

## Contending for Faith 1

### Genesis 32

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I would recommend a book called 'The Believer's Authority' by Kenneth Hagin. He's an older man who has really walked a lot in the power of the Holy Spirit in everyday life. So, that's The Believer's Authority by Hagin. It's really good.

There is a way of peace to walk in everyday life. It's the way of faith and it's a way that is different from the way of sight. The way of sight is the way we've all been taught to walk. When circumstances seem to be moving against you, the way of sight prompts you to move against them with all the cleverness, and all the power at your disposal. The way of faith is to believe that God has crucified the world in Christ -- has already dealt with those circumstances and has taken the sting out of them and then in the light of that to act.

The way of sight when you perceive someone who was a friend moving against you in criticism, the way of fight prompts you to move against them to try and correct it, to try and explain it in some way with your own cleverness and your own actions. The way of faith is to see that that person and the effect of their words has been crucified in Christ and the sting has been taken out of it and then in the light of that to act and speak. So you can see, loved ones, there is action and speaking in both situations but one is acting and speaking out of your own knowledge, and your own cleverness, and your own ability to do something. In the way of faith the acting and speaking is out of a quiet, and peaceful, and confident heart. Confident that God has already put the thing right and all you've to do is act in the light of that. And so it is a way of peace and it is for each one of us. It applies to everything from finances, personal battles, troubles at home and difficulties with your career. It applies to everything. There is a way of peace that is the way of faith as opposed to the way of sight.

Now, what we're doing this evening is dealing with one of the chapters in the Bible that probably almost more than any other speaks clearly about this way. It's Genesis 32 loved ones, and it's the one we've reached in our study of the life of faith. It continues the history of Jacob. You remember Jacob was the younger son of Isaac and Rebekah and he was given a promise, or rather Rebekah was given a promise about Jacob. That promise is back in Genesis 25, if you would like to look at it. Genesis 25, and Rebekah was pregnant and God spoke to her. Genesis 25:23, "And the Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples, born of you, shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger." That was the promise.

The elder, the elder boy inside your womb, shall serve the younger. So that promise was given by God early on and yet Jacob was the younger son and he spent the next 10, 20, 30 years of his life trying to make sure that that would come about by his own power and his own strength. You find even in the birth that took place in Verse 25, "The first," Esau, "Came forth red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they called his name Esau. Afterward his brother came forth, and his hand had taken hold of Esau's heel." Even there before he was born, Jacob was striving to bring about God's plan by his own power. "So his name was called Jacob," [the striver or the usurper] "Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them."

That just continued. Old Jacob kept on trying to make sure that he, even though he was the younger,

would inherit the promise of God's leadership of the people. So it went on, in 25:29, "Once when Jacob was boiling pottage, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. And Esau said to Jacob, 'Let me eat some of that red pottage, for I am famished!' (Therefore his name was called Edom) Jacob said, 'First sell me your birthright.' Esau said, 'I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?' Jacob said, 'Swear to me first.' So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave to Esau bread and pottage of lentils, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way." So even then Jacob was determined to make sure that this plan came true and so it just went on like that, loved ones.

It just went on, and on. Jacob kept on trying to ensure and you find it in Genesis 27:18. This was the culmination of it because he didn't only deceive his brother but he deceived his old father. Genesis 27:18, "So he went in to his father, and said, 'My father'; and he said, 'Here I am; who are you, my son?' Jacob said to his father, 'I am Esau your first-born.'" Just lied to his aged father. "I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that you may bless me.' But Isaac said to his son, 'How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?' He answered, 'Because the Lord your God granted me success.' Then Isaac said to Jacob, 'Come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not.' So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.' And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. He said, 'Are you really my son Esau?' He answered, 'I am.' Then he said, 'Bring it to me, that I may eat of my son's game and bless you.' So he brought it to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, 'Come near and kiss me, my son.' So he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his garments, and blessed him, and said, 'See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed! May God give you the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be every one who curses you, and blessed be every one who blesses you!" And so Jacob, even though God has promised him all this, he continued to deceive and to use his own strength to make sure that his father blessed him.

Loved ones, God has made a promise to you and to me about our lives. It's as plain a promise as the promise he made to Jacob. I'll show you, it's in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." You could just as easily put yourself into that verse and you can say tonight, "For I am his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that I should walk in them." God has prepared you and prepared good works for you to walk in and you don't need to strive, and strive, and strive to make that come true. You don't.

You don't need to prove yourself. You don't. As you sit there tonight you don't need to think, "I have to find God's will for my life. I have to make it come true. I have to make a success of my life. I have to fulfill God's will." You don't. You are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which he has prepared beforehand that you shall walk in them. All you have to do is walk in those good works. He'll outline them to you, he'll open them to you, and you can rest in that. You can rest in that faith. You don't need to be striving.

I don't know about the ladies, you know, because you're probably the same as us guys but I know us guys always feel we should be achieving something. We're almost taught from when we're born that we have to find our niche in the hall of fame -- we have to do something worthwhile. And probably you sisters are maybe just the same in many ways. We don't have to. We don't. We can stop striving.

We can stop being a Jacob always trying to bring about God's plan for our lives. We can rest in faith that I am God's workmanship. I'm God's workmanship, he's made me. He's created me in Christ Jesus for good works that he has prepared beforehand that I shall walk in and all I have to do is walk forward joyfully. That's it, loved ones.

We don't need to strive, and strive. And yet striving with our natural strength is what keeps us out of God's blessing and that's what kept Jacob out. It kept him out of God's blessing of rest. We are made to live lives of rest and lives of achievement by faith in God and faith in his spirit, not to live lives of striving and strain and yet that's the life that Jacob set out on, if you remember. Of course, the result of what he did was disastrous. You remember, he bluffed his father into giving him the blessing instead of Esau. The result of it there is back in Genesis 32. Of course, Esau was just made and there and was just absolutely determined to get his own back on this brother of his. And so Esau, you remember, got angry and just wanted to kill his brother.

And I think it's Genesis 27:41, "Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, 'The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.'" Esau determined he would kill Jacob. "But the words of Esau, her older son, were told to Rebekah; so she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, 'Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself by planning to kill you.' Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran, and stay with him a while, until your brother's fury turns away.'" And that's exactly what Jacob ended up doing, running away to Haran where he met his uncle Laban who was a worse schemer than he himself was. Who was a worse manipulator, and a worse liar, and deceiver than even Jacob himself was.

And that's what happens to us when we scheme and plan, God eventually brings us up against somebody that schemes and plans far worse than we do. And you remember old Jacob's kind of pathetic story of his 20 years with Laban. It's given there in his own words in Genesis 31:38 and he waited, he stayed there 20 years, you remember, and he ended up with two wives and no possessions. And Genesis 31:38, he says to Laban his uncle, "These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your she-goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flocks. That which was torn by wild beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it myself; of my hand you required it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. Thus I was; by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes. These twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages just ten times."

That was Jacob's 20 years spent with Laban and that's the way it will be for us until we come to the end of ourselves -- we just end up running around in circles, and circles, and circles, and wearing ourselves out. Until at last God finally gets hold of us and God began to get a hold of Jacob and he said, "Look, it's time for you to go back to your homeland where your brother Esau is from whom you fled." And so we read in 32:1, "Jacob went on his way and the angels of God met him; and when Jacob saw them he said, 'This is God's army!' So he called the name of that place Mahanaim."

God knew that Jacob was going to meet his brother Esau and that Esau was going to look pretty threatening and so he encouraged him by sending him a group of angels. Mahanaim is two armies really. And it meant that God sent a heavenly army to be with him so that that army could walk with his own group and so he encouraged Jacob by doing that. Jacob is like us, as we approach something that is difficult we need God's encouragement and God often does that. He sends you some encouragement to let you know, "Look, I'm with you. Go ahead into this, my power is with you." He

begins to allow you to see the group of chariots of fire that are round about you. Because that's what he did, you remember, with Elisha, he let him see chariots of fire round about him that were there.

So God often does that, as you're approaching some great difficulty that you know will be hard for you, God gives you assurance. Hang on to that and stick with that because immediately after that Satan will come and tempt you to make your own plans and to go by your own strength. As sure as anything, that's what happens. You have an exalted time in prayer when God says, "This is going to be a tough time but I'm with you," and encourages you to trust him alone. Then immediately after Satan comes in and says, "But you better make some arrangements of your own because this God won't be able to handle himself." And that's exactly what happened.

In Verse 3, "And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother." Jacob still was not out of his natural strength, he still had another trick up his sleeve. "Okay Lord, I know you've given me angels but I have my own plan here. This brother Esau of mine, I think I have a scheme that will at least quiet him if he's still angry with me." "And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, instructing them, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau." Make sure you call him my lord, "Thus says your servant Jacob," [make sure you name me his servant] "I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now; and I have oxen, asses, flocks, menservants, and maidservants." I'm really quite rich. "And I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favor in your sight." That's what we do, you know.

God gives us assurance that he'll take care of the situation but we still depend on our natural strength. We think with our specious words and we'll still manage to persuade this person to do the right thing by us. Loved ones, we don't need to do that. Whether it's in work or job situation, or with a friend at home, we don't want you to curry favor and we don't need to play the old diplomatic game. We don't. We don't need to be awkward. We don't need to be obnoxious, but we do need to just be straight, and simple, and speak the truth. And do you see when we don't do that, and you know when you don't and I know when I don't, when we don't do it, we're not having full faith in God. That's it.

God knows that and he's limited by our lack of faith, by our combination of faith in what God can do and our faith in what we ourselves can do. So, I don't know how many of you come up against this situation at work or with someone that you've failed to do something for, and you bring the thing before God and you lay it in his hands and ask him to take care of it. Then you yourself make a few little arrangements on the side. You're particularly nice to the people that day, and you're particularly subservient to your approach to them. Well, God knows that you're still using your old natural strength. Really, in a way, you prevent him being strong for you and showing himself strong. That's of course, what Jacob was, trusting God but doing a little on the side, still the old Jacob making his own arrangements by his own natural strength.

Verse 6, "And the messengers returned to Jacob," [they did not bring great news] "Saying, 'We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him.'" When you're a schemer and a manipulator all news is bad news. All schemers and planners have plenty of problems, they do. When you scheme and you manipulate, you always have worries. Why? Because, you're trying to keep this lot happy, and you're trying to keep that lot happy. You're trying to keep this lot satisfied and they all have to act exactly as you had foreseen they would act and if any of them act out of the number you have called, you're in real trouble.

If you're double minded, your mind is dependent on all kinds of things. If you're single minded and dependent on the Father, then it doesn't matter what comes. You can handle 500, you can handle 3,000, it doesn't matter what. But if you're combining your faith in him with your kind of human hopes of how things will go from a human point of view, and you're a manipulator and a schemer, your mind is always filled with worries and anxieties. That was where old Jacob was., "We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him.' Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed." And that's what you'll be, loved ones, if you're walking by sight.

It didn't mean anything actually. There was nothing to be afraid of as we find. But if you're depending on yourself, every shadow is a demon. Every circumstance -- it means bad for you. You're filled with defeat before you see the thing. Your fear -- old Roosevelt was not far wrong. "There is nothing to fear but fear itself." Your outcome, there's nothing to fear but fear itself. God has assured us that the world is crucified with Christ. He has assured us that he has destroyed the elemental spirits of the universe. He has overcome the principalities and powers. There is nothing to fear but fear itself and that's all Satan has. He has only the idea that there's something to fear. That's it.

Well of course, you know this as well as I do because you can quote as many instances as I can where you have tossed at night and not been able to sleep, and not a thing happened the next morning. It all went well, it all went beautifully. So it is true, that there is nothing to fear. God has defeated every enemy. It's only when you depend on yourself, you have to look out and imagine the fears. "Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed," in Verse 7, and of course it still was the old game, "Alright, okay, I tried the first one, I sent messengers and now he has 400 people. Alright, now I'll plan something else." "And he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies."

And it's kind of ironic. Mahanaim back there, you know in Verse 2 is two companies, one company is God's company and the second was his own. Now he forgets God's company he just divides his own company into two. "Into two companies, thinking, 'If Esau comes to the one company and destroys it, then the company which is left will escape.'" It's the old game. Don't do it. Don't get caught in it, you know.

You can't depend on God and your own tricks, and your own strategies. You can't. You're either depending on one or the other. Don't be always making special little arrangements. Oh, there's just a good quotation that I read, "How many of us obey God by the front door and make preparation to retreat by the back." The thought was good, you know, "How many of us obey God by the front door and make preparations to retreat by the back." Well you know, you can think of it yourselves, how many of us obey God up front, you know, but meanwhile when we get out of the prayer meeting, or we get back home we think, "Well, a little bit of life insurance won't do any harm here." We mind as well say to the Lord, you know, "We don't really have faith Lord." Faith is making no provision but what God has made in Jesus. That's faith and that's the faith that works. That's the faith that God answers.

In Verse 9, "And Jacob said, 'O God of my father Abraham,'" strangely enough this was the first real prayer he ever really prayed. So he had made his arrangements but he prayed also. Usually when you scheme you don't pray but old Jacob, he schemed and prayed. "And Jacob said, 'O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord who didst say to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will do you good,' I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness which thou hast shown to thy servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and

now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him.” And he was honest with God, “Lest he come and slay us all, the mothers with the children. But thou didst say, ‘I will do you good, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’”

So he did pray. He did ask God to protect him but it’s the old game. Oh the grace of God doesn’t deal with our nature. The only thing that deals with our nature is the dear cross of Christ. All the grace of God, and Jacob was still old Jacob, back he goes, Verse 13, “So he lodged there that night, and took from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau.” So he prays to God and yet it’s the old human nature rising up with his own strength, “A present for his brother Esau, two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milch camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten he-asses. These he delivered into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, ‘Pass on before me.’” It’s our scheming that wears us out. “Pass on before me, and put a space between drove and drove.”

And if you remember your own plans, they always have to be precise. In fact, they’re so complicated that you spend more time worrying how they’re going to be worked out properly. “Pass on before me, and put a space between drove and drove.’ He instructed the foremost, ‘When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you, ‘To whom do you belong? Where are you going?’” Can’t you see him tossing at night? How often have you done it? “Now he’ll say this and then I’ll say that. Then he’ll say that. Now, what if he says that? Oh, then I can say that.” And you go on and on. “When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you, ‘To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And whose are these before you?’ Then you shall say, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob; they are a present sent to my Lord Esau; and moreover he is behind us.’ He likewise instructed the second and the third and all who followed the droves, ‘You shall say the same thing to Esau when you meet him.’”

So that Jacob hoped to meet Esau after Esau had received present, upon present, upon present. “And you shall say, ‘Moreover your servant Jacob is behind us.’ For he thought, ‘I may appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterwards I shall see his face; perhaps he will accept me.’ So the present passed on before him; and he himself lodged that night in the camp.” It’s amazing, you know, here we are almost two thirds of the way through this chapter and Jacob is still scheming. Still praying a little, trusting God a little, making his own plans a little and therefore holding back God’s blessing.

You and I miss God’s plan and fruitfulness for our lives because we continue to try to bring it about by our own powers instead of by faith. And that’s why God had to determine to deal with Jacob finally and this is what happens in Verse 22, “The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. And Jacob was left alone.” And the guy was worn out. He knew that he had schemed, and planned, and manipulated all his life and here he was living in terror again, back where he started the whole thing and he knew he had to deal with his God.

So it is with each one of us. We have to finally decide are we going to go with whatever God can do for us, however little or however great that is, or are we going to continue to try to ensure things by our own power? “And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day.” Who was the man? Oh, it’s in Hosea 12 if you look at it. Hosea 12:4, “He,” Jacob, you can see by going back in the context, “He,” Jacob, “Strove with the angel and prevailed, he wept and

sought his favor. He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with him – the Lord the God of hosts, the Lord is his name.”

He strove with the angel. The man back in Genesis 32:24, “And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him,” the man was the angel of Jehovah. As you study who the angel of Jehovah is in the Old Testament, you find that he is talked about as like the son of man and in one other place he looked like the Son of God. As you follow through you find that the angel of Jehovah is talked about as God himself. The angel of Jehovah was Jesus in Old Testament times and it was Jesus that wrestled with Jacob and he wrestled with him as any wrestler wrestles to eventually pin Jacob to the ground in the place where he saw that his own natural strength was no longer any use to him and that it could not bring about God’s will for his life. And that’s why Jesus as the angel of Jehovah wrestled with Jacob.

You can see Jacob’s natural strength was mighty, “And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day.” The whole night and in Verse 25, “When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob,” and the angel couldn’t prevail against Jacob. Jacob was so strong with his natural strength that Jesus could not get him to the ground. Jacob was determined that he would continue to do these things by his own methods.

Loved ones, it’s amazing how long it takes you and me to run out of our own strength and our own power and that’s why we see so little miracles in our lives, because we’re still trying to do things by our own strength. When Jesus saw that you see what he did, “He touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob’s thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.” The thigh is the strongest part, one of the strongest parts of the body and Jesus put his finger on the strongest part of Jacob’s natural strength, his ability, and his power, and his scheming, and his manipulating.

I don’t know what it is with you -- it’s different with all of us. With some of us it’s our desire to show our spirituality, with some of us it’s our understanding of spiritual things. But there’s usually something in you and in me that is our strength. It’s our might, and it’s our ability to bring about God’s will in our lives and until Jesus is able to put his finger on that, and put that out of joint we are unable to enter into God’s power. You’ll know where that is. If you wrestle with God and you allow his Spirit to wrestle with your own heart, he will reveal that to you.

“Then he said, ‘Let me go, for the day is breaking.’ But Jacob said, ‘I will not let you go, unless you bless me.’ And he said to him, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Jacob.’” Then he said, ‘Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.’ Then Jacob asked him, ‘Tell me, I pray, your name.’ But he said, ‘Why is it that you ask my name?’ And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Penuel, saying, ‘For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.’”

And it’s interesting, loved ones, that God is held only by those of us who eventually allow him to put his finger on our own natural strength. God will not be held by anyone who has still his own natural strength intact. Only when you are at last broken as far as your own ability is concerned is God able to be held by you and drawn by you into his own heart. That’s why God says, “You have striven with God and prevailed.” God allows himself to be taken into the heart by anyone who at last dies to their natural strength. But until you do that, God cannot take you over. And so all of us need, you know, to come to this place.

There’s something in each one of us that God wants to put an end to so that he really can begin to

be our strength, and our might, and our power. And I would encourage you in just your own hearts and lives, to seek that place where God wants in your life. All fruitfulness begins when you come to the end of your own strength and your own power. I don't know how many of you have thought, "Oh, I do want to find myself. I do want to come to the place where I know what I'm here to do on this earth."

Loved ones, you can come to that place. You can wrestle with Jesus and allow him to wrestle with you. You can speak to him, "Lord Jesus, will you wrestle with me? Will you put your finger on the strength in me that is preventing you showing yourself strong in my life?" And I don't know but that can come in any way but through some hardships, and some difficulties, and some failings. I don't know if you've had failings in your life but in a way we shouldn't be afraid of failings. In a sense, it's only through failings that God can bring us to the end of our powers and the end of our own abilities. And so failings are a precious time for us.

So, I don't know where all of you are in your lives, but I wouldn't be afraid of failures. I would see that it is in failures that you come to the end of your own strength and your own powers. Old Watchman Nee has some good things in his book 'Changed Into His Likeness' and I'd just mention a little to you. "Defeat is defeat. When you or I are defeated it means I cannot, I yield. Yet being as we are we have another try. God may overthrow our plans again and again but we don't admit defeat. We do not give up. We just think, 'We have not planned well enough and the next time we must do better.' Is anything too hard for the Lord the angel had exclaimed to Abraham but it's almost as if we say to the Lord, 'Is anything too hard for me?' One day we must acknowledge defeat, confessing that we know nothing at all and can do nothing at all.

Jacob had not come there and still thought he knew Esau. For this last step therefore, something more than discipline was necessary. Discipline brought him as far as Penuel and it brings us to the place where God can touch us fundamentally. But beware of boasting of God's disciplinary dealings. Some of us say, "Oh yeah, God has been really disciplining me," for until the question of our natural strength is finally settled this kind of talk can only increase our pride." And then he says, "Wrestling illustrates God's method of dealing with us. It is finally to weaken us so that we cannot rise."

And then you remember, how the Chapter ends because Jacob says, "What is your name?" And this is the only time in which God refuses to give his name and the reason is that he doesn't want Jacob to know what has happened to him because he doesn't want him to seek an experience. And Nee says, "Those touched by God do not know what has happened. When it really takes place we don't know what it is. That is why it is so difficult to define, for God does not want us to wait for an experience. If we do we shall not get it. God wants our eye fixed on him not on experiences. Jacob only knew that somehow God has met him and that now he was crippled. The limp is the evidence not merely the witness of the lips."

Then in Verse 31, where he looks most pathetic, he's at last victorious. In Verse 31, "The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his thigh." That's when you're ready to be used by God. When you've come to the place where you know that you cannot do it by your own power and that only God can do it. And then at last when you go off limping, afraid to lean on your own power and convinced that you can do nothing in this world, then you're at last in a place where God can make your life fruitful. Don't be afraid of that place. That's a blessed place.

Let us pray. Dear Father, thank you. Thank you Lord, that the place where we seem unable to do

anything by our own power is at last the place of power. It's at last the place where you strength can be made perfect in our weakness. Father, when we see the mighty giants, when we see Madam Guyon, [Christian mystic, 1648-1717], and we see Calvin, and we see Wesley, and we see C. T. Studd, and we see Jacob, and we see Paul and Peter, our Father, we think we could never be like them. We thank you Lord, that your one aim is to bring us to an absolute conviction that that's exactly the case, we can never be like them.

But you, Lord Jesus, you can be like them if we once and for all give up our own abilities and our own powers to bring about your will for our lives and allow you to come in and do what you want. So Lord, we would ask you tonight to put your finger on our particular thigh, whatever is the strong point of our nature and our ability and our own strength, we ask you to put it out of joint forever so that we may at last see that nothing will come of our lives unless you bring it about Lord. We ask this in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Now the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with each one of us now and ever more.