

CHAPEL - February 17, 1931

-- President Wright

Scripture lesson: 119th Psalm, verses 9-16

I wish this second division of the 119th Psalm that I have read in your hearing this morning could get into the hearts and souls of all people. If people would do what the Psalmist says we wouldn't be confronted with the situation that often confronts us. I heard one and part of another sermon Sunday that dealt with the problem that confronts us; although no mention was made of it each dealt with the problem that we are face to face with. One sermon was a description of two young men with considerable wealth. They met together and divided the country; and one went toward the city of Sodom. Sodom was a rich and corrupt city and the plains around Sodom were fine places for large flocks. He desired to go toward worldly things. Absolute ruin was brought upon him and his family. The other went to the hills and built an altar to God and set up to worship Jehovah and he and his children live today and have given to the world the religion that you and I believe in.

The other sermon that I heard only part of dealt with the Prodigal Son; how he went to his father and said, Father give me my portion, give me what you have, what is coming to me. He went away and spent it all in riotous living. When he came to himself and realized the situation he said, I will rise and go to my Father and tell him to make me --- Dr. Fosdick said here that not so much the realization of the fact that riches do not make life, but that God must work in one to make it --- went to his father then to say "Make me" make me as one of your hired servants; make me willing to do something worthwhile. Both of these sermons dealt with people who sought after the world's riches; our lives will be failures, too, until we follow the word of

God; for only that will make a real, worthwhile life. We people in the world today, as I see it, are striving for worldly possessions. We are willing to make almost any sacrifice if we can get something for ourselves. "Give me" seems to be the dominant thing in the life of the world today. We are face to face with a terrific tax problem, and people are saying it is the schools. A recent study shows conclusively that only forty-six per cent of the taxes levied in the state of North Carolina by the counties and local government go for schools and the other fifty-four per cent go for other things. I see in the papers that the county commissioners in this county will probably close the schools operated by the county at the end of the six months' term because they have not collected sufficient taxes to run them. In this particular county forty-three and six-tenths per cent of the tax money goes to the schools. The schools are the most important thing by far, and yet I know it to be a fact for I have investigated it, that only forty-three and six-tenths per cent goes to the schools. A member of our Legislature who is supposed to be a friend of the schools said "You can get your reports and say what you will but I know that as much as seventy-five percent of the taxes we pay is for schools. There are thousands and thousands of people in North Carolina who believe the same thing. It isn't true. You can't find it on the records of North Carolina.

The people who are saying "Give me" are looking toward the city of Sodom; will not let the truth come into their lives and free them.

In the United States eighty per cent of all the money collected by the government is for wars, past or to be. We have spent it for destruction, for wars are destructive. Eighty per cent of our Federal taxes go for that. Wars are the result in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred of selfishness of those people who go to Sodom, who say "Father, give me--"; not from those who say, "Make me", those who want to serve.

I feel that we ought to know these things for it is the truth that makes us free.