

Give Me This Mountain

by Esther Sutera

God offers a way out of temptation and provides strength and majesty to help us conquer any mountain in our lives.

Duration: 56:28

Scripture: Deuteronomy 5:3, Psalm 133:3, Matthew 17:1, Matthew 17:5

Topics: "Victory"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the story of Caleb and Joshua from the Bible. He highlights how the majority of the spies sent to survey the promised land were fearful and negative, focusing on the giants, mountains, and walled cities. They lost sight of the goal and forgot that God was leading them. However, Caleb and Joshua maintained their faith and trust in God's promises. The speaker also warns against the dangers of sin, emphasizing how it can subtly lead us away from God little by little if we are not vigilant.

Transcript

Well, it's good to have you all here this afternoon. And as we already heard last night from the speaker and from the speakers this morning, that the theme and the subject this afternoon is focusing our spiritual lives once again. And so, this afternoon I have chosen for my topic, with this in mind, a topic centered around the various kinds of mountains.

And that every one of these mountains that we will be talking about this afternoon will in one way or another relate to our own hearts and lives in our everyday walks. Now, mountains are illustrative of many things. It could be a mountain of temptation.

It could be a mountain of problems. It could be a mountain of sin. It could be a mountain of blessing.

It could be a mountain of strength. It could be a mountain of warning to us. Mountains are positive and negative, good and evil.

So, whatever the mountains we will be talking about this afternoon, I want you to say, Lord God, what is the mountain that you want me to conquer in my heart, in my life today? And say with Joshua and Caleb of old, O Father, O God, give me this mountain. And so, mountains are illustrations of many different things in our hearts and lives. Yielding to the temptation of sin and selfishness grieves the Spirit of God.

Did you hear what I said? Yielding to the temptation of sin and selfishness grieves the heart of God. But it does more than that. It drives us into a spiritual dryness and into defeat spiritually.

And that's why we have a time of refreshing and a weekend like this, that we might refocus our spiritual attention to a God who is a mighty fortress in our lives and in our generation. It is comforting to know that on every mountain of temptation there is a way out. On every mountain of temptation in your life there is a way out.

God never sends us or allows us to have temptations in our lives and then we have no answer for them. But with every temptation He offers a way out. In the three temptations of Jesus, in Matthew 8 we read, And the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain to tempt Him.

He took Him to a very high mountain to tempt Him. And that was a mountain of temptation. And I often say, if the devil had enough nerve and enough courage to tempt my Jesus, then he has enough courage to tempt each one of us here today.

And each one of us has a mountain of some sort in our lives. A mountain, a problem, an obstacle that God can say, I have a way out for you when you think indeed you have no way out. But God said, I have a way out for you.

Just come to my mountain. But strictly speaking there is no mountain of temptation in the New Testament, is there? And yet, even if there is no specific mountain in the New Testament, let me say this, something at least happened on that mountain of temptation that can benefit us today. And that's why we're here.

Oh, I want us to see that with this temptation, with any temptation, with your temptation and with mine, God offers a way out. Sometimes we think, Lord, there is no way around my mountain. There is no way around my problem.

But God will, with temptation, offer you a way out. Eve's temptation is a picture of human life, isn't it? And in her life are mirrored your life and mine. The behavior and the actions of your life and mine.

How soon Eve was tempted and how soon she fell. But with that temptation, God also made a way out. Well, now, we don't have to be very old to realize that it doesn't take us long, not very long after we move away from the cradle, that we have to choose from right and wrong.

And it doesn't take very many months before a little one knows right from wrong. And it doesn't take very long before they have to make a choice whether or not they will choose the good or the bad. So, just a little ways away from the cradle, we begin to make choices.

We sit in this very hour this afternoon, and whether you want to or not, or believe it or not, God is putting you in a place where you have to choose. And I'm asking you today, choose yourself a mountain this hour, whether it be a good mountain or an evil mountain. Whatever that is, God has a way out for you.

Now, temptation isn't a new thing. It's as old as the hills. It started with Eve, right? So, temptation is not a new thing.

It is an old thing. And you know, temptation does not only attack one kind of a person. It doesn't only attack the young.

It doesn't only attack the old. It doesn't only attack those who have sexual impurities or a tendency to social drinking or whatever you might say. Temptation comes to us on every level, rich, poor, young, old, whatever we are.

Temptation comes to all of us. But I want you to remember that temptation is not always evil. But there is a good side to temptation.

Many times when we talk or counsel with women, they say, I am so afraid, I am so tempted by this particular mountain or problem or obstacle in my life, I fear it, I can't conquer it. But may I say to you this afternoon that temptation is not always evil, but sometimes it's good and for our benefit that we might be able to grow and conquer the mountains in our hearts and lives. If you are tempted this afternoon, and I know each of us are tempted in specific areas, let me congratulate you.

And you say, congratulate me for temptation? I say, yes, if you are tempted in any way, let me congratulate you because it shows that you have some moral insight within you and that God is bringing to you the opportunity to choose evil or good. You have a choice. God has made a way out.

When temptation for the evil comes to us, God has made a way out. When temptation for the good comes to us, God has made a way out. Well, I can hear a whole lot of quiet little voices saying to me now, well, how do I find a way out of this temptation? How do I know right from wrong sometimes when I face my mountain? Is there a way out for me? And God says, I didn't say, God says, yes, there is a way out for you.

How many times have you quoted 1 Corinthians 10, 13? There hath no temptation taken you, you don't know it, but such as is common to man. There are two words following that I want you to listen. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man.

The next two words are, but God. See, God has everything to do with temptation. And when all is said and done, He is not going to put a temptation on you that you cannot bear.

Great news! He's never going to put a temptation on you that you can't bear. Sometimes you'll see the mountain and you'll say, God, I can't conquer it. But God has promised that He will never put a temptation on you that you cannot bear.

Let me read it to you from the Phillips translation, which I thought was very good. No temptation has come your way that is too hard for flesh and blood to bear. But God can be trusted not to allow you to suffer any temptation beyond your endurance.

He will see to it that every temptation has a way out. Now, doesn't that make you feel good to know that you will not be pushed into a corner and say, God, there's no way out for me. There is! Not because I said it, but because God said it.

If I were to stand up here and say it this afternoon, you would have reason not to believe me. I can only tell you what 1 Corinthians 10, 13 says, right? But God said He will not and He won't. But this letter that was written way back there to the Philippines is also written for us today.

But we have to make some choices, don't we? And so we have to make choices today. Remember, if you remember nothing else, often we have the fear of temptation. Let us remember today that fear is not one-sided, that temptation is not one-sided toward evil.

But it has also another side, and that temptation is good. Being tempted to the good, there is a way out. There is a way out.

And if you are seated here this afternoon and you have a mountain or a problem in your life that you can't walk around, but God, but God. What did He say? He said He would make a way out. And if He says it, He will do it.

Well, don't fear evil temptation. Remember, God said there was a way out. And fear of evil and being tempted is a very, very real thing, ladies.

You know it. I know that many of you face it head on. The fear of being tempted on a certain situation or a mountain in your life that you just can't conquer.

And over and over again, and maybe year after year, you may come back to a mountaintop experience like this and say, God, I still haven't conquered that mountain. And perhaps you're here today, and you were here last year, and perhaps you're here today, and you say, Lord, the mountain I was not able to conquer last year, I am still not able to conquer. Can you remember two words? But God is able, but God is able.

Don't look at the size of the mountain. You know what's happening? You're looking at the mountain, and you're losing the goal. No mountain is too big for God, good or evil.

And so, don't be afraid of temptation, but let it be a situation where you say, God, You are able to cause me to get to conquer this mountain. Like Caleb said, God, give me this mountain. And we'll be talking about that in just a little minute.

There's something very fascinating and awesome about mountains, isn't there? Even those of us who are flatlanders and raised on the prairies love the majesty of mountains. Mountains speak to people. The smoke is in North Carolina, and the bleakness and the beauty of Mount Juneau in Alaska.

It doesn't matter where. If you are standing and viewing a mountain, there is something awesome about a mountain, isn't there? There is no way that a poet can describe a mountain. He's lost for words.

There is no way that an artist can capture the expression of a mountain. But mountains are awesome. Not only are they awesome, but there's majesty in the mountains.

Majesty and strength fixed in every mountain. And I want you to know this afternoon, and you already know, that the God of the mountains is a strong God, and He is available to meet each of us today in the very place that you're seated. Have you ever said to someone, I have a mountain in my life that I cannot move? It just sits there, and it doesn't budge.

Perhaps it's an unsaved husband who comes home drunk and beats you, or perhaps it's wayward children, or perhaps it's broken homes. It doesn't matter what it is. Big mountains are small mountains.

But you have felt, Lord, I have endeavored to conquer this mountain in my life for years, and I still don't have victory. And today I say, but God, who is a God of strength and of majesty, said He would make a way out for you, and He does. But God is strong enough to scale every mountain in your personal life.

But more than that, He is able and possible and strong enough to conquer and wage any mountain in our generation. The reason we sang the song a moment ago is because in the generation when Martin Luther

was alive, he too faced mountains, perhaps greater than our mountains today. But he had obstacles and mountains to face, and yet he did not shrink from the mountains and penned the words, a mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.

Our helper He amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing. Did we in our own strength confide? Our striving would be losing. Were not the right men on our side the men of God's own choosing? And though the world with devils filled should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God has willed His truth to triumph through us.

Should we fear? Should we fear temptations? I say no, we should not fear temptations. But our restless generation today as well, as well as in the day of Martin Luther, has a restless feeling. And our generation today seems to be telling us that there is no certainty and no assurance in the God of our Christianity.

And that's startling, isn't it? But I want to say this. Don't be angry or alarmed at our younger generation that is saying there is no certainty or assurance in the God of Christianity that our parents are displaying. Don't be angry with them.

But instead, you should say, God, let me prove to them that the God that is strong enough to hold up and fix the mountains in this world and who is fixed and changeless is still the same God that will work for us today. Mountains are mentioned all through the Bible. And in every case, they have a significant meaning.

And I trust that we will not miss what that significant meaning is as we talk about the different mountains. God has mountains for us to conquer today. God has mountains for us to scale today.

And that's why we're here, right? We're here, we're interested in sharpening our spiritual focus. And God is asking us to deal with mountains in our lives so that we can be drawn to him and be refreshed in a brand new and in a special way. I was really excited last night when we heard Brother Bill give his testimony and the Scripture around it and the Scripture areas he used.

And I said he took it right out of what I was preparing for the hour this afternoon. But anyway, we read in Joshua where God's people were just brought out of bondage and they were preparing to go into the promised land. And God was leading them all the way.

He was providing. He was doing the leading. He was doing the providing.

And all of these things, he had promised them the land. He had promised everything for them. And he brought them out and then there were just a few obstacles that kept them from going into the promised land.

So in the scene described in Joshua 14, we know that Caleb was fully aware that those obstacles or mountains were not yet removed and they could not yet enter the promised land. And to think that 40 years earlier under the direction of God that Caleb and Joshua and 10 other men were asked to go in and survey the land. And they did.

And you know the story, don't you? You know it so well. You've heard the story since you were in Sunday school. But let me just touch on a few spots this afternoon.

We know what happened. The fearful majority came back, didn't they? They were defeated. They were negative.

And you know what they said to Moses? They said, Moses, the giants are so big. The mountains are so big. And Moses, the cities are walled and they're strong.

There's no way we can conquer these cities. There is no way. Do you know what their problem was? They lost the gold.

They were looking at the giants, at the mountains, at the cities, at the walls. They lost the gold. But God, they forgot that God was leading them.

And do you know what? The minority report came back too. Only two. And two of the minority were Joshua and Caleb.

And their report came back the exact opposite. You know what they said? They said, Joshua, Moses, we too saw the giants. We too saw the walled cities.

But God. You see, the two didn't see the grasshoppers because they saw God, right? And so they said, Moses, let us go in at once and possess the land that God has promised for us. God has promised us a life of victory.

God has promised us a life of peace and joy. And the problem is that many of us don't have the victory, the peace, and the joy is that we don't believe God. We are looking at a grasshopper image instead of saying, but God, he said he would scale every mountain in our lives.

But what happened? The same thing that happens all the time when you vote about things, right? That Joshua and Caleb were voted down, right? And the fearful people sided with the fearful majority, didn't they? And what happened? Here they stand at the very border of blessing. Here they stand at the very border of blessing. God was ready to take them into their promised land.

He was ready to scale every mountain. He was ready to take every defeat and turn it into victory. And they stood with their toes touching the border.

Can I say that perhaps once again this weekend, some of us are standing here with our toes touching the border of blessing. And at this very point, we are going to have to make a choice. But do you know what they chose? But they turned and they walked away.

And I pray this afternoon that as you stand at this border of blessing this afternoon, and God is talking to you about a mountain that you think in your mind that you cannot scale, please don't turn away. Because the result was when they turned away, that they wandered in the wilderness. No victory.

No peace. Instead, they were murmuring and complaining and blaming and rumbling and in defeat and just a treadmill spiritual existence. God does not want us to have to have a treadmill spiritual existence.

He wants us to be able to sharpen our focus so that we can walk with Him in victory and let Him conquer the mountains for us. But they were just wandering and complaining and for not 5 years or 10 years, but for 40 long years, they wandered in the wilderness. I would hate to think that even for one more year, that any one of us will leave this border of blessing this afternoon and go back to wander in our own puny spiritual wilderness.

God doesn't want that. He has much more in store for all of us. They wandered there for 40 years until they were all dead.

What an existence! After they touched the borders of blessing, they turned their backs. And what an existence! But now old Caleb comes into the picture again. And you know, here by this time, Caleb is 85 years of age.

And he said, we have gone in circles long enough. We have gone around this mountain long enough. We have been walking in spiritual defeat, murmuring and complaining long enough.

And he said, now therefore, give me this mountain. And that's what God is asking us this afternoon to say with Caleb, Oh God, give me my mountain. Oh the mountains of God.

May every mountain of God speak to us today. And may we step out on God's promises, literally and actually name that mountain within our hearts and lives and say, God, give me that mountain, not next year, but today. Oh, I'm asking you today, ladies, for yourself personally, will you choose yourself a mountain and believe God that He is able? Whether it be a good mountain, an evil mountain, or whatever it is, but God will give you the opportunity to make a choice as to whether you want to conquer this mountain.

Whether it's a mountain this weekend of a brand new surrender to the Lord, or whether it's a mountain of new understanding for God, or the mountain of determining that this is the day you're going to sharpen your focus once more. In the Bible, mountains are used to reveal His plan for mankind. May we allow Him again to deal with every mountain.

And if we allow mountains in our lives, it will hinder God's plan for our lives, and we will be wandering in defeat. And I'll tell you something, if we do not allow God to deal with our mountains, we have no other choice but to leave the border of blessing and to turn and walk into the wilderness. Maybe not for one year or two, but maybe for forty.

But maybe until we're dead. And God forbid that we should turn from this border of blessing and join that fearful majority. And to know that there is a fearful majority out there.

And we live among them, right? People all around us are a fearful majority. But they're looking at us to see our God. How fitting it is that Jesus often taught His disciples from a mountain scene.

He took the three disciples on a mountain scene. For one thing, the Sermon on the Mount. He taught it from the mountain.

For another one, He taught the Beatitudes from the mountain. And for another thing, He taught the Law from the mountain, didn't He? Mount Sinai. How many times have you heard the story about Mount Sinai and the Law that was given? I would like to just take a moment and talk about Mount Sinai today and see what significance it has in your life and in mine and to see whether God is trying to say something to us on this mountain today.

What does Mount Sinai mean to you? Now, I'm not a theological person or anything, but there are things in the Bible specifically that speak to us. And mountains do speak to us. What does Mount Sinai say to you? Well, in Exodus 20, we read where this wandering tribe finally arrived at Mount Sinai and there's where they received the Law.

Not only did they receive the Law, but what an absolutely awesome experience it was to be near that mountain. Go back and read it in Exodus 20. But here is where God showed His awesome presence to

the people.

And not only that, but He reestablished His relationship with people. He didn't have to, but He did. Why? Because of His love and His concern for us today.

Do you think that we would be here today if God was not continually and again and again showing His love and concern for us today, whoever we are, and bringing us once again to the place where we can conquer the mountains in our hearts and lives? God came to the mountain so that He could reestablish a living relationship with His people today. And we are part of that people, aren't we? To keep our relationship with God, we must keep His Law. You say, I can't.

You think God is going to come to us? Is it the kind of a God that's going to come to us and pound us and say, You keep my Law? No! God has made it so we can choose right or wrong, good or evil, didn't He? He's given us the understanding and the opportunity. There are peoples of the world who don't have the opportunity. You and I have today.

We have had many times. What are we doing with the choices? But God has given us the Law to keep our relationship to Him alive voluntarily. Isn't that great? You're away from the corner.

You're not backed into the corner with someone having a hammer over your head and saying, You do this. God doesn't work that way. He said, Mount Sinai, I should speak to you that I have given you a Law whereby you can live externally.

Keep it voluntarily. You have a choice to make. And God is asking us today.

You know the Law is not outdated. It doesn't need rewriting, although people try to rewrite it, don't they? But it's not outdated. It doesn't need any updating.

It was given on the mountain, and it is as fixed and as changeless as the very mountain. That gives me courage. That gives us stability as Christians to believe in a God who never changes and who, by the way, loves us, but He also hates our sin.

The Law was written on tables of stone, wasn't it? It was given so that it would lead us to Christ. But when Christ came, He brought a brand-new Law that was to be written on the fleshly tables of my heart and yours. And again, as before, He is not saying to us, You must, you must, you must.

But again, we have to voluntarily obey His Laws. Break God's Law. Don't you? Many people break God's Law and disobey God's Law.

And do you know what? Their problems are not halved, but their problems are multiplied and multiplied and multiplied. When we break God's Law, our problems and our mountains become multiplied, and there certainly is no way around it. I wonder if you can say with me today, Oh Lord, how I love Thy Law.

I want it to be the constant rule of my life, not just today on this mountain, but forever. God is interested in a forever commitment. And I want to stand on this mountain and say, God, I love Your Law, and I want it to be the commandment of my life forever.

And then on the other hand, perhaps there is someone here who will have to go back to Mount Sinai today. And you know you have broken God's Law. And you know that God knows that you have broken God's Law.

And God is asking you today, What significance does Mount Sinai have in your life? If you have broken His Law, come back to Him and confess it and let Him be your God. He doesn't want us to turn from the mountain and wander in spiritual defeat. And again I want to ask you, if you are willing and ready to say, God, I have broken Your Law and I want to come back today and say with Caleb, I want that mountain.

But the Law of Mount Sinai was not only given for the benefit of our fathers. It is so easy for us to look back in the book of Genesis and Exodus and Leviticus and say, that all was written for our fathers. But it was not.

It was written for us today. And so was the blessing of God meant for us today. All the blessings and benefits were not meant for the people then only, but for us today who are part of His family.

And so in Deuteronomy 5 we read, Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant of blessing, but with us who are here and alive today. Oh, I tell you, I want that blessing for me. Oh, that we might once again have the spirit of refreshing and resharpening our focus that God might once again quicken us, that we might be what He wants us to be.

I want a Mount Hermon blessing. You say, what is Mount Hermon? Mount Hermon speaks of a mount of blessing. And the psalmist David gives us a beautiful word picture of this mountain of blessing.

133.3 it says, It is like the dew of Mount Hermon which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore. Mount Hermon is noted for its many dews.

And the psalmist David is saying here the heavy dews of Mount Hermon actually speak or symbolize our spiritual refreshing and a spiritual quickening. And that's why we're here today. I want to have Mount Hermon, the place of blessing, speak to me.

And more than anything today I want the dews, the heavy dews of Mount Hermon to fall on me afresh today. How about you? Are you looking for that refreshing and blessing that only comes from Him? For it says, for here the Lord commanded blessing. Oh, I see.

Where? Mount Hermon. For here the Lord commanded blessing. I'd like to believe that this is a Mount Hermon this weekend.

For God says, for here the Lord commanded a blessing. I want that mountain of blessing. Don't you? Don't you? I don't want to be among the ones who will turn from the border of blessing and say, No, no, that's not for me.

My mountains are too big. And then you will have no other choice but to walk in the wilderness with the fearful majority. And they will look at you and they will see your defeat and your God.

Sad enough I'll have to say that according to the law of averages, there are some in this room who will disobey. And I trust that that some will not be you. But there will be some of you in this room who will disobey, walk away from the border of blessing, turn around, and you will make another choice.

And you know what mountain you will land on? Mount Gilboa. And you say, Well, I know Mount Sinai. I know that.

And you say, I know Mount Hermon, the place of blessing. I know that. But what kind of a mountain is Mount Gilboa? I never heard of that.

And what significance does Mount Gilboa have on my life? Well, let's take a look. Mount Gilboa is where we as human beings settle down after we disobey God and make every kind of worldly excuse that our hearts and minds can conjure. Oh, what a mountain.

When we sin, when we disobey, when we turn our heels and walk from the border of blessing, we willfully will settle on Mount Gilboa. I don't like that mountain. It speaks of problems.

It's a mountain of warning. And may I say today, it is a mountain of warning. It is here on this mountain that we think sometimes that we can secretly and quietly get by with disobedience and sin.

But not so. But not so. It is on this mountain, after knowing some of the blessing of God, we will turn around and excuse sin, rationalize it, lie about it, cover it, blame someone else.

If it wasn't for my husband not being a Christian, I would. If it wasn't for my children's thoughts and soul, I would. If I didn't have such a cantankerous neighbor, I would.

If, if, if, if. And someone said, I'm glad you stopped because you didn't say my if. Listen, I don't have to say your if because God already knows your if.

Right? But God is able. Right? I would like to think that Saul is sitting up here on that balcony this morning because he's the man I'm going to tell you about Mount Gilboa. And the next time you read 1 Samuel, I want you to think about what I'm saying.

Saul is our perfect example, a perfect illustration of what I'm saying, of excusing sin and of rationalizing, of blaming. And I see Saul sit up there on that balcony. It's Mount Gilboa.

And what he's saying, he's looking down at all of us here this afternoon, he's warning us. Don't you do what I did. He's warning us.

It's a mountain of warning. Mount Gilboa. In 1 Samuel we read where Saul was chosen of God.

Head and shoulders taller than anybody else. Saul was chosen of God. To be what? King of Israel.

King of God's people. Saul, you must be a special person. I wonder if God would think more highly of you than someone else.

But God chose him to be king over his people. And do you know what? In the beginning, everything went rosy. Everything went fine.

All things went for him. He was walking in victory and in obedience. But do you know what happened? Little by little, little by little, little by little, he turned from God.

Oh, not everything right away. I can't tell you the story. You probably know it.

But little by little. And you know that a man who once knew God's law like we do, and you know Saul, a man who once knew God's blessing like we do, little by little, by little, he turned his back. And he began to wander in the wilderness of his own self-will because he was somebody.

Right? His pride got the best of him. He was somebody. And do you know the end of Saul's life? And he's sitting on that balcony here this afternoon and he says, Don't do as I did.

Don't do as I did. I once knew God. I once knew his law.

I once knew his blessing. But don't do as I did. Wander away from him and lose everything.

I mean everything. I mean everything. Are you willing to listen to his warning this afternoon? If you read in Chapter 31, After the battle of the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons on Mount Gilboa fallen.

And do you know what the enemy did? They chopped off their heads. That's the end of Saul. That's the end of a man who once knew God's law, who once knew God's blessing, and who turned from the place of blessing, and in his self-will he wandered away.

And God is saying, I am bringing you Mount Gilboa as a reminder, that don't do as Saul did. You can't sin. Excuse it.

Rationalize it. Blame others. And get away with it.

And I say so many times, I would do this if my husband did this. I would do this if my husband did this. And I finally have to say, Not so.

When I stand before God, He's not going to ask me, What did your husband do? Is he? It strips off every facade, and God's going to say, What did you do? Perhaps when I stand before God and He looks at me, He doesn't even know or remember that I have a husband and children. Right? I'm sure He does. But it might as well be that I stand before Him, and He's not going to ask us, What did my neighbor, my husband, my father, my mother do? Oh, are you telling me for a moment today, that sin doesn't pay off? If you think it doesn't, the sin of disobedience, if you think it doesn't, we'll have to look at Paul, at Saul, and let us listen to his warnings.

Oh, what a dreadful sin. Oh, what a dreadful end was that of Saul who wandered away. This afternoon I want us to not only be warned, but beware that sin will ever so slyly, ever so little by little, ever so smoothly, lead us by the hand, quietly, and sometimes we're not aware of it.

That's why we need to sharpen our focus and let God give us the discernment when we are slyly and little by little. I have heard women come to me last night here. And one of the women said, I have made a commitment to be an intercessor for the Lord, but I have been slipping away.

Tonight I have come back and once again promised God to be the intercessor. He has called me to be. But you see, little by little, in the busyness of life, in the problems of life, on and on we go, and we are led away.

And we are led away into problems, we are led away into disgraces of every kind. And we begin to make excuses. And I'll tell you something, if that doesn't bring defeat, I want to know what does.

Do you know what our present day attitude is? If I don't like God's law or man's law, I'm going to break it. That's our attitude. Maybe not so much our generation, but our dear young people, and I'm not sure exactly where they picked it up, but if I don't like the law, I'll break it.

And break it they do. But you see, could we say to them without any anger, oh, but you'll never break God's law. God's law surely will break you and multiply your sorrows and your mountains.

Just, it's all right, you know, if I fudge at a red light and just sneak through. But you let someone else try it and you watch the fire fly. It's all right for me to do it because I can excuse it, but you watch that next person do it and you watch the fire fly.

It's all right for me to cut across the lane and cut someone else off in a car next to me, especially if it's an older person. I have to be careful because I'm getting there. And they're not too quick in their reflexes and maybe their vision and maybe their hearing is not as good as mine and maybe they are cutting me off at the lane.

What do I do? You watch the fire fly? No, no. I look at that driver and I say, Oh God, one of these days, very soon, I'll be behind that wheel. And then I want the person in the next car to have mercy on me.

Right? Right? Right? Yes. Oh, how quick we are to judge, how quick we are to let the fire fly. Someone in that car can speak to you and say, Father, I thank you for allowing her to chop me off on this lane, even though it almost caused a collision.

But, Father, I thank you for that illustration you gave me again. Be patient. Be patient.

No, we can't break God's law and get away with it. I want Mount Gilboa. I want Saul from the crest of Mount Gilboa this afternoon to stand there and to be ever a symbol and a reminder that it doesn't pay to disobey God.

That it doesn't pay to wander away from God. Do you want that Mount Gilboa to be a reminder to you this afternoon? Tell me. Do you want... Some of you are almost asleep, I can tell.

Do you want Mount Gilboa and Saul to stand as a significant reminder to you that you cannot break God's law and get away with it? Do you? Do you? Yes. So, Mount Sinai we know, a place where God tells us what to do. Mount Hermon we know, where God is waiting to bless us.

And that's what we want, the dew of blessing from Mount Hermon. Mount Gilboa, yes, I want it to stand forever a symbol and a mountain to remind me that you do not do as did Saul. I want God to make the mountain big for me and every mountain, whether good or bad, I want to conquer it.

I want to conquer them all. We read in Matthew 17 that Jesus took three of his disciples to the mountain apart. Apart from the rat race and the busyness and the problems of life.

Why did he take them up to the mountain? I believe Jesus took his disciples up the mountain to teach them things that he personally wanted them to know. Right? It says, And after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And certainly I want to say this, that there are things you can learn on a mountain that you can't learn anywhere else.

On the mountain of quietness, away from the busyness and the problems of your life, where God wants to speak to you and say things that only you need to know from him. You've got a mountain that the lady next to you does not have. Each of us have different mountains that we need to scale.

And God wants to teach us how to scale every mountain. I doubt if there is anybody here this afternoon that does not have a mountain or a problem in your life of one sort or another that you must grapple with. I really doubt it.

Working with people all the time everywhere and where we live and where we work, people have problems. But just in case there's one of you here this afternoon that doesn't have a problem, I wish you would stand for a minute so we could see you. Anybody here with no problems? We'll rejoice with you if you do and want to see what you look like.

But all of us have mountains to face. Oh, I should maybe retract that somewhat and say if you don't have a problem in your life, would you still stand? Maybe we could envy you. Huh? Oh, it's pretty common that we all have mountains to face.

But oh, God has brought us here this weekend, I believe, to deal with mountains in our lives, right? Every year all of us look forward to this weekend. And one great reason is that we see people we haven't seen all year or not maybe for several years. And what a time of rejoicing where we can visit together, say hello, eat together, pray together, laugh together, weep together, bring ourselves, get ourselves caught up on your family situations.

And I'll tell you, there's people here this afternoon whose lifestyles have drastically changed since last year. You know that? And I wonder, I wonder what this weekend will hold in store, this weekend between now and next year will hold in store for some of us seated here this afternoon. We don't know, do we? We don't know what mountains we might have to scale or face.

Isn't it a good thing and a wise thing, as we are on this Mount of Blessings this weekend, to scale that Mount of Blessings, to be able to stand like did Mrs. Stamper here this morning, for those of you who have heard her. Her husband was here with her last year. He was rejoicing with her last year.

But did you sense the note of victory in her heart and her spirit as she laid her dear one aside just in April? There are mountains in our lives within the next 12 months, perhaps the next 12 days, that none of us know about. Only wisdom tells me that we might be prepared to scale this mountain and remember that God said He would not put anything on our lives, but He'd make a way out. And He makes a way out for us, doesn't He? Yes, it's good to be here, to be with all the friends and to be able to visit and all that again, but some of you are here maybe can say, well, I was able to leave my children at home and what a tremendous, marvelous opportunity to get away from those lively little rascals.

And the best part of it all is that my husband's home, having to fight with them, right? Maybe you're saying that. I don't know. But I'd like to believe this afternoon that greater than any reason at all why you're here, I don't know why you're here.

God knows why you are here and so do you. But I'd like to believe this afternoon that greater than all of the reasons that you have come up to this mountain apart, this weekend here in Illyria to allow Jesus to speak to you afresh and to know Him better and to hear Him. Are you hearing Him at all? You know, I just look at Saturday afternoon and before you know it, it will be history.

You can't afford to miss any speaker lest you will miss something that God wants you to hear. And so I would like to believe that God has not only brought His disciples to the mountain apart, but He's brought all of us to this mountain apart that you and I might hear individually what God is going to say to us in these days. Certainly while on the mountain with Jesus, Peter must have had a tremendous underlying and a tremendous overwhelming feeling of the presence of God and the blessing.

You know what Peter said, don't you? Who knows what Peter said? Of course, of course. That underlying, overwhelming sense of God's presence and he was just bursting at the seams and finally he said, Oh Lord, it's so good for us to be here. As a matter of fact, it's so good, let's just build a house and stay.

I don't think Illyria would want us, do you? Huh? But I trust that we can say, Oh Lord, it is so good for me to be here. Barring all the good friends and all the food and all the fellowship, barring all that, but Oh Lord, it is so good to be here where you are. And you know, he was not finished speaking yet and the next verse says, And while he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overwhelmed them and a voice out of the cloud said, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.

What are the next words? Hear him, hear him. That voice out of the cloud came and said to Peter, to the disciples and Jesus, This is my beloved son, I'm well pleased in him, God said. Hear him.

Now I don't have the foggiest notion what God is speaking to you about. But I do know this, that that voice out of that cloud is saying, Hear him, hear him. I say this, if and while on this mountain top, if we get a fresh glimpse of Jesus and who he is and that lofty one of heaven, then I really think we ought to become fanatics about hearing him.

You say, well I don't like the word fanatic. I don't like a spiritual fanatic. But I want to tell you something, if what Jesus said is true, then you and I should become spiritual fanatics about hearing what he has to say to us from Mount Sinai, about hearing what he has to say from Mount Hermon, about hearing what he has to say from warning Mount Gilboa.

We ought to become fanatics. We become fanatics about a lot of things, don't we? We become fanatics about most anything. Let any pet subject grab ahold of any woman and she will become a fanatic, almost.

Right? It's not easy to become a fanatic. But a real good healthy sound fanatic about hearing what the Lord has to say to us in these days. Did you know that the third chapter of Philippians is known as the fanatics chapter? Perhaps you've heard that before.

But the third chapter of Philippians is known as the fanatics chapter. And in this chapter we hear and we read about this fantastic, lengthy, great pedigree of Paul's, right? Paul says, I am this, and I am this, and I am this, and I am this. He was somebody, wasn't he? He was somebody.

And what a pedigree he had. Wow! Have you ever written up your pedigree and told God how important you were to Him? Well, Paul did. He said, I am all this.

Here I am. Lord, you're so lucky to have me. We've got it all together, you know.

But no, he said all this to say, he turned from the border and he said, and he said these words, Oh, that I might know Him. But that I might know Him. You see, that whole line of pedigree didn't really make that much difference after Paul met the Lord on the mountain.

He said, I'm all this and everything. But all of a sudden he takes his pen and with one swipe, he says, I count it all as done. And I replace it with one desire.

Oh, that I might know Him. Oh, that I might know Him. That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering being made conformable unto His death.

I believe that that day that Paul met Jesus afresh on the mountain, when He, a proud Jew, could set aside his pedigree and said, Oh, can you feel the pain in His bosom when He said, Oh, that I might know Him. Oh, that I might know Him. Have you ever been to the place when you said, Oh, that I might know Him.

That's the mountain I want. How about you? Well, there's one thing for sure that I want to say this afternoon is that the more you and I hunger after Paul's plea when he says that I might know Him, the more it will drive us to the prayer of Paul right after that in Galatians when he says, Oh, God, it's not I, but it's Christ. Paul, all his pedigree and all his positives and all his pluses are set aside.

So if we're going to pursue his plea, then we will have to pursue his prayer. Oh, God, it's not me, it's you. And that's what the speaker said this morning, isn't it? And if that's the prayer of your heart this afternoon, I must ask you just a few questions in closing.

How totally committed to Him are you? How totally committed are you to say, Lord God, I want that mountain? And again, in the book of Joshua, there's a little phrase used three times about this stalwart giant called Caleb, who for 48 years followed the Lord. And you know what the phrase is about Caleb? I think you do. It says, Caleb wholly followed the Lord.

Caleb wholly followed the Lord for 48 years. Now, tell me, do you think that there were no obstacles in his generation? Oh, yes, there were. It says, Caleb wholly followed the Lord in spite of the obstacles, in spite of the mountains.

A lot of his friends dropped out of the race. Ten in the group that were sent in to survey the land, ten of them dropped out of the race, but Caleb for 48 years followed the Lord wholly. Oh, that we might have that determination.

It's too easy to fall out of the race, but Caleb never did. And throughout the entire Bible, there is a small word used again that cannot be translated and that can be easily understood by all. And the word is all.

And it means the same thing as holy. Deuteronomy 10, it says, Hearken diligently unto my commandments that I have given you today to love the Lord thy God.

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