unprophesied. She is not going to walk in that way. She is going to tumble and fall and probably bruise her face and chin and hip, and maybe even cut herself a little bit, here

and there, because most children are like that. And I know that it is really impossible for that to happen because my children were not able to do it.

Now, how did they learn to walk? They learned to walk in experience, by experience. They learned to take a little step after when they learned to crawl. They learned to pull themselves up on furniture. They learned to move around furniture. And then they ultimately see a piece of furniture, just about a foot away, and they managed to make their way over that one. And then finally, they get out and very uncertainly stand and claps on the floor or they began to take a step and fall, and they take another step and fall, and they are so fearful through it all. Have you ever seen a child, finally standing alone and suddenly, it is just too much for them and they just sit down right where they are. I have seen a lot of Christians like that. It is just like that. And the only way in which you can learn to walk is to walk spiritually.

To get up in the morning and say, "Lord, I would like to know today what you would have me to do." And then go out, have yourself a good falling time, but by falling you will ultimately come to the place where you will be able to recognize God's guidance. And furthermore, you will discover when you have made your mistakes, because the Lord has a marvelous way of bringing a sense of anxiety, and a sense of failure, a sense of disturbance, a sense that you have taken the wrong step in your heart. The thing to do is to go back and start over again and look for his guidance. But if you will start to do this, you will grow to the place where you will be able to take walks and enjoy what Paul means when he says, "Walk by the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

May God help you and help me too, to grow in the knowledge of what it means to walk by the Spirit. Our time is up. Let us close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for these encouraging words that come to us from the Old Testament. We thank Thee for the way Thou didst supernaturally guide the children of Israel to the promise land, and we thank Thee for the marvelous supervision

laid for us and we confess Lord our sin and failure, and so often not even looking for guidance from Thee in our daily lives.

We ask that Thy will be with us and guide and direct us individually and may enable us Lord to learn to walk by the Spirit, that we may not fulfill the lust of the flesh, that we may please Thee, and that we may be fruitful.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.