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Daily Program

Date: Thursday, September 16, 1999
Title: Let Goods and Kindred Go
Series: A Mighty Fortress

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Let Goods and Kindred Go

Lisa Barry: How many hymns can you recite from memory? I'm sure we could all get the first verse from a great many hymns. And one of those would certainly be "A Mighty Fortress." The problem for many of us is that we don't give enough attention to the words of hymns, so they don't have the impact that they could have. All this week on *Gateway To Joy*, Elisabeth Elliot has been highlighting "A Mighty Fortress" and showing how the words can be lived out in everyday life. Her example comes from a missionary to Indochina who kept a diary of the daily experiences of her work. It's an example we can all learn from, so let's get started with this Thursday edition of *Gateway To Joy*. Here's Elisabeth.

Elisabeth Elliot: "You are loved with an everlasting love." That's what the Bible says. "And underneath are the everlasting arms." This is your friend Elisabeth Elliot, continuing my talks today on "A Mighty Fortress," that wonderful hymn written by Martin Luther. And I've been reading you, stanza by stanza, and interspersing this great hymn with selections from a woman's diary--a missionary woman named Hazel Peebles Jackson who lived in what was then called French Indochina. And the part that we've been reading about recently and today is about World War Two and what happened with the missionaries at that time. But I intersperse it with these wonderful words from "A Mighty Fortress."

Some of you listeners know that Elisabeth Elliot is constantly hammering away at people, trying to get them to read, sing and memorize--if possible--the old hymns, because they have meant such a tremendous lot in my own life in steering me spiritually, in supporting the things that the Scriptures say, and in enabling me to get through the very worst times in my life. And Hazel's diary certainly tells some poignant things about what she and her family went through during World War Two. And these words from Martin Luther's hymn are so relevant. Let me read the third verse:

"And tho this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph thru us. The prince of darkness grim--(that's a reference to Satan, of course) we tremble not for him; his rage we can endure, for lo! his doom is sure--One little word shall fell him."

And yesterday I told how in one of the most unsettling and uneasy times in Hazel's life, she made tomato puree. In the

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midst of uncertainty and calamity going on around her, she just settled down and made tomato puree. Now what does that got to do with anything spiritual? It refers to a very simple spiritual, which is do the next thing.

You know, when Jesus moved from point A to point B to point C, we don't find Him frantic or bewildered or worried. We just find Him doing the next thing that His Father assigned to Him. So let me read some more of this rather remarkable diary of Hazel's.

May 1, 1943: "The French Adjoint gave us a good apartment. All French officials regret their being obliged to put us in concentration camp."

The next day, 2nd of May, 1943: "Our first Sunday in concentration camp. Met in the Olson apartment to sing and pray. Very beautiful here. All streets paved and lined with large shade trees. Prison grounds also beautiful."

2nd of June: "Spent our 22nd wedding anniversary in concentration camp in My Tho."

27th of August, 1943: "Rumor of Europe being invaded in several places at once. A 7 o'clock broadcast says, 'Our boat will sail from Saigon October 1st and make exchange in Goa, India on October 15th.'"

1st of September, 1943: "Cutting up curtains for clothes. Deaths increased 25% due to lack of medicine."

10th of September: "Very busy packing. Can't take Bibles or any books with notes written in them. The Japanese kindly allow us to take an unmarked Bible."

17th of September: "We hear that Switzerland refuses Hitler passage for his troops through their land."

September 27, 1943: "This diary must be left. Our luggage examined from 9 to 11, then we drove to Saigon on the way to the boat. We board the Toyo Maru for Goa, India, where exchange for American Nisei and continued on the MS Grips Home for America.

Thanksgiving Day, 1943: "On board the Grips Home. News of the safety of the three boys was received." Hazel adds some quotations which are not dated.

"Don't live a single hour of your life without doing what is to be done in it, and going straight through it from beginning to end. Work, play, study--whatever it is, take hold at once and finish it up squarely, then to the next thing without letting any moments drop between. It's wonderful to see how many hours these prompt people contrive to make out of a day. It's as though they picked up the moments which the dawdlers lost.

"In order to grow in grace we must be much alone. It is not in society that the soul grows the most vigorously." And this is a quotation from Andrew Bonar. "In one single, quiet hour of prayer, it will often make more progress than in days of company with others. It is in the desert that the dew falls freshest and the air the purest."

That's lovely, isn't it? "It's not in society that the soul grows the most vigorously. In one single, quiet hour of prayer it will often make more progress than in days of company with others."

January 9, 1944: "Furlough in Wheaton, Illinois."

12th of January: "Bernard had a small tumor removed from his leg, due to a fellow pressing a cigarette butt against it last summer."

February 25, 1944: "I noticed a definite change in my nervous condition. Was someone praying and believing? Since then people say that I look, talk and act differently. It's like being born or resurrected. Praise to God. Before it was hard even to sing or smile. Words or songs would dry on my lips before one line was sung. Now I want to sing and shout 'Hallelujah!' God is good to deliver me so quickly."

And I want to read a little bit from Courtney Furman's book about hymns. And this is about the great hymn we're talking about this week, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."

"While the song does not mention Satan, our arch enemy, Luther certainly believed in his literal existence. Indeed, he is reported to have hurled an inkwell at him while he was confined by his rescuer, Frederick the elector of Saxony in Wartburg Castle. In such times of treachery and deceit as Luther lived, he trusted in God's truth--personified in Jesus--to ultimately win the day. And it did. Moreover exorcism by that matchless Name was his defense. For God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the Name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

And then in stanza four of this hymn, "One little word shall fell him." That's the end of stanza three and it goes on to stanza four. "That word above all earthly powers--no thanks to them abideth;" That's the Word of God that we're talking about. Make sure that you read the Word of God. Have a Bible; use it daily. "That word above all earthly power--no thanks to them abideth; the Spirit and the gifts are ours thru Him who with us sideth. Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; the body they may kill: God's truth abideth still--His kingdom is forever."

And it's certainly obvious in the dairy of Hazel Jackson that she was willing finally, after some struggles, to let goods and kindred go. It's got to be one of the most difficult things in the world for us to do. We love to cling to our things and we cling to those we love. And there are times when God may separate us from both of those, and He's constantly asking us, "Will you trust Me? Will you love Me? Will you praise Me?"

2nd of March, 1944: She tells us that Bernie, one of her sons, has been making belts for a week. "He gets 80-90 cents per dozen, and makes one dozen per hour. Leather and wood belts for Woolworths and Penney's. He makes 16-18 dozen a week besides his studies." And of course these people were really poor missionaries. I mean they had been stripped of a very great deal. And so this young boy had learned how to make belts and was selling them, making 80-90 cents per dozen.

5th of June, 1944: "Rome fell to the Allies."

9th of June, 1944: "Had my hair curled, second time in my life. Age 49."

That's just a little reminder of what blessings we have here in this country. Just so many things which are unnecessary and yet enjoyable. We just take them for granted, don't we? And here was a missionary woman who thought that that was so good that she was able to do that, that she actually put it in her diary.

25th of April, 1945: "Our new president, Harry Truman, began the opening of the United Nations Conference in San Francisco with a moment of silent prayer and closed with his trust in God for divine guidance. The fall of Berlin is expected in a couple of days."

Lisa Barry: How fascinating it is to see the events of history unfolding from a person who was living through it all as a missionary. Elisabeth has been reading the diary of Hazel Peebles, and she's our living proof that our God is certainly a mighty fortress. And the question I'm wondering right now is, whether this series has whet your appetite to learn of more hymn stories. The stories give so much more meaning to a hymn and we have a book that includes a hymn for each day of the year. That way you can bite off manageable pieces each day and have a little food for thought on a daily basis. The cost for this expansive book is \$18.50 and to purchase it, you can send that amount along with your request to:

Gateway To Joy, Box 82500, Lincoln, NE, 68501. That's Gateway To Joy, Box 82500, Lincoln, NE, 68501. Or call toll free 1 800-759-4JOY. That's 1-800-759-4569. Our Web address is gatewaytojoy.org.

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