

## 15. My Father's House

Contributed by LG Parkhurst Jr  
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And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'" -- Mark 11:17.

God sometimes forewarns us to encourage us and help us through the dark times ahead, but we may or may not be sensitive enough to hear Him. Before their many trials began to bury them in the Alps, God granted Edith a premonition into the future and revealed the purpose for tribulations. She almost prophetically wrote home from their boat on September 3, 1954, "our ways are not the Lord's ways, and how can we experience His sufficiency in all things, His comfort in tribulation, if we never go through the times of tribulation? We need to experience all kinds of tribulation if we are to also experience His wonderful ways of bringing us through and supplying our every need." Apparently, they needed to experience all the tribulations they suffered in the founding and early years of L'Abri, and that is why Edith sometimes asks people who say they would like to have a life like hers, "Are you willing to pay the hardship and suffering?"

In their afflictions, God demonstrated His love and provision time and time again. If He did not remove the affliction, He sustained them through it and increased their faith and joy. And after showing them the sufficiency of His grace, then He often removed the affliction. God also used their afflictions, their faith, and His answers to prayers in times of trouble to lead many nonbelievers to saving faith in Jesus Christ. They saw God's mighty power at work and defeating Satan's schemes, so they came to believe in God and turn to Him in prayer. Satan sifted the Schaeffers just as he tested Job, and we can see today that he did not prevail over them any more than he defeated Job.

Through training and tribulation, God made the Schaeffers' home and L'Abri into a House of Prayer. Jesus said, "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations," and, by beginning in one small chalet tucked away in Switzerland, that is exactly what God made L'Abri. Thousands of people from almost every nation and religion would eventually come to L'Abri, find God, and learn how to talk with Him. Through the Schaeffers' work, God intended to teach all believers that they needed to look upon their homes as "Houses of Prayer," rather than thinking only of the Temple in Jerusalem or their own church as places of intercession. Through L'Abri, God would show the Church what she needed to become to be His house--she needed to be a House of Prayer. God never intended the church or our homes to be a place of withdrawal from responsibility for the state of the world, but a place to intercede for the material and spiritual needs of others, a place to do spiritual battle for the souls of men, women, and children. A House of Prayer is not a place for withdrawing into our minds or spirits to experience "something spiritual" or to take a "spiritual trip," but a place where everything is taken to the Lord in prayer and time is spent simply talking to our Heavenly Father, as we would any other person we have come to love, enjoy being with, and respect.

However, if God wanted the Schaeffer home to be a House of Prayer, He would need to provide the house and maintain it, for on February 14, 1955, Swiss authorities gave the Schaeffers until March 31 to leave Swiss soil. This blow almost devastated them, especially when they thought of all the work it had taken to build up their overseas' ministry and how difficult life would be to start over completely. As they thought about the possible alternatives, Edith reminded them of the Lord's promise to her from Isaiah. As they learned more about the edict of eviction, it seemed they could stay in Switzerland if they could find a new home in a Canton that would accept them. They prayed, asked everyone who supported their work to pray, talked to the authorities, and began to look for a new home they could afford.

They could not afford any house they were shown, until Edith found Chalet les Mèlèzes in Huemoz. The day she saw it, Edith prayed for a sign from the Lord, that if He wanted them to buy the house He would send them \$1,000 the very next day in the mail. She had never been so bold and asked for something that seemed impossible before, but she prayed and believed that with God all things are possible. The next day, before she left with Fran on the train to show him the chalet, they received their mail--and found a check for \$1,000.00. Some dear friends in Ohio had written in their letter that "the Lord, they felt, had led them to send it to the Schaeffers to start a fund to buy a house where young people would come to learn more about the Lord Jesus." The Holy Spirit had provided His answer even before He had inspired her to go boldly to the Lord with an "impossible" request. This three story chalet, completely furnished, would cost them about \$17,000, but they had to trust in the Lord's leading for the rest of the money to be given in time to make the necessary payments. When the first payment was due, they counted their gifts in their "house" fund, and discovered that they had \$3.52 more than they needed. For most of the time in L'Abri, and even to this day, God works just this closely to provide their needs--one day at a time.

While these attacks on the Schaeffers were taking place, their two new elders in the International Church were suffering

too. Professor and Mrs. Czerny's son died, and Mr. Exhenry's wife, who was Roman Catholic, threatened to separate from him. So as the Schaeffers and those who loved them prayed for the Schaeffers needs, they also prayed for their church leaders and members, because the devil was trying to destroy all that God was building through them. However, the more Satan fought, the more God opened some people's eyes, and when the children's piano teacher learned about their afflictions and subsequent eviction, and saw their steadfast faith and love for God even in adversities, she believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. And their new elders remained faithful and steadfast in their witnessing to others in the midst of their troubles.

In the fires of affliction, God brought them a greater revival and reformation, and Edith wrote home, "We ask only that we may be filled with the Spirit so that His plan may in no wise be hindered by our flesh...He does time things perfectly, and we need to keep our minds stayed on Him so that we will not be 'anxious' in anything--but truly bring to Him the needs both material and spiritual with thanksgiving." In their tribulations, God gave the Schaeffers the opportunity to practice their Biblical faith in the power of the Holy Spirit, and this consistency in the dark times led some to believe who otherwise would never have seen God's sufficient grace in all situations. Prayer

Dear Father, in the difficult days, remind me that spiritual victories do not come cheaply. Give me that inner peace that passes all understanding, and keep me from running away from the battles you want me to fight using the spiritual means you have provided. Help me to bring everything to you in prayer, by quietly drawing me by your Spirit to tell you everything and intercede for all who have needs. As I study the spiritual biographies of others, encourage me and teach me to learn the spiritual principles you want me to apply in my life, and keep me from copying someone's life for the wrong reasons. Help me do all that you want me to do to glorify you and your Son. Amen.

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