

Sunday, June 19, 1966

Climb every mountain...ford every stream, follow every rainbow until you find your dream. There is no experience that comes to any of us that quite parallels the feeling of standing on a mountain peak, looking out over the valleys and beyond the distant mountain ranges feeling there the presence of a creator in the fullness of his majesty and power. Quietness that rises up out of the valley, and envelopes the mountain is the very voice of God himself. You have known that feeling, that's why, when something very profound happens to you, you speak of having had a mountain-top experience. These are those times when certainly your life opens up and new vistas come into focus. You discover that life is not the humdrum thing that many have found it to be, but when one makes himself available to the forces in the world about him, come high moments when an ultimate reality speaks forcibly to his conscience. The trouble about living is that so many of us never climb to the top of the mountain, but are content to stay down in the valleys, in the shadow of the mountain.

Robert Frost wrote a poem which he entitled "The Mountain." He told of coming to a village during the night, and finding a place to stay. On awakening during the night and looking out of his window, he was unable to see any stars at all in the sky, and he wondered about it. The next morning he arose, had his breakfast, and went out, and then he discovered why it was that he couldn't see any stars. There was a mountain that lay along side the village, and it cut off the view from his window so that he was looking into the shadow of the mountain when he looked out of his window. It captured his imagination, and he crossed over to the meadow that lay alongside the mountain, looking up at it. There he came upon a little shepherd lad who was taking care of the stock. He approached the little boy and he began to ask him questions about the mountain there... "what about this pathway here; does it lead to the top of the mountain?" The lad answered, "Perhaps it does, but those who climb the mountain come in from the other side." "It isn't quite so steep there, and they can get to the top more easily." "Well, tell me, what can you see when you get to the top?" "As I stand here and look up at the towering peak, I see great shafts of granite reaching out of the mountain." "Granite ledges on which one can kneel and rest, and look through the lattice work of the trees and shrubs out into the valley." "It must be a beautiful thing." The lad answered, "They say that it is." "They say that there is a spring on top of the mountain that winds its way down the mountain side bringing fresh, cool water, and somebody says that there is a lake on top of the mountain, a beautiful thing to see." "What's this, you've never been to the top of the mountain." "You're telling me what other people say is on top of the mountain." "No, I've never been to the top of the mountain." Why sure, I've been here all my life; there's nothing for me to climb the mountain."

How true it is of so many of us, taking the common-place that lies all about us for ~~grabbing~~ ^{grasping}. We all have our dreams. Not one of us is that we must project our ideas out into the future and invision what could happen to me. We all have our moments of grandure when we dream what we shall excell, and what it is that we will have in life. But we're always looking beyond the horizon, waiting for another day, looking for a fresh opportunity, when all the while, each day affords us opportunities unmatched. Mountains to climb...and we stay down in the shadows of the mountain, yearning for something; dreaming about something, but never reaching out and taking hold of it. Never climbing the mountain. If we look at the life of Jesus Christ, we can see that the full breadth of his life can be measured by three mountains that He climbed. The three mountains which figuratively protray the full breadth of his mission, what he came to do, and what he was able to do with his life fully committed to God. We too must climb these mountains if we are to experience the full of what life can bring to us.

The first mountain that Jesus climbed was the mount of temptation; the mountain of the mind. It was here, as he began his ministry and went off and spent a time with himself alone, here apart from all that would take his mind from the immediate task, he set himself to invision what his life should become. While there, he was tempted to do many thing, tempted there to take the easy way, become a shogan, move out into a world that will respond to the dramatic, and then you'll bring them easily under the compulsion of what it is you're wanting to do for them; the things you're wanting to do with them. But He saw the falacy of this taking the easy way, not going down to the very core, the drama of his life, but keeping it on the superficiality of his life. To bring in the mysticism, and leave out the rub of man's problems and the desire for God to enter into man's life and touch them at the point of their problems, is the delima of men. When He came away from that mountain, he knew the course he was to follow. He had let his mind soar to the very heights of understanding. He had let God touch his mind so that he knew what he was to do, and how he was to go about it. We have a responsibility to ourselves; that is to understand ourselves, and to understand life so that we can relate ourselves to life, with no misconceptions so that we can get out of it what we ought to, and put into it what God demands us. The mind is the most profitable thing that we can know.

The wife of our Secretary of Defense was speaking this past week, and the sub̄ject of automation came up. She said, "We don't have to fear too much from the mechanical brains that seem to be so awesome." "Take the human brain...." And then she began to describe the very complexities of the human brain. And she said, "I defy any scientist to ever reproduce this, and any mechanical organ." We know quite well that it can't be done. Think about that brain that God has given to you, that mind that rests obscure within your head. What are you doing with it? Some of us use it only to parrot the cliché's of other people. To take slogans that have lost their meaning or certainly are not relevant to our lives, and by repeating them over

and over again we think that we have found a credo by which we are to live. The world is crying today for an original idea. for an individualistic mind, the one who is willing to be energetic in his thinking, so that he can chart new ways for men to go to achieve the ultimate that God has promised to us. Too many of us are content to only live above the premises that others have made. That is why the left and right wing groups today are so popularly reaching the masses of the people; because we don't have to think for ourselves, only let others speak through us, and the cliches, the pat sayings that seem to express what it is that we are wanting. I tire myself of this occurring within the Christian faith. We have slogans by which to live, and we see them running along the highway. The passerby can look at a slogan and it has no real relevance for him, and yet, it is supposed to be the dynamic appeal of Christ for a world that is seeking some direction. We need to take Christianity and make it relevant in the minds of thinking people, and we need to take people and make them thinking Christians. God has given us our minds and he has given us a logical approach to life. There is nothing in Christianity that isn't logical. There is nothing within the mind that cannot be compounded in the mind, and made relevant to life. That is the thrilling thing about it. Those who say that the church is other-worldly have never really studied the life of Christ, to see what his demands are upon his followers. We can communicate with God through our minds. What is more decisive than a fresh idea, a new approach, and individual thought that comes only from God? We need to climb the mount of the mind. Let our minds think about God, condition them to God's presence, discipline them to God's thoughts and revelations, and then we'll not wonder about the scope of life. But we will embrace the scope of life and the new adventure setting before us each day. Jesus Christ on reaching up to the very presence of God himself, so that he was transubstantiated in reality. He stood there in the presence of the ancient prophet. He stood there in the presence of God. Here, James and John felt there was a radiance about Christ that they had never seen before. Even as Moses on Mount Sinai, Jesus was transfigured before the very presence of God. This was the mount of the soul. Now, it is not too easy for us to think in terms of spiritual things, because we are too materialistically oriented. We can know things about us and we can talk. We can talk and know that we can embrace by all of our senses, but when it comes to exalterial effects from God, then we are in alien country, most of us. We don't know exactly what we are talking about, and we don't know really, what to expect. But here is the greatest gift that God has given to man. Let his soul, the soul that we can't define, that we cannot isolate, from the rest of the life simply because it is an integrating force within the life. It is not separated from the personality, it is not separated from the man, it is a part of the totality of man. It is his divine nature, that eternal nature of man.

Sometime ago, someone asked Charles Sanders, who was the greatest electrical engineer of his day, "In your estimation, where will the greatest advance of man be made within the next fifty years?" He thought for a few moments,

and then he answered. He said, "The greatest advance of man and science will be in the realm of the spirit. He said, "Scientist have been exploring the materialistic universe. They discovered many things about it, but the greatest force that has been let loose in the world is the spiritual force of man. And scientist have fatally promised; they have not explored it, they are coming more and more to find that the physical universe does not satisfy the deepest longing of man. If man is to fully find himself, it will be in the realm of the spirit. He said that scientist will one day learn that, and when they put themselves to discovering the full effect of the spirit upon man, he will gain more in one generation than he has gained in the last four generations. The realm of the soul, the realm of the spirit. This is not an uncharted wilderness into which we must find our way, the path way has been opened by all of the saints who have trod them before us. The saints of every generation who have discovered the very interest of God in their lives by the discipline of their lives, they have shown us the way to find God personally. There is no greater evidence of what God can do to man than to see what he has done through people.

of the great things of our church bring us into contact with God himself, and looking for his foes.

A few weeks ago television came into its full maturity in my estimation when that great Pulitzer Prize play, "Death of a Salesman," was shown on television. I've never heard a sermon preached more eloquently than was portrayed in this great drama. Willy Loman who wanted the very of life for himself, and being so illusive as far as he was concerned

He developed a positive attitude in the mind of his children; you can excell in anything you want to do, you are above everybody else. Reach out and take hold of the world, its yours to claim. He was his many friends, slap them on the back, hail fellow. They all liked Willy. But when he came to the end of his life, he discovered that his children had turned their backs on him; they hated him instead of loving him. They realized that he had given them a false credo by which to live, and it wasn't sufficient for what they needed out of life. He, himself, had become unfaithful to his wife, he couldn't find a rapport, turning to his children he found no rapport, he had no with which to turn. So he took the car and drove out into the night, and took his own life. John Mason Brown, writing the critical appraisal of this great play stated, "A real problem with Willy was, he had no spiritual life on which to build and to find."

How many of us can see our own lives reflected in the life of this man. Think about it, and wept for it, and get it, and then you've got the world by the horns. But you fail to realize that the soul is what really counts. But Jesus climbed the third mount, and that was the mount of Olives. This is the mountain of decision. He had spent the full measure of his three years in his ministry. There were many things that he had achieved, but there were far more things that he had failed to achieve. It was a dissolutioned Christ who went out to

the mount of Olives, prior to his crucifixion. Not one pleased with what he had been able to do, one who was driven to the point of tears of his own failings. And now, what shall I say in this hour, Father, deliver me from the demands that are to be made upon me, give me another chance, add another measure to my life that I can complete the things that I have tried to do, but have failed to do. That's what he would have liked to have done. But fighting the issue, and facing it in that moment of decision, he said, "Not my will, but thine be done." The moment of spiritual maturity comes into our lives when we can face God honestly, and make the affirmation of our own faith, and dedication. Of course, there are a lot of things that we want out of life; there are ways that we would like to do it. We're not always content with the way He demands them. Yet we know that until we are willing to say to God, it is your will that must possess me, that we'll not find that oneness with God that we so sorely need. We have found a definite need for the will of God to be made manifest in the world in which we live. We've tried to do it ourselves, we've set up our own boundries, and we've discovered with the plum line - that we're all out of plum. That Jesus Christ, that master carpenter of Nazareth, has shown us how to build the building, and somehow we failed. We haven't measured up fully as he has said that we ought to become. We don't need to look simply introspectively into our own lives to discover this thing. Look out into the community in which we live, look at our nation, ask over the ocean to the other continents. See what is happening in the present day world. As nations emerge without direction, as communism threatens the very existence of some nationalities and the freedom of all, as we here in our own home are unable to find a relationship with one another that is apart from hatred and intolerance. But we find day by day that we're unequal to the task today demands of each of us. How are we to find this direction and know how to go and where to go. It is only when our consciousness can be atuned to God, and by offering ourselves totally to him and let his voice speak in these moments of decision, that the way that he has promised and has shown can become the way of our lives. These are the three mountains that we must climb if we are to achieve the fullness of live: The mountain of the mind, the mountain of the soul, and the mountain of decision.

An old indian chief was coming close to the end of his life, he knew that death was near and he feared for his people. He wanted them to have leadership that was of the same devotion that he had for them. He had three sons, and he wondered, which of these three sons whould take my place as head of the tribe. One day he called the three of them together, and as they stood before him, he said to them, "My days are few, and one of you is going to have to take my place, and I don't know which one it will be. I love each of you equally and dearly, I have full confidence in each of you, but one of you must stand out a little more than the others if he is to take my place. And then, shielding his eyes, he looked over at a distant mountain and he said to the three, "I want each of you to go and climb that mountain just as far

as you can to, and when you've come to the place that you can go no further, I want you to turn around and come back and tell me what you saw, and bring back a memento to show me that you've been to where you said you went." Then he dismissed the three and he went back to his teepee. The days passed and first one son struggled back into the village and the father met him and the son said, "Father, I have climbed the mountain so high that the trees are not like they are here in the valley, they are stunted with the height. They are wild. There are just these trees and a few shrubs and no more, and I have broken off this leaf of a shrub to show you where I have been. Later, the second son struggled back into the village and the father met him and he said, "My son, how far did you go?" He said, "O Father, I went so high up the mountain that the trees do not grow as they do here in the valley, but they are dwarfed and stunted and a few shrubs are all that grow there. And I fell exhausted at that point felling that I could go no further, and then I looked higher and I saw all of the meadows. And I struggled until I went there, and I found flowers growing, and I plucked one and I brought it back to show to you. The father waited, days passed, and finally his third son returned, and the father said to him, "My son, how far did you go?" He said, "Oh my Father, I climbed so high on the mountain that the trees did not grow there as they do here in the valley, they were dwarfed and there were shrubs and that was all, and I fell and I rested awhile, but I looked up, and I saw fields of blooming things, and I struggled until I got higher. There were beautiful flowers that I had never seen before that grow only on lofty peaks." "Oh, my Father, that was as far as I could go because there were sheer cliffs and precipices beyond that and I was fearful. And yet, I looked at the summit of the mountain and I wondered what was there, and so I climbed and climbed. He held out his bleeding hands to show how difficult it was to scale those lofty heights, and then he said, "My Father, I came to the very peak of the mountain and I stood there. There were no trees, there were no shrubs, there were no flowers; all was bare. As I stood there and the wind flew into my face and I looked out over the valleys and over the mountains, and I saw how little I was. How far greater someone else is than I. And I sat there and I felt the presence of a mighty one with me. Now, I have come back with empty hands for all I found is in my heart.

We who stand in the shadow of the mountain, looking up at the lofty heights, shall we stay here content or shall we climb until we find the fullness of God's presence. Climb every mountain, ford every stream, follow every rainbow until you find your dream.

Let us pray.

Music: In these moments of consecration, I trust that you have renewed your fellowship with Jesus Christ. If, never having accepted him before, that you've opened your heart and let him become the master of your life, will you affirm that commitment as we stand and sing hymn 283.
All sing, "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus."