

## TRANSFORMING TRAGEDY INTO TRIUMPH

TEXT: "Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away, and be at rest. Then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness."

Psalm 55: 6, 7.

*Make your point!*  
*(Slow)*

In the text, we HEAR the cry of a man who temporarily, at least, is defeated. THINGS have been too much for him. He FEELS he must get away from everything. LIFE has tumbled in on him. His HOPES and DREAMS have been dashed to the ground. ~~TRAGEDY has come upon this man.~~ No longer can he resist like an eagle, but feels he must flee away like a dove.

HAVE YOU EVER FELT THIS WAY? Have you ever had the urge to get away from everything. I'm sure we've all had a feeling like this at one time or another. I had this feeling Friday afternoon when I received word that Dr. Hydon wasn't going to be able to preach, and that I had a sermon to prepare. AT TIMES we really find ourselves up against it. It's human to have such feelings. Life isn't easy and it was never meant to be easy.

We get tired of the struggle and the monotony of routine. We get fed up with the struggle to make ends meet. Monthly bills <sup>POUR</sup> pile in on us and we get discouraged. We get tired of working with the same old unloveable people. Each day brings more dishes to wash, the kitchen floor gets dirtier, there are more customers to please, more work to be done at the office, more homework, ~~more papers to correct.~~ <sup>MORE PROBLEMS TO FACE.</sup> Things pile up until we could cry out like the psalmist of old:

Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away, and be at rest. Then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness.

We all find ourselves at times wadding around in the slough of despondency. The experiences of life cause the blackness of night to fall around us. We look for and search for a way of escape. Life today is filled with many unhappy and imprisoned people.

# SCOTIA METHODIST CHURCH

CATHERINE AND TENBROECK STREETS  
SCOTIA 2, NEW YORK

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TELEPHONE SCHENECTADY 2-9575

PAUL V. HYDON, PASTOR

PHILIP A. C. CLARKE, ASSOCIATE

## TRANSFORMING TRAGEDY INTO TRIUMPH

TEXT: Oh that I had wings like a dove! Then would I fly away and be at rest. Then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness.

Psalm 55 6, 7.

In TEXT - cry of man temporarily defeated.

THINGS have been too much.

FEELS he must get away.

LIFE has tumbled in.

HOPES, DREAMS dashed to ground.

No longer can resist like EAGLE, but must flee away like DOVE.

HAVE YOU ever felt like this?? URGE TO GET AWAY??

Sure....WE'VE ALL felt like this. I had feeling like this FRIDAY

AT TIMES we really find ourselves up against it.

HUMAN TO FEEL THAT WAY. LIFE ISN'T Easy....

GET TIRED OF STRUGGLE AND MONOTONY of routine. Struggle to make ends meet. Bills pour in.

We get tired of working with same unloveable people.

EACH day more dishes, floor dirtier, work piles up at office...

more school work, more customers to please. MORE PROBLEMS TO

FACE. CRY OUT LIKE PSALMIST: TEXT.

We all find ourselves WADING IN SLOUGH OF DESPONDENCY.

BLACKNESS OF NIGHT.....DISCOURAGES. LOOK FOR ESCAPE.

Life filled with unhappy - imprisoned people.

PURPOSE OF SERMON - examine ways available - TRANSFORMING THE TRAGIC MOMENTS OF LIFE INTO TRIUMPHANT EXPERIENCES. Look over common escape mechanisms....used by people seeking to break away.

AFTER - suggest simple formula - meaningful for soul searching experiences of life.

CHANGE OF ENVIRONMENT.....CAN have value. Trip out of town...refresh. Helps.

But on other hand...if problem - sick mind, bored personality, or burdened soul...then there is no escape that way.

TO PACK A BAG, KEY, CAR, NEW JOB....NO positive guarantee for a solution. NO ESCAPE FROM INNER SELF.... C of E helps, but not answer.

ESCAPE IN ALCOHOL.....PEOPLE FACED WITH ACUTE STRAIN. Bury sorrows. For a while SLIP AWAY AND FIND REFUGE. FALSE SONG ON LIPS...GEST ON TONG.

BUT.....even though hard facts softened, sooner or later...reality.

SELF DESTRUCTION.....AND THEN THERE ARE THOSE who finding....escapes ineffective, take desperate exit there is, S. D. Acute strain, frustr. and brooding over problem....decision escape through taking own life.

SUCH THINGS HAPPEN.....MAN COULDN'T GO ON FACING LIFE. BODY IN RIVER.

NO NEED TO DWELL on this point, C Faith teaches man will have to face problem of self in next life.

CHANGE OF ENVIRONMENT, ESCAPE through A. And S. D. three methods to escape reality. Transition at this point....add positive note of suggestion, one more oriented in C F. Centers in quote, author, Words - CURE FOR ANYTHING IS SALT WATER \* SWEAT - TEARS - SEA....

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PURPOSE OF SERMON      The purpose of this sermon is to examine some of the ways available to us for TRANSFORMING THE TRAGIC MOMENTS OF LIFE INTO TRIUMPHANT EXPERIENCES. I shall spend some time looking over what might be termed the common ESCAPE MECHANISMS used by people who are seeking to get away from the reality of life. After having done this, I would then like to share with you a simple formula which many people have found meaningful as they passed through the soul stirring experiences of life.

CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT      *THE FIRST COMMON ESCAPE MECH. + WISH TO REFER TO IS —*  
 A change of environment can have great value.

A trip out of town, or a couple of days away from the job can do much to refresh a person. A change of environment can help. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, if the problem has to do with a sick mind, a bored personality or a burdened soul, then there is no escape that way. To pack a bag, to turn the key in the door, and to get into the car and drive away....or to get a new job - this is no positive guarantee for a solution to the problem. It is no escape from the inner self where the root of the trouble may be. A change of environment helps, but it is not the entire solution.

ESCAPE IN ALCOHOL      *DEEP TROUBLE*  
 Some people faced with ~~acute strain~~ turn to alcohol as a means of escaping reality. They try to bury their sorrows in drink. For a little while one ~~escapes~~ *SLIPS AWAY FROM* the intolerable and ~~makes an escape~~. *FINDS A REFUGE.*

Alcohol puts a FALSE song on a man's lips and puts GIBBERISH on his tongue. His trouble melt like mist before the rising sun. The hard facts of ~~reality~~ *LIFE* are softened for a while, but sooner or later ~~the facts~~ *REALITY* ~~has~~ *has* to be faced.

SELF DESTRUCTION      And then there are those who finding all other escapes ineffective take the most desperate exit there is, that of self destruction. Suffering from acute strain and frustration and brooding over his problem, a man comes to the decision that escape can only come through taking his own life.

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Such things do happen in every day life. In Thursday night's paper we read of the account of a man who couldn't go on facing life. His body was found in the Mohawk River.

There is no need to dwell unduly on this point except to say that no permanent escape can come through this exit. Our Christian faith teaches us this, that a man will have to face the problem of himself in the next life.

SUMMARY AND  
TRANSITION.

A change of environment, an escape through alcohol, and self destruction....these are three ~~escape~~  
*METHODS*  
~~mechanisms~~ used by people facing tragedy and searching

for an <sup>*OUT.*</sup> ~~escape~~. There are other ways of escaping from reality. Allow me to make a transition at this point and add a positive note of suggestion, one that is more oriented in our Christian faith. It centers in a quotation which I once heard. I have never discovered the author of this quotation. His words are: THE CURE FOR ANYTHING IS SALT WATER - SWEAT, TEARS, AND THE SEA. There's insight in this statement; let's take a look at it.

SWEAT

In this threefold cure, the element of sweat comes first. Not a polite word; perhaps frowned upon in the best of society. Perspire might sound better. Good strong Anglo

Saxon word. ~~Robust and shows signs of strength.~~

I would like to think of sweat as a SYMBOL OF WORK. Present day psychologists claim that there is a curative value in work. Too often we look upon work as a curse, rather than a cure.

I'm reminded of the disciples of Jesus who had toiled all night fishing and hadn't caught a thing. They were discouraged. Their spirits were low. All seemed so futile. But then the words of Jesus came across the water and fell upon their ears, "Launch out into the deeps again." Back to work they went, and the result banished their sense of futility.

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Whenever I think of the curative value of work, I'm always reminded of the words of a physician who said to a woman who was fearful that she was working too hard, "Work's a blessing....never forget that, work's a blessing."

Work then is a cure for futility. When you're feeling low, one of the best things to do is to get busy. When worry and fear take hold of you, then get busy and get to work. Do something. Don't become paralyzed by fear. ~~It's wonderful what troubles can be worked off at the end of a hee.~~

Now perhaps some of you are thinking something like this, "That's a fine thought, but I'm so busy right now... ~~..I'm working so hard and I've got a pack of troubles.~~" "Work....I've got enough work to handle... and troubles.....I've got my share." Well then let me add this thought.

Often we wear ourselves out because we have not learned to do one thing at a time. A tennis player could never win a match if his mind were continually upon the whole match and the number of points he needed to win. No....he goes out and wins the game point by point. Yet we get worn out, restless, and fatigued because we haven't learned to meet our work and our problems one by one. That was the method of Jesus - going from task to task; doing one thing at a time, and pouring his whole energy and personality into that particular task.

TEARS        The cure for anything is salt water. SWEAT, TEARS, AND THE SEA. Tears are the second element in this cure. They too have curative value. Tears are for a PURPOSE. Not only do they keep the eyes irrigated, but they also give release to the soul. Tears have healing in them.

Too many people go around with their emotions all tied up in side of them. We need to express our emotions. Tears of sorrow and tears of joy have value. Tears are symbolic of the expression of emotion. Don't tie yourself up inside emotionally. Talk things over with someone.

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And then there are the tears of repentance. We recall to mind the disciple PETER in the courtyard. Jesus was being questioned by the authorities in Jerusalem. Peter had sneaked in and was warming himself before the fire. Somebody recognized him as a follower of Jesus. He was betrayed by his strong Galilean accent. Peter then denied his association with Jesus and the men from Galilee with oaths and curses. The account claims that Jesus then passed by and looked upon Peter. That look almost broke Peter's heart. Peter went out and wept bitter tears of remorse. ~~Tears of that kind are holy~~  
~~and healing.~~

And expressed feeling of regret or remorse for having done wrong coupled with a desire to go forth from this time on to live a better life is certainly a holy and healing experience. (Pause)

THE SEA The cure for anything is salt water - SWEAT, TEARS, AND THE SEA. And this brings us to the third element in this suggested cure. If sweat, and tears are the gift of God to us, so is the sea. The PSALMIST sings, "The Sea is his and he made it." The Sea is so full of symbolism.

It is a symbol of the great power of God. Perhaps you've had the experience of looking out at the ocean at night, and looking up into the starry heavens. Perhaps you've felt that overpowering conviction that such a universe as we live in just didn't come into being by mere chance, BUT THAT behind it all there is a divine hand. That this divine hand is guiding the world, that it is guiding the affairs of man. The sea is symbolic of God's great power.

It is symbolic of God's great love. You may be familiar with the line from the old gospel hymn, "There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea." In that wideness, in the immensity of his love and concern for us, there is room for each person.

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We need to learn to deal with our problems through this way of faith. We need to recognize that there are limits to the things a man can do. We need to escape ~~to~~ God with our many troubles.

The rocks of life tumble down on all of us at one time or another. We don't know when and we can't find our for usre. Life must go on and so must we, but we can go on without strain.

It's all very simple. A small child may have fears, but if he can place his hand in the hand of his father, then those fears oon disappear. The reality of God's presence should be such in our lives, that we place our problems, our entire lives into the hands of God.

I think of Jesus and the great trust he had in God. I think of Gethsemane, of the slumbering disciples and of the agony that he was passing through. Great drops of sweat were on his brow. WHY? BECAUSE HE was looking for an escape. "O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." There, in a sentence is the cry of humanity.....to flee from Calvary and be at rest. But soon there came the steady, resolute words: "Nevertheless not my will, but THINE be done."

Jesus was one who never turned his back, but marched forward.

During this period of Lent, let us think more concerning Jesus. It is he who makes the coward spirit brave, and nerves the feeble arm for fight. All the ages attest that by his spirit in their hearts, shrinking souls have been made strong, timid souls have been made valiant, and they who would take to their heels and run away have been rooted and grounded in their task. I close with lines taken from the 40th chapter of Isaiah:

He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.  
Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:  
But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.

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