



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)
So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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The Son of Pharaoh's Daughter

I would like to think about the choices and the decisions that we are faced with from time to time, for a message from the life of Moses. I would like to think a little bit about the first forty years of his life. The message title this morning is *The Son of Pharaoh's Daughter*.

I would like to read the verses that we have in Hebrews 11 about the man Moses and his faith, thinking mostly of the

choice that Moses made. From the Bible, the first forty years of his life we learn most of that from Acts 7 in the message that Stephen preached before his stoning. Some things are mentioned there that we do not find even in the story of Moses birth. It is a story that is familiar to all of us, and a favourite of children.

Hebrews 11:23–29. “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents,

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because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. (24) By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; (25) Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; (26) Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

(27) By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. (28) Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. (29) By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned."

Moses at the end of the first forty years of his life stood at a

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crossroad. He came to a “Y” in the road. He had some choices to make. Likewise we have some choices that we need to make. Today, it makes a lot of difference who our parents are. People can be either ashamed or exalted by whom their parents are. Sometimes children think, “If only I would have been born in that family.” Or, “If they would be my parents, then life would have more or better opportunities.” Moses had two sets of parents. He had his biological parents. Their names were Amram and Jochebed. Then he had foster parents. He was adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter. He was the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.

Who our parents are is beyond our control including where we were born and such like. Nevertheless, we do have a lot of choices — our friends, our neighbours, our church family — whether God is our father or Satan is the one that rules and directs our lives. 1) *Moses’ parents are an inspiration to us as parents, school teachers, and Sunday school teachers.* The faith of Moses’ parents is mentioned. They had faith that saw the threat of Pharaoh. Pharaoh saw God’s people as a threat to his nation. He saw them growing and becoming stronger and more in number and he wanted to

weaken them. He wanted to stop their growth. Therefore, he took advantage of them and enslaved them. He oppressed and mistreated them. He made their lives bitter with hard bondage. In spite of this, God’s blessing was upon them. Regardless how hard Pharaoh made their life, they even grew and thrived the more. His plan was not working, and so he schemed to eliminate them and neither did that work. Finally, he resorted to open killing. All the baby boys were to be thrown into the river.

However, here it says that Moses’ parents had faith — faith in God — “and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment.” They chose to obey God rather than the king. I would like to think of some things that Amram and Jochebed understood about children. They had a right view about children. They saw that “he was a proper child.” The word *proper* simply means “handsome or fair.” We do not know if Moses’ parents understood about God’s plan for this child Moses. *They saw this baby boy as a gift and realized that they were stewards and had a responsibility, and that responsibility was to God.* As parents and young parents today we want to recognize and realize that our children today are gifts from God

and we are stewards of them. God is holding us accountable for how we teach and train them.

Amram and Jochebed saw the great potential of children. So did Pharaoh. Likewise Satan does today. Pharaoh was looking for ways to destroy their children. This set of parents did what they could and they left the rest in the hands of God. When they could not hide their baby anymore, they put him out in the little basket boat in the river and committed him by faith to the almighty God. Today as we think of raising children in this wicked world that we live in, we wonder if it is possible. As we, by faith, do our part and leave the uncertain future to God, God is still as real as He was back then.

They understood, in a real way the brevity of their opportunity. When Pharaoh's daughter brought the child Moses to his mother and offered to pay wages to have her care for him, she understood in a real way that this opportunity was fleeting and brief. Sometimes today I think we forget how brief an opportunity we really have to impress and to teach and to train our children.

We need present day Amram's and Jochebeds — parents and school teachers, Sunday school teachers. We have the same kind

of enemy that God's people had back then. Victory, success, and growth frustrate the enemy. It angers the enemy. It makes him try harder to eliminate and to cause us to fail. When it is our turn to teach Sunday school, maybe one of the little children's classes, it does not take a lot of time to study to teach those classes, or does it? We know the stories so well that they are studying that we know them inside out. However, we should still spend time in prayer and study to make the lessons come alive because we really only do have a short opportunity.

Our easy lifestyle softens us, temptations tire us, and peer pressure sometimes tends to weaken us. We need the faith like Moses' parents had. We have faith in the same God. We acknowledge, know, and understand that God is sovereign and that He moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. In this account the river that was supposed to drown Moses actually is what saved him. Pharaoh commanded that all the baby boys should be killed, but his own daughter actually saved him. Pharaoh thought that he would suppress God's people, but they actually grew even more. When Pharaoh's cruelty was at its height, and the way looked

impossible that is when Moses was born. God is able to work that way yet today even though we live in perilous times. They are not impossible times. It takes faith.

Though the Church may be threatened that does not mean it is weakened. Satan appears today to be all powerful. He appears powerful but God is all-powerful. Temporal things sometimes look glamorous but eternal things, the Bible says, “are not worthy to be compared with . . . ” temporal things (Romans 8:18).

II) *Lessons from Moses.* In the word Moses (in his name) we have two letters that I would like to think of and liken them to ME. We are a lot like Moses. We are sons of God. We are sons of Adam. Adam, the Bible says “was the son of God” (Luke 3:38). By right of Creation, we are God’s. However, it is also true that Satan adopted us. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). We say that children, and all of us have an Adamic nature. We have a nature that we received from Adam which makes us susceptible. Satan would like to adopt us for his child. He has done that through the fall and through the curse of sin. Finally, we are about at the

same place that Moses was. God is our father, but through the fall of man Satan adopted us. He has many ways that he can appeal to us to follow him.

We stand where Moses stood and we have come to years and it is now up to us. At forty years old Moses made a decision. We do not know what all he thought. We do not know what all he knew. From the account in Acts when he went out to set those quarrels in order, it says that “he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them” (Acts 7:25). Somehow we do not know what all his thoughts were. There were some things that Moses did know. He knew who his brothers were. It says, “that he went out unto his brethren” (Exodus 2:11). He knew who God’s people were. That phrase is here in our text verses. He chose to identify with the people of God. He also understood that there would be a deliverance. He knew that God’s people would not always live in Egypt.

He recognized the brevity of sinful pleasures. By faith he understood that they were only “for a season” (Hebrews 11:25). He saw ahead to a day of reckoning — “the recompence of the reward” (Hebrews 11:26). Yes, God would hold him accountable

for what he chose. He knew that God was omniscient, and it helped him. It helped his parents so that they did not fear the wrath of the king. They saw God as more powerful than the king. Moses knew that God was a holy God, and that he required obedience. In verse 28, he kept the commands of God, even down to the detail. Yes, there was that little detail of sprinkling that blood on the doorpost. Really, what would it matter? But he kept God's commandments.

Are we choosing the right family according to all that we know? There are a lot of things that we know and understand. There are a lot of choices that we need to make personally. We have had parents like Moses who tried hard to teach him what was right, but most of us have had some negative influence. Moses was raised in a palace. He was educated in the ways of Egypt. He was exposed to the pleasures of sin. Maybe we did not grow up in a palace, but we grew up in America where we have things comfortable and nice. We do not know what it is like to be hungry. Maybe we do not know what it is like to not have even one dollar in our wallet. We generally are able to acquire the things that we need, and we live comfortable lives.

We did not have a foster mother like Moses, but maybe we had some friends in the past, or there are some relatives of ours that could have caused us to choose wrong. When you think back to your growing up years, you can likely think of some negative influences. Moses did not use that for an excuse to be an Egyptian, and to have Satan for his father. *Moses analyzed [his past and its influences] and he chose for God.* Most of us have chosen like Moses for God. Praise the Lord! However, it is not a once-and-done choice. There are choices that we make every day which identify us, and show who our father really is.

If it would be a once-and-done choice, it would not be as difficult. The Israelites very easily, very aptly explain that it is not a once-and-done choice. They chose to leave Egypt but they wandered around in the wilderness because they again wanted to go back to Egypt. Yes, there are daily choices that we make that show to other people and to God which family we really want to be in. There are things that we buy like clothing that identify us, and speak to others which family we belong to.

I was not able to understand completely the customs of Egypt, nor the customs of the Israelites.

Nevertheless, they were two opposite peoples. They wore different kinds of clothes and they were easy to identify who was an Egyptian and who was an Israelite. Likewise it is today. People wear things on their bodies to make statements. Caps that people wear show that they like racing or hunting. They identify them. Things that we put on our vehicles identify where our appetites and interests are.

I would share some concerns we have as a ministry. One is Men's haircuts. We should continue to not have block hair cuts or shave our necks and have heavy hair in the back, but to have a tapered haircut. That is one thing that made the people of Egypt stand out in separation to the people of Israel — the way they cut their hair. It identified them. It showed who they were and who their father was.

Another concern that was mentioned was our selection of tombstones. We are thankful for the tradition in the way that our church has funerals. We do not have elaborate coffins with lots of flowers. In our cemeteries we do not have flags and flowers. We belong to a different father than the world does. The concern was this: on our tombstones we need to be careful to maintain simplicity. Instead of an open Bible with

the husband and the wife's names now there is maybe hearts and also the modern technology of colour being added to tombstones instead of simply a design or a flower. Now, we can have a green vine with a red rose. That technology keeps on going. We can get tombstones today that have scenery pictures. They can have the person's picture — their photo can be in colour inscribed on the tombstone. We can even have a port in the tombstone with a computer in there that has all our history. Somebody can walk through the cemetery and plug into that and can get your history and life's story from that.

There are many ways that we make choices that identify us. The encouragement was that in our choice of tombstones we would stay with things that are simple and identify us as God's people. We are thankful that we do not have a lot of flowers on our tombstones or flags and that type of thing. These are little choices that we should make that we do not start down that road of identifying with things that are of the world.

Other choices would be in places that we go. I met an older man awhile ago who was shocked by the fact that I was never at the farm show. He could not believe that a farmer would

not go to the farm show. People cannot understand, but they have a different father. They have different interests. We make choices that keep us safe. The pleasures of sin — Moses realized that there was a sense of pleasure of living in Egypt, I am sure. There were many things about that life and about that lifestyle that could have been enjoyed. He realized that it was only “for a season.”

Let us make choices that identify us with God’s people and that keep us wanting to stay there. Some of these things that we choose that keep us safe might be legitimate things. They might be things that are not right or wrong in themselves. That is what kind of bait we put on a mouse trap too. We put real cheese on a mouse trap — something that would be good in and of itself. That is how Satan works. He allures and attracts us. He seeks to win our affection by real and legitimate things that are not wrong in themselves. He seeks to lead us on. Today we have telephones, cell-phones, and digital cameras. Then, the next thing that comes is cameras on our phones, and the digital cameras now you can get them with the moving picture on them, and there is sound incorporated. They keep on going.

In order to keep ourselves

from being caught in the snares of Satan, we need to make some choices. We need to do some analyzing. Some young people have been asked to get rid of their cell phones because it was a snare to them. The digital cameras with moving pictures and sound are actually moving picture shows. We have not had camcorders. We have said no to them for years, but now we have the availability to that on our little cameras. Moving picture shows, plays and dramas, fairs — the world’s methods of pleasure seeking — the church has given direction on this. We would not go to a movie house but what about the IMAX theatre? It is an easy way to get an education. Maybe it is at the science museum. What will we choose? Some of us have been in places like that. They are Satan’s way of leading us on, and leading us astray. The pleasures of sin — yes, there is some pleasure there. In some of these things the church has given us direction that is a help to us, and that is designed to be a help to us.

The church’s rules and guidelines cannot save us — not at all. Nevertheless, they can help us very much. I would like to read a few lines from the poem entitled “Looseness” [from the Sword and Trumpet].

“In matters of church we know very well

That no law in itself can save one from hell.

Yet, by heeding good laws a man’s ways are made clean.

And pitfalls avoided that he’d never have seen.

The flesh can be checked and the conscience alarmed.

And evil suppressed by which others are harmed.”

Is that not what the church does for us? Sometimes, these areas that could be made to look ridiculous or inconsistent. That is exactly what they do for us. They save and they protect us from pitfalls by which other people are harmed. That happens all the time in the world around us. The world goes stumbling on, and finally years after the fact and when it is too late, they are trying to figure out what went wrong and how they can correct society. It is a help to us — to each one of us. We should see it as avoiding pitfalls and snares that we had not seen. We do this for our young children. We build fences around the lagoon, and we put shields on power take-off shafts because a young child would not discern the danger and he would simply walk right out onto that lagoon because it looks safe enough. Or, he would simply reach out his little finger and he

would touch that thing that is going around. Thus, we see there are some dangers there that they would never have seen or understood.

That is how some of these, in matters of the church, can work as well. Many of us in our innocence do not understand. Sometimes, some in our youth cannot discern where it would take us or what it will do to us. Therefore, we sometimes give some direction that will protect and keep us out of Satan’s traps.

We can also choose to identify with the people of God in our speech. Moses likely talked like the people of Egypt because that is where he got his education. We talk like our parents. People can identify us on the phone and know who our father or relatives are because of our voice. Hebrews 11:14 says, “they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.” By the words that we say we declare to those around us that we are seeking another country, and this world is not our home. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matthew 12:34). Our willingness to serve in street meetings, or prison work are choices that we make that identify who our parents, who our spiritual father really is.

Also, we talked about Moses’

obedience. He kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood. He understood the importance of details. Likewise, we today, if we are God's children, we understand that lustful thought is the same as outright deeds. The detail of an unforgiving attitude will not be forgiven. There are many details that God has given us, commandments too as well. By faith Moses "endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27). If we will be successful today would choose right consistently, we need to live with a God consciousness like Moses did — "as seeing him who is invisible." We cannot see God. When we are all by ourselves we need to remember that God is the invisible God and He is there.

When the Russians got to the moon, they sent a message back to the earth. They looked all around and they did not see God anywhere, but they did not have faith either, did they? By faith we endure, "as seeing him who is invisible." Let us remember that God is omniscient. God is everywhere present, and God is all-powerful.

Moses' choice proved right in the end. Hebrews 11:29 says, "By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were

drowned." If Moses would have stayed in Egypt, the pleasures of sin probably would not have lasted very long. Instead of Moses going through the sea on dry land, he would have likely been drowned, if he had chosen to put his lot with the Egyptians. By faith we believe that God would have delivered the Israelites anyway, whether or not Moses would have been their leader, whether or not Moses would have chosen for God. God's cause will triumph. As a result of his choice we know Moses as a friend of God. We cannot be a friend of the world at the same time. No man's heart can contain both the pleasures of this world and the peace of God. Sometimes we forget that, and we seek or choose some of the pleasures of this world and then we are frustrated why we do not have the peace with God that we would like to have.

Jesus said (through John) "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). We need a power that is beyond ourselves in many of these choices. Choosing to forsake the world and having God as our Father makes us eligible for the power of God. That is what it did for Moses. He stretched out his rod and the sea parted. It was because he chose

to be on God's side. Then, God was able to work through him.

He compared the pleasures of sin against the reproach of Christ, and "the recompence of the reward" (Hebrews 11:26). He chose like each of us want to choose. We analyze things by faith and by all that we know there is really no comparison and we know where we want to be. We know that the pleasures of sin are far too costly.

It is like a hunter who sought to catch an eagle. The hunter laid a net near to his bait of fish. It was placed there by the fish, and the eagle was annoyed by this strange thing. After a while, the net did not move, and he came closer and it was harmless. He again ate his fish and took the last one and soared away. After a while, he became so accustomed to that, and the patient hunter kept making all the adjustments necessary until the eagle was not afraid of this strange object. However, with the last attachments being made, a string was hooked to that net. It was taken down underneath a root and back into the bushes, and there the hunter lay. When the eagle was there eating his meal, the net came down and the eagle was caught.

Will Satan give up on us simply because we decided we will

not become one of Pharaoh's daughters, one of Pharaoh's children? We will serve the Lord. We are free. Will Satan give up on us? No. The Bible tells us that the most dangerous enemies cannot be seen. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood" (Ephesians 6:12). It is not things that we see but it is "spiritual wickedness." It is a battle of the mind. The eagle's eyes could see a rabbit two miles away. Imagine that keen eyesight, but not everything can be seen. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

We all need some advice from time to time. Youth especially need counsel and direction. I heard an old man say, "If only you could put an old man's head on a young man's shoulders." We talk about the potential energy of this next generation, and the strength of youth. Then, we think of the wisdom and the discernment of a grandfather. We cannot do that. Young people, young parents, we can benefit from the knowledge and from the advice of our older brethren and sisters who are experienced.

Moses needed to exercise faith to properly evaluate when he made his grand decision. Likely to his peers and those he associated with, he made a very foolish choice. "You threw it all away

Moses. You had everything going for you. If only I could have had that.” Moses needed an education. He needed food to eat. He needed a house to live in, but he chose a balance. He chose what was best for him.

That is what Satan’s traps do. They appeal to our basic needs. Sometimes Satan tempts us to eat too much food. He might tempt us to eat expensive foods that might be wrong. We all need friends. God made us social beings. It is a basic need of ours, to associate with other people. Who will they be? The trapper put out eagles’ food, but it was done keenly with cunning and a subtly.

Solomon is a vivid example for us. Many of the things that he had, were basic needs, but there was not discernment and wisdom. Solomon himself said, “It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory” (Proverbs 25:27). We could find much good advice from the book of Proverbs, but somehow Solomon failed to live it out. Thus, knowing is not everything, but doing what we know indeed is the safest course.

The other lesson that we could learn about Satan and his interests in our destruction is that free provisions have a hidden cost. We tend by nature to be greedy

and lazy and getting something for nothing is attractive. However, the fact is that there is a price to be paid for everything.

We speak about the law of sowing and reaping. The Bible says, “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Regardless what the picture is that Satan paints, Satan knows how to paint beautiful pictures. The colours are so bright and gay. He knows how to make them that way. Satan is good at making the wrong look right. Let us beware.

The other thing that we do not want to do, if we do not want to be trapped by our enemy, is grow accustomed to this life of ease. There is a battle raging between God and Satan. The circumstances of life that we face are not mere coincidence. We look back at stories about Noah, Abraham, and Joseph. Sometimes in those accounts it says, “Then it happened that,” and we say that was God. Likewise it is for us today. The circumstances of life are not mere coincidence. They are sent by either God or Satan. We should discern the circumstances around us lest we lose our alertness like the eagle did and be brought down, and be brought back again into bondage and into Pharaoh’s house.

We are so thankful for what

God has done for us in showing his love toward us, and in sending Jesus so that we did not need to continue being the son of Pharaoh's daughter who had adopted us and taken us captive at his will. Galatians 5:1 gives the exhortation that we would, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

In conclusion I would like to read a poem entitled "I cannot afford."

I cannot afford to go back on the Lord,

Returning to pathways of sin.

I dare not begin to let doubts creep in,

If heaven at last I would win.

My soul must be fed with His own living bread,

If I would be faithful and

strong.

My mind and my heart be kept wholly apart,

From the things that to Satan belong.

I cannot delay all God's will to obey,

When He has revealed it to me.

With diligent care, I must always beware,

The lust that His children should flee.

No, I can't afford to stop serving the Lord,

The price is entirely too high.

I have counted the cost, if my soul should be lost.

I want to be His till I die.

May that be the prayer of each one of us — to faithfully serve God because finally we cannot afford anything else.

Remaining Pillars in the Sunset Years

My subject is *Remaining Pillars in the Sunset Years*. Remaining means, "to stay while others go, stay in the same place, to go on being." That is remaining pillars, or continue being pillars. I have two illustrations that I would like to use first that will help in this thought. The story is told of Queen Victoria. Occasionally she would get off

the throne and go back somewhere in the areas where the poor people lived. There was especially a poor widow that she enjoyed visiting. Her ungodly neighbours noticed this. They came with the question, "Who has been your most distinguished guest?" "Her majesty the queen," was the reply.

"You mean her majesty the

queen? Ah we have you now. Now we caught you. What about this fellow Jesus you are always talking about?" No, indeed," was her reply. "He is a permanent resident. He lives here."

Our subject is remaining pillars. The other one is this. A group of ministers were trying to decide about who would have a city evangelistic campaign. Someone was suggested. Someone else asked, "Why him? Does he have a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?" There was silence for a while and then an older individual said, "No, the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on him." Remember those two things — the one who resides within and who has the monopoly in operating our lives.

I have a number of questions that I want to ask as we go along here. *How important are pillars?* I want to look at some Scriptural illustrations of pillars. One has to do with Hannah's song of thanksgiving at the blessing of being able to make a contribution to the Lord's work. In 1 Samuel 2:8 she says while praising the Lord, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the

world upon them." Are they important? She was comparing. Notice her comparison of the poor and the beggar and how God treats them and then she seems to enter into the thought, "for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them."

In Job 9:6, we have the thought again. God has set the world on those pillars. Job says in Job 9:2, "I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?" He has a problem. "If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. (4) He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? (5) Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. (6) Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble" (Job 9:3–6).

We are looking at the thought of pillars and their place. God apparently has set the earth on pillars. Sometime ago, I asked an individual who has done some studying of astronomy, "Why is it that there are times when the moon is so far down in the full, in the horizon, and then the next time it is up here. There is a few degrees difference." He said "It is because the earth is shifting, I

guess, on pillars, but it does not worry me because I know who put those pillars there and they will fulfill the purpose he has for them.”

What is a pillar? Webster says, “A long, slender, vertical structure used to support a super-structure.” *What makes a pillar?* That is the kind we want to look at. Revelation 3:11, 12 says, “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. (12) Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” Again, the idea is that God is the “Pillar Maker.” He sets the earth on pillars. I would like to introduce the thought into our minds that if we will be a pillar in the sunset years of life, God will need to make it. God must do the putting together. Of course, we will need to let Him and want it. Now, that has the individual in focus.

In Galatians 2:8, 9, we have a statement that Paul makes, “(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty

in me toward the Gentiles:) (9) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Here we have leaders referred to as pillars. Therefore, we have the individual and then the leaders. Of course, they are individuals also but I think you get the idea.

The local church has the responsibility in collective capacity to maintain the doctrine of faith by teaching and practice. This is what it will take to make pillars. It is only as the church maintains and realizes the responsibility that they have in maintaining doctrine of faith and by teaching and practice. There are those churches today which say that they go by the Bible, but a lot of their practice falls short of the mark. It must not only be teaching. It must be practice as well if we will have the kind of pillars we need. Those are the only kind of pillars that God will make.

In 1 Timothy 3:14, 15 the apostle Paul spoke to Timothy the young bishop. “These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: (15) But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know

how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” Here we see the group, “the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” Where else on this earth will we find the truth except in the Church — “the church of the living God.”

There the pillar is. That is the pillar. The ground of truth — “thy word is truth” (John 17:17), Jesus said to the Father. Therefore, the main pillar of the superstructure is the truth right here. It will hold it forever. Let us look at that. Turn with me to Hebrews 6:17. In, the context here he is looking at a number of things — the fact of falling away earlier in the chapter and then he talks about Abraham in verses 14–19 saying as he talked to Abraham, “Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. (15) And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. (16) For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. (17) Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: (18) That by two immutable things, in

which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: (19) Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.”

It is the truth that makes a pillar. It is the immutable truth. It cannot be changed. It does not need to be. God has said everything that needs to be said. We do not always get it done. I am not sure I am saying everything that ought to be said on this subject. However, God’s Word is not that way. It is truth. It is forever fixed. It is immutable.

What it means to be a pillar in the context of the group. We had looked at it as far as individuals, and also as leaders as individuals. I should have asked this question earlier, *When do we enter the sunset years?* Did you ever think of that? Who is here who knows when their “sun” will set? I realize that at my age, and a number of us are in the sunset years because we have lived our allotted time — “threescore years and ten” (Psalm 90:10). Therefore, we are in the sunset. However, the thought I want to leave with is that some of these younger children here may be in their sunset. Do not ever forget it. Keep it in mind. It may not be down

the road very far. Things of this life therefore should be growing strangely dim.

Years ago, I picked this up and I have often thought of it. There was a small child, who was not of school years yet. They had the privilege of having their grandmother living in the home with them. One of the things that this child observed was that grandmother read her Bible a lot. She was always reading her Bible. Then, the child went to school. After a few years of being in school, the child learned about this word “cramming.” Anyone who does not know what that word means, ask some of the younger, or the school children. Sometimes they come down to the end of the year and they have coasted along. They realize, “Hey, that test is coming,” and then they are into it. “Ah, now I know why grandmother reads her Bible so much — she is cramming for the final.” No, that is not the way I see it. Grandmother reads her Bible because she loves that Book. She has someone dwelling within. That Someone is the Book.

In the light of the group, what produces a pillar? We must be in order for us to remain. Therefore, we want to look in the Scriptures. Paul gives some instruction. We had that thought

in our mind as we looked at Galatians 2. Ephesians 2:11 says, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” The reason he has done this is “For the perfecting of the saints” (verse 12). I believe it is for making pillars. Did I take it out of context? No. God will need to produce that pillar if it will ever amount to anything. If it will stand God needs to be the Architect and make it what it ought to be.

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (verses 12, 13). That would be the evidence of His indwelling, would it not, when we become that? Then, in verse 14 there is a warning. There is a corroding element that can make this pillar worthless unless we are on guard. There is a reason we are teaching these things and that they need to be taught and instilled among us. If we will be pillars, “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and

cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” The deceiver is out to destroy God’s pillar making.

James confirms and introduces the same thought. In James 1:5–8, he is talking to “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting” (James 1:1), and all of us. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. (6) But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. (7) For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. (8) A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” We need to have a mind that is set — a mind set. Did you ever hear that? There are some people who have it. If we will be a true, standing pillar we need to have a mind set on Him and the truth.

Paul injects this warning in Ephesians 4:14 and then he moves on. “But,” notice, “speaking the truth,” which is the pillar and ground of which pillars are made. “speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things.” Again, it is growing up unto Him, the one who is dwelling within, who is in residence. “That in all things he might have the preeminence”

(Colossians 1:18). “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: (16) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (verses 15, 16) Do we see how God is working in the Church, in the individuals, in order to make them fit His purpose in His kingdom?

In Proverbs 9:1 the writer says, “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.” There may be a few of you who have seen hewn logs already, especially in some of the older barns. You can see those 8’x8’s and those 8’x10’s and they were hewn. Some of us have those instruments that they used for that. A few of us might have seen them use them. They go along on a log and they go this way and they trim it off, but the hewing marks were still there. I like to think of that the way God needs to make His pillars. Some of us have some have some marks that He had to cut out in moulding and producing that pillar. Thank the Lord for it. Praise Him for it. Here he says, these are the kind, and they are hewn.

One of the things that Solomon had was hewers of wood or timber that he sent to Hiram, as he prepared the Temple.

I found in the first three chapters what I have called the seven pillars (of hewn pillars). Notice them that wisdom has hewn out. 1) Proverbs 1:7, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge [wisdom]” [see also Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10]. Without the consciousness of who God is, and what He is, we will not be a pillar. 2) Proverbs 1:8 says, “My son, hear the instruction of thy father.” This is part of pillar making. It is responding to instruction from those who are in place of instruction — parents. We will touch that a little latter.

3) Proverbs 2:1 says, “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee.” We need to receive it. That is part of this hewn pillar. We need to respond to the truth — His Word and receive it. (4) In Proverbs 2:11, I find here what I have called the “guards” to the making of this pillar. Notice, “Discretion shall preserve thee.” Discretion is well-disciplined. That could be a good subject — discipline. I think we are all agreed that those who are well-disciplined will make good pillars. (5) The second one is “understanding shall keep thee.”

(6) Proverbs 3:1 says, “My son, forget not my law.” It is a fine thing to read it and believe it, but if we forget it, it will do us no good. “but let thine heart keep my commandments.” The reason is verse 2, “For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.”

(7) Proverbs 3:3 gives another part of those seven hewn pillars. “Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart.” Then the reason, “So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man” (verse 4).

In conclusion, I would like to say this: Remember, the subject is remaining pillars. We could list a large number from the past whom we have known and we looked up to as pillars. Sad to say, today where are they? Where do they stand? However, I did select one as I looked back to the beginning of life. My first impressions were in a little brick church out in Adams County. The first individuals whom I picture there where I am standing in that church, was a tall gaunt man by the name of Noah Mack. He was one of the first impressions that I have. The minister was a short, chunky person but he stood out.

I was told that at one time

someone came to him and asked, "What branch of the Mennonite church are you from?" His reply was (and I think I can see him say it) "I am not part of any branch. I belong to the main stem or trunk." There was no question in the mind of the questioner what he meant. Personally, I prefer to not be part of a branch either because with branches we never know where they will go.

More than twenty-five years ago, several of our brethren were in the Selective Service office in Washington, D.C. seeking CO status for our young men. After explaining their reason for being there, they received this reply. I understand that one brother said he was a diplomat and knew how to talk. Apparently he caught the truth though. He said, "You did not leave them. They left you." I would like to propose that we are still a part of the stem which will help to make us real pillars.

We must start making pillars as soon as they are born. I do not know how many of you agree with that. I am not sure it cannot be done even before they are born. It can be influenced. That is when it needs to start — as soon as they are here. One of the things that is so important is receiving instruction, and there is not a better time to teach that child than the day it arrives.

Some years ago, I was preparing a message on child training. I was in a doctor's office. I said, "Doctor, I believe the day to start training a child is the day it arrives." He said, "I agree with you." Then, he gave me a little story. He was still an intern in Chester, Pennsylvania, and their first child arrived. They lived in an apartment. The first night that the child was home everything went fine. However, the next night it simply wanted to cry. He went and checked the child and could not find anything wrong with it, but it refused to quit crying. He said "Finally I said to it, 'Well, you have come live with us. You will make the adjustment.' It took three nights to get it across, and to get it accomplished, but from there on it was peace all the way."

Let us start now. Let us start early. Do your work well. I will share this with you yet. My mother died when I was nine. When I was ten years old, I was put into the children's home at Millersville. You will excuse this personal illustration, but it speaks to the point, in all respect to my parents. The man that I went to live with out of the children's home a year or so later, I overheard him talking to someone else. He said "It was like breaking a young mule." Brethren and

sisters it is a lot easier when they arrive.

May the Lord help us to fill our place now, whether twenty years or ninety years. Of course, more will be expected of the older ones. The reason is they will not bend so easy. If you will remain a pillar you will not dare to bend or you will not be one.

I would like to close with returning to Revelation 3:7–12. I want to read the instructions to the church at Philadelphia. “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; (8) I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. (9) Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make

them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. (10) Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. (11) Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. (12) Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.”

As I read this, I think of what we read there in Hebrews about that immutable Word of God. I think he is talking about a pillar here, do you not? In verse 11 He is speaking of what they are made and what kind of pillars they are. To remain a pillar will be worth it. May the Lord bless.

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The Providence of God

From a sermon by Clair R. Weaver

Sunday, February 15, 2004

Centerville Mennonite Church

Recognizing Divine Providence

From a sermon by Daniel Binkley

Richland Mennonite Church

Sunday, February 16, 2003

Children's Book Reprint *continued*

The Little Woodchopper

“Well,” said William, being moved by deep pity, and in whose heart the conviction was growing stronger that these men before him were his brothers, “haven’t you any relatives in the neighborhood where you came from? Isn’t there anybody who could take care Of you?”

“No,” responded the elder one, “we are all alone. Our father settled in that district years ago,

coming from another place. He was a woodchopper and his name was Robert H.”

“And did you not have another younger brother?” asked William, who was hardly able to control himself.

“Behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.” Numbers 32:23.

The men looked at each other

in fright, and then stared to the ground, but not one said a word. After a pause William jumped up, and going with outstretched arms toward his brothers, said:

“Yes, you had yet another younger brother, and I am that brother! You meant to do me harm, as once the sons of Jacob did when they sold their brother Joseph, but God has turned all for good. He has kept me alive and led me in a wonderful way to this place, to my old grandmother, the mother of our father, who at that time still lived, and who brought me up in motherly love and care. She lived here in this little house which is now mine, in which I have now lived many years in peace and quietness. God has given me besides these earthly possessions, a faithful wife and dear children. And now you are all welcome here with me! I have enough to keep you till you have gained strength, and are able to make your own living. I forgive you for what you have done to me, and hope that God too will forgive your evil deeds.

“Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”
Ephesians 4:32.

The five unfortunate men sat

there like statues. While William spoke they did not once lift their eyes to him. His words had struck them with terror and shame. So that kind man who stood now before them, meeting them in such a loving manner, was the brother they had once treated so cruelly and shamefully. And this brother, instead of rebuking them sharply for their awful deed, and driving them off his place, had only kind and forgiving words for them, even stretching out his hands to help and save them. Quite a while they sat there without saying anything. At last the eldest one stood up, went to his young brother and fell down on his knees, tears flowing from his eyes. William begged him to stand up.

“Not until I have heard once more from your lips that you will forgive us our terrible sin,” he sobbed.

The other brothers began to come, and they too, with many tears, begged forgiveness from their youngest brother. It was a touching scene.

“Yes, I forgive you,” said William again and again, for he was deeply touched. “Let the past be forgotten and come into my arms as my brothers.”



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