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Andrew M. Davis

Teaching Notes

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A.C.T.S. Heroes of the Faith

George Mu_ller (1805-1898)

I. By Faith

A. Imitating Faith

“Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.” Hebrews 13:7

B. The Arithmetic of Faith: Pierson, p. 300-301

- Number of dayschools: 7
- Number of students at the day schools (64 year total): 81, 501
- Amount of money raised for dayschools (64 year total): 109,992 pounds
- Number of Sunday Schools in great Britain: 37
- Number of students at the Sunday Schools (64 year total): 32,944
- Bibles or portions circulated (64 year total): 1,989,266
- Amount of money raised for Bible circulation: 41, 090
- Missionaries aided financially: 115
- Amount of money raised to aid them: 261, 859 pounds
- Circulation of books and tracts: 3,101,338
- Total number of orphans at Ashley Downs (64 year total): 10, 029
- Amount of money raised for orphanage: 988,829
- Total amount of money raised & spent by George Mueller: 1,498,000 pounds (almost \$8 million)

C. Personally Challenged

D. Key quotes:

1. Muller’s life verse

Psalm 81:10 I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.

2. On prayer and faith

"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of!"

3. On himself

"There was a time when I died, utterly died, to George Mueller... died to the world... and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God."

II. Overview of the Life

- September 27, 1805: Born to a Prussian family in Kroppenstadt, near Magdeburg, Germany
- Attended school in Halle; received fairly good education
- Had been confirmed, even took communion, but not a Christian
- 1821-1822: Living deep in sin, spent time in jail
- 1825: Visited a Moravian mission and was soundly converted
- Returned to Halle to prepare for Christian ministry
- 1826: Began to preach
- 1829: Invited by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to go to England as a missionary to the Jews
- 1830: Became pastor of Ebenezer Chapel at Teignmouth, Derbyshire, England in connection w. Plymouth Brethren
- 1831: Married Mary Groves, October 7
- Abolished pew rents; began to live by faith and prayer, refusing fixed salary from the church
- 1832: Moved to Bristol, where he spent the rest of his life working with orphans; influenced by reading a biography of that great Pietist A.H. Francke, who had started orphans homes in Germany
- 1834: Organized *Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad*, strictly a faith venture
- 1836: Opened a house on Wilson Street as a faith venture for 26 orphan girls
- Through faith and prayer, but with no money of his own, other houses, more workers, and an ever-increasing number of orphans came under his care; the project advanced only by faith... no human beings ever told of a financial need, but only God alone
- 1849: Two new orphan homes build at Ashley Down; over 100 children moved in
- 1866: "House number three" completed; "House number four" started to accommodate over 1000 orphans
- Wrote an autobiographical account *The Lord's Dealings with George Mueller*; five volumes of testimonies of direct answers to prayer; the circulation of these books inspired many to give financially to Mueller, and to start works of their own

- 1875: Number of orphans at Ashley Down reaches 2000
- 1875-1892: Evangelistic preaching tour with his wife which lasted seventeen years; he went to Europe, America, Asia, and Australia; they visited 42 countries, traveled over 200,000 miles
- 1893: Died in Bristol, England. Probate records showed his final net worth at about \$800 despite having personally handled and distributed about \$8 million during his lifetime

III. A Sixty-Year Example of Persevering Faith

A. Conversion

- At age nine, Muller stole government money his father (a tax collector) had gathered
- At age fourteen, living in Prussia, he was busy pursuing his own pleasure. While his mother lay dying, he was out partying and getting drunk with his friends.
- At age 16, he had become a liar, thief, swindler, and a drunkard; he was arrested and put in jail; his father bailed him out, then beat him when he returned home
- Muller began making resolutions to improve, but he never really changed
- Once at Halle University, he began running up debts he couldn't pay; after squandering his money, he staged a "robbery" to prove him money had been stolen; everyone was sympathetic and helped restore the money through their generosity
- Eventually came under the influence of a Bible study of Pietists and was soundly converted

B. Doctrinal Convictions

1. Believer's baptism
2. The Sovereignty of God

C. A Commitment to Live by Faith

1. The pew rents and James 2
2. No more fixed salary
3. £ 1,500,000 worth of faith

D. Beginning the Work with Orphans

1. Oliver Twist

2. Growing gradually, then leaps and bounds

E. Moments of Testing & Trusting

IV. Spiritual Lessons

A. Daily Habits

1. Getting happy in God

“I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not, how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished.... I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God, and to meditation on it.”

[Long quote, Piper, *Desiring God*, p. 127]

2. Too busy??

“The first three years after conversion, I neglected the Word of God. Since I began to search it diligently, the blessing has been wonderful. I have read the Bible through one hundred times and always with increasing delight. I look upon it as a lost day when I have not a good time over the Word of God. Friends often say "I have so much to do, so many people to see, I cannot find time for Scripture study." Perhaps there are not many who have more to do than I. For more than half a century I have never known one day when I had not more business than I could get through. For forty years I have had annually about thirty thousand letters, and most of these passed through my own hands. I have nine assistants always at work corresponding in German, French, English, Danish, Italian, Russian, and other languages. Then as pastor of a church with twelve hundred believers, great has been my care. Besides, I have had charge of five immense orphanages; also, at my publishing depot, the printing and circulating of millions of tracts, books and Bibles. But I have always made it a rule never to begin work till I have had a good season with God. The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Word in our life and thoughts.”

B. Persevering Prayer

1. 50,000 recorded answers to specific prayer

2. Mu_ller’s sermon on prayer (Steer, p. 245)

Conditions

1) Petitions must be in accordance with God's will (1 John 5:14)

2) We must not ask on account of our goodness or merit, but 'in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ' (John 14:13-14)

Also: we must be HOLY: Psalm 66:18 "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."

3) We must exercise faith in the power and willingness of our God to answer our prayers (Mark 11:24 "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours.")

Mueller was careful to say that repeated successful answers to prayer tends to increase greatly your faith! It builds little by little!!

4) We must continue to wait patiently on God until the blessing we seek is granted. "For we observe that nothing is said in the text about the time and circumstances under which the prayer is to be answered. 'Ask and it will be given you.' There is a positive promise, but nothing as to time..." "Someone may ask, Is it necessary I should bring a matter before God two, three, five, even twenty times; is it not enough I tell Him once?" We might as well say there is no need to tell Him once, for He know what the need is before we ask. He wants us to prove that we have confidence in Him, and that we take our place as creatures toward the Creator." (p. 246)

3. Praying for decades

"I am now, in 1864, waiting upon God for certain blessings, for which I have daily besought Him for 19 years and 6 months, without one day's intermission. Still the full answer is not yet given, concerning the conversion of certain individuals. In the meantime, I have received many thousands of answers to prayer. I have also prayed daily, without intermission, for the conversion of other individuals for about ten years, for others about six or seven years, for others four, three, and two years, for others about eighteen months; still the answer is not yet granted, concerning these persons.... Yet I am daily continuing in prayer and expecting the answer.... Be encouraged, dear Christian reader, with fresh earnestness to give yourself to prayer, if you can only be sure that you ask for things which are for the glory of God."

NOTE: Pierson, p. 302-303

C. The "Grace" of Faith vs. the "Gift" of Faith

D. Mu_ller on Discerning the Will of God

1. I get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to any particular matter.

2. I do not leave the result to feelings or simple impressions. That can make one open to great delusions.
3. I seek God's will through or in connection with his word. If you look to the Spirit without the word, you open yourself to delusion.
4. I consider providential circumstances (God-controlled circumstances).
5. I ask God in prayer to reveal his will to me.
6. I make sure I have a clear conscience before God and man.
7. Every time I listened to men instead of God, I made serious mistakes.
8. I act only when I am at peace, after much prayer, waiting on God with faith.

E. Storing Up Treasure in Heaven with Unrighteous Mammon

F. Perfect Religion