

GREAT RESOLUTIONS

Program Thirty Two

Taking the Gospel to the Interior of China Part Two on the Life of Hudson Taylor

Necessary Learnings

In 1849 young Hudson had the opportunity to meet Edward Cronin, who had gone forth in faith with the gospel to Baghdad, Iraq. Through this contact with Cronin and other brothers, Hudson began to learn and read about the principles of serving the Lord by faith. He became convinced that “God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supplies.” But, he also realized he lacked the personal experience and learning of living a life of dependence upon God. He wrote, “To me it was a very grave matter to contemplate going out to China, far from all human aid, there to depend on the living God alone for protection, supplies, and help of every kind. When I get out to China, I shall have no claim on anyone for anything. My only claim will be on God. How important to learn, before leaving England, to move man, through God, by prayer alone.”

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Hudson’s burden for China grew. He wrote to his mother, “I need your prayers. I cannot tell you how I long to carry the Glad Tidings to poor, perishing sinners; to spend and be spent for Him who died for me!” At the age of 20 he was baptized and consecrated himself anew to the Lord. With China in view, Hudson took steps to prepare himself. He continued his study of the Mandarin language and also decided to pursue a course of medical education, knowing that medical skills would be useful in China. He took a job as a medical assistant to a Christian brother, Dr. Robert Hardey, and moved into a poor neighborhood. He worked as Dr. Hardey’s assistant by day, and spent his free time distributing gospel tracts and preaching the gospel among the poor. As he studied, worked and served, he sought opportunities to exercise faith that God would

provide for his needs.

One such opportunity had to do with Hudson’s job. Dr. Hardey was a kind but very busy man and had asked Hudson to remind him when it was time for Hudson’s salary to be paid. Hudson determined he would not remind his employer directly, but instead looked to the Lord to do the reminding. One Lord’s Day Hudson went out to visit the poor in the neighborhood as was his custom. His salary was many days past due and he had in his pocket but a half-crown left from his previous pay. Late that evening, a man begged Hudson to come and pray with his wife, who was near death. Hudson agreed and went with the man to his lodging and encountered a scene of abject poverty. The sick wife, a new-born infant and several other children were obviously suffering from lack of food. Hudson struggled within, knowing he had the means to help but also knowing that if he gave his last coin he would have nothing left. Distressed and conflicted, Hudson found it difficult to even pray for the family. Concerning his inward conflict then, he wrote “Ah, thought I, ‘if only I had two shillings and a sixpence instead of this half-crown, how gladly would I give these poor people a shilling!’ But to part with the half-crown was far from my thoughts. I little dreamed that the truth of the matter simply was that I could trust God *plus* one-and sixpence, but was not prepared to trust Him only, without any money at all in my pocket.” In his unwillingness to part with his last coin, he testified that the flow of joy stopped in his heart. The father spoke to Hudson “you see what a terrible state we are in, sir. If you can help us, for God’s sake do!” Then the Lord’s instant speaking within came, “give to him that asks of you,” and he was enabled to give the half-crown to the family. Hudson testified: “Not only was the poor woman’s life saved; but my life, as I fully realized, had been saved too.

I well remember that night as I went home to my lodging how my heart was as light as my pocket.” The next morning Hudson received a completely unexpected envelope. Inside was a pair of gloves and a half sovereign – worth 400 times the amount of the half-crown he had given away! “Praise the Lord,” he exclaimed, “400 per cent for twelve hours’ investment – that is good interest. How glad the merchants of Hull would be if they could lend their money as such a rate. Then and there I determined that a bank that could not break should have my saving or earnings – a determination I have not yet learned to regret.”

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“I cannot tell you how often my mind has recurred to this incident or all the help it has been to me in circumstances of difficulty in after-life. If we are faithful to God in little things, we shall gain experience and strength that will be helpful to us in the more serious trials of life.”

The supply from the half-sovereign was spent carefully, but was now gone. Hudson continued to pray and wait regarding his now long past due salary. He needed money to buy food and pay his rent. A simple word of reminder from him would rectify the situation, but Hudson was determined to leave this to the Lord. At last, through a set of unique circumstances no doubt ordered by the Lord, the busy doctor finally remembered to pay his young assistant. Hudson was full of thanksgiving and rejoiced—not only for the needed funds, but also because he felt he was learning lessons of faith that would enable him to serve God in China.

Hudson learned further to rest upon the Lord’s faithfulness as he moved to London in 1852 to continue his medical training. Both his father and the Chinese Evangelization Society had offered to bear his expenses during this time of further study. Hudson declined both offers, knowing that each would think the other was undertaking his support. Thus, Hudson felt he was putting himself completely in God’s hands.

Hudson’s times of testing in London were many. He even nearly lost his life when he

contracted a fever from working on a cadaver. By the Lord’s mercy and because of his previously strict diet, he recovered.

The Door Opens

He continued to pray for an open door to China and one opened sooner than he anticipated. The Chinese Evangelization Society was suddenly ready to send him. Hudson decided to take the opportunity, even though he had not completed his medical studies. He was just 21 years old.

His mother saw him off. Before the small ship left, she knelt in prayer with him in his cabin. Then she had to leave the ship, and return to shore, where she watched the ship pull away from the harbor. Hudson wrote of that parting: “As we passed through the gates and the separation really commenced, never shall I forget the cry of anguish wrung from that mother’s heart. It went through me like a knife. I never knew so fully until then, what ‘God so loved the world’ meant. And I am quite sure my precious mother learned more of the love of God for the perishing in that one hour than in all her life before.”

The voyage took over five months, during which Hudson experienced dangerous sea storms, as well as long periods of monotony, bouts of sea-sickness, and discouragement at the crew’s indifference to the gospel. But there was also time for prayer and study. On March 1, 1854, he was in Shanghai. “My feelings on stepping ashore I cannot attempt to describe,” he wrote. “My heart felt as though it had not room and must burst its bonds, while tears of gratitude and thankfulness fell from my eyes.” But the reality of being a complete stranger in a foreign country, thousands of miles away from all that was familiar and dear, soon led to intense feelings of loneliness and homesickness.

He encountered many difficulties right from the start: communication problems, problems finding housing, and bitter cold weather. To his embarrassment, he had to depend on western missionaries for many necessities during his first months in China because the Chinese Evangelization Society support was far from adequate and often late. Moreover, Shanghai, where he was, was in the midst of a civil war. Suffering abounded all

around him. Travel was dangerous and housing and supplies, if available, were only to be had at grossly inflated rates. Hudson endeavored to keep his troubles to himself and realized that grace, peace, and stability could only be found as he came to the Lord in the Word through prayer.

After several months, Hudson procured housing outside the missionary settlement. He was happy on one hand to be living among the people, but at the same time he suffered, knowing he was the subject of criticism from other westerners. Hudson kept himself from a spirit of bitterness. He wrote to his sister, "You ask me how I get over my troubles. This is the way . . . I take them to the Lord."

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Initial Journeys

Within his first two years in China, Hudson began his journeys into the interior, even though he was still learning the language and had little money. His recently arrived co-worker, Dr. Parker, accompanied him on his first journeys. They soon became aware that the Chinese people as a whole feared and hated foreigners. Most had never been visited by a Westerner and almost no one had ever heard the gospel. They distributed hundreds of New Testaments, books, and tracts. Like the Lord Jesus, they felt they 'must work the works of Him that sent me.' They experienced a variety of responses from the people. Some hid themselves behind closed doors while others threatened them. But there were times when they were looked upon with curiosity, and slowly with interest and even friendliness. Their medical care for the people soon opened the door to many hearts. As an example of their trips, they recorded that in one month they traveled for 25 days and preached the gospel in 58 different cities. As they worked, they prayed for the Lord's leading in how they could be the most useful in China.

The Lord led Hudson to take two steps at this time. First, he exchanged his European

clothing for Chinese dress, and even began to wear the Chinese "pigtail" hairstyle. The result was as he expected – people were much less fearful of him so it became easier for him to associate with the people, but it also brought about sharp criticism from westerners, including many missionaries. Hudson was undeterred, however, and later advised missionary candidates to do the same: "Let us in everything not sinful become Chinese, that we may by all means 'save some.'"

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Second, Hudson severed ties with the Chinese Evangelization Society. The Society, though well-meaning, did not understand the situation in China and was woefully inadequate in providing for its missionaries. Hudson suffered much because of this, both physically and emotionally. In these things he endeavored to learn "in whatever circumstances he was to be content." (Phil. 4:11) But, when Hudson became aware that the Society was operating on borrowed funds, he felt he could not in good conscious continue with them. He resigned. Through much prayer and consideration, he decided to go forward without seeking donations or even letting his needs be made known to others. Hudson trusted that the Lord would supply him. Though this way was not always smooth, Hudson testified, "How blessedly He did lead me I can never, never tell. It was like a continuation of some of my earlier experiences at home. My faith was not untried. . . But oh! I was learning to know Him. I would not even then have missed the trial. He became so near, so real, so intimate!" The way of living by faith became a strong testimony of Hudson Taylor's work.

Marty Robert and Bill Lawson

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