

On Your Lips and In Your Heart

I. Preamble & Prayer Song

A. Law of the Lever – [CC]

- Archimedes of Syracuse (**Picture of Archimedes**) in ancient Greece is famous for jumping out of his bathtub and running naked through the streets shouting “Eureka!”
- Ancient urban legend declares this because Archimedes had discovered the principle of water displacement
- Archimedes certainly ranks as one of the most brilliant minds in antiquity
- He came close to pinpointing the **value of pi**; showing it to be greater than $223/71$ **and less than** $22/7$.
- The world’s first seagoing steamship with a screw propeller was the SS Archimedes, named in honor of Archimedes’s screw pump.
- He even has a moon crater, a lunar mountain range, and an asteroid, 3600 Archimedes, named in honor of his astronomical achievements
- But he is perhaps most famous for one oft-quoted quip: **“Give me a place to stand, and I will move the earth.”**
- Archimedes didn’t invent the lever, but he did coin the law of the lever
- Simply put, a lever amplifies input force to provide a greater output force.
- The longer the lever, the greater the leverage
- The concept of leverage has been—ok, let’s just say it, leveraged in a thousand ways
- Follow me here, as we zero in on systems thinking
- In any system, a leverage point is the place in a system’s structure where a solution element can be applied
- In others words, a high leverage point is a place where a small amount of change force can cause a large change in the system’s behavior
- It’s a 1 % change that makes 99 % difference

B. Two Powerful letters—IF

- There is no higher leverage point than the two-letter word [**if** – **CC**]
- It identifies our deepest regrets—*if only* - It defies impossible circumstances—*as if*
- It is full of infinite possibilities—*what if* - It overcomes all refutations—no *ifs*, *and*, or *buts* about it
- From a Biblical perspective, *if* is the conditional conjunction that will turn God’s eternal promises into present day realities
- Each of those promises is a high leverage point
- And none perhaps carries more leverage than the *if* flowing from the Apostle Paul’s pen in his letter to the Romans
- Tucked away in what is chapter 8, verse 31 [CC]

“If God is for us, who can ever be against us?”

- That one little *if* can change *your* life!
- Think about it—
 - A. If God is for you, it doesn’t make any difference what comes against you

- B. It doesn't make any difference what comes against you, if God is for you
- What is God saying here through Paul's pen?
- He's saying—
 - A. No weapon fashioned against you will prosper
 - B. He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world
 - C. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us
 - D. Since he did not spare even His own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?

C. On Your Lips and In Your Heart

- I've got news for you today—unless you take the leverage point of *if* from God
- Take it on your lips and in your heart—you'll regret not doing it
- Cause you will pass up the blessings God desires to bestow on you and me
- So what does it takes to do this?
- That's the purpose of this message today—to show us how to place on our lips and in our heart this leverage point

D. Prayer Song – Into My heart {CC}

Into my heart, into my heart
 Come into my heart, Lord Jesus
 Come in today, come in to stay
 Come into my heart, Lord Jesus

Out of my heart, out of my heart,
 Shine out of my heart, Lord Jesus

Shine out today, shine out all way
 Shine out of my heart Lord Jesus

II. Message

A. Unconquerableness – [CC]

- Oswald Chambers coined a word that describes the leverage point of God's *ifs*
- *Unconquerableness*
- I know, spell-check will always underline it in red, but that's ok
- Here's what Chambers says about it— [CC]

“No power on earth or in hell can conquer the Spirit of God in a human spirit.”

- It's an inner unconquerableness—it may not pass spell-check, but it actually spells *what if*
- You see, religion is all about what you do *for God*, but Christianity is all about what Christ has done and will do *for you*
- It all starts with that leverage point—God is *for you*
- Put it down—

- A. If the Father is on our side, then game on
- B. If Christ is in our corner, the fight is decided before it even begins
- C. If the Holy Spirit is our tag team, well then, Katy, bar the door and baton down the hatches
- I would like to illustrate this with a favorite story of many found in our Bible

B. Joseph Meeting his brothers in Egypt

- It's the story of Joseph, the son of Jacob
- Who, is nearly 40 years old and has not seen his brothers since they sold him to some Ishmaelite traders when he was 17
- Joseph had landed in Egypt at the bottom of the rung in society—
 - A. Sold as a slave by his brothers—resold as a slave to Potiphar, head of Pharaoh's secret service—his body guard
 - B. Potiphar's wife was unsuccessful in getting Joseph to have an affair with her—so into Pharaoh's prison
 - C. Joseph now had a rap sheet, a history as a valued slave gone bad—no one, perhaps even God couldn't be on his side
- But through a series of dreams, by two of Pharaoh's deposed servants—his baker and his cup-bearer
- Joseph, despite every setback, every bad turn, every dead end—he believed *God is for him*
- And then, in just a few hours one day, Joseph is ordered to Pharaoh's court
- Pharaoh has had a dream and no one can provide the meaning
- No one that is, until Pharaoh's cup-bearer who now remembered Joseph provided him the meaning of his dream
- And Joseph is called on—he shaves, and puts on fresh set of clothes—perhaps his first civilian attire in years
- Oh to be out of those stripes!
- TEXT: Genesis 41:15
- And Pharaoh gets to the point quickly—

“I had a dream last night, and no one here can tell me what it means. But I heard that when you hear about a dream you can interpret it.”

- Here's Joseph's chance to toot his horn—make some noise for himself
- Perhaps barter with Pharaoh—“I'll give it my best shot, if you tell me what's in it for me?”
- But no, what Joseph's learned with those extra two years since Pharaoh's cup-bearer had left the prison and returned to his post and forgot all about him was this—
- **CC Point: Mankind can fail you, forget about you, consider you dead and gone, but God will not**
- Why think of it—Joseph may have been a slave and then a prisoner—his life going down and not up
- But in each instance, he was a “leader”—
 - A. He led Potiphar's household
 - B. He led Pharaoh's prison
 - C. He's now given the opportunity to lead Pharaoh to the meaning of his dream
- But instead of bringing himself up, let's listen in to what Joseph says—

- TEXT: Genesis 41:16 READ

“It’s beyond my power to do this.” Joseph replied. “But God can tell you what it means and set you at ease.”

- Joseph learned who is *for him*, Joseph will issue his calling card and it won’t have his name on it, but rather God’s name on it
- I can’t tell you, this heart and these lips of mine are guided by Someone far more capable than I am
- Have you been struggling to fight a battle and each time you have lost?
- I have news for you—there’s a tipping point, a leverage point, and you and me—we’ve got to let God take the lead

C. Tipping Point

- I read a book once by Malcolm Gladwell, entitled *Tipping Point*
- In it Gladwell defines the tipping point as “the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point”
- It’s the moment when an idea, trend or social behavior passes a point of no return and gains acceptance
 - A.** In physics, a tipping point is when an object is displaced from a stable state of equilibrium into a new state
 - B.** In economics, it’s the point at which an emerging technology becomes the industry standard
 - C.** In sociology, it’s when a quorum of people adopts a behavior so that it reaches critical mass and goes viral
 - D.** In sports, it’s the moment when momentum shifts, or re-shifts
- Spiritually speaking— *the tipping point is when you believe, without any reservation, that God is for you*
- It’s the revelation that God doesn’t just *love* you, He *likes* you
- He loves you enough to die for you, and he likes you enough to want to spend eternity with you
- Joseph remembered the words of his grandfather, Isaac, when he told Joseph the story as a young teenager, of being offered on the altar by Abraham his father
- And the look Isaac had in his eye when the tipping point on the altar occurred
- And Isaac described his father’s hand with the knife being stopped by an unseen hand
- And his father’s name being called, not once but twice—“Abraham, Abraham!”
- TEXT: Genesis 22:12-[CC]

“Don’t lay a hand on the boy! Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son.”

- Joseph treasured that moment with his grandfather in his heart and **learned to let God, who is for you, lead his life**
- He heard Pharaoh’s dream and put on his lips the words God gave him in his heart
- I love this story because Joseph is led to do more than provide Pharaoh the meaning of his dream—let’s read it
- TEXT: Genesis 41:32-36 READ
- Joseph, without realizing it provided Pharaoh with more than the meaning of his dream
- He gave Pharaoh the blueprint of how to respond to the dream—really, God gave it to Pharaoh through Joseph
- And, Joseph is pegged as the one to carry this blue print out—at 30 years of age
- Joseph led a secret service head’s household, led Pharaoh’s prison, now he will lead Egypt through a crisis

- Now, fast forward nine years, and Joseph, as governor of Egypt, second to only Pharaoh, is nearing 40 years old
- His brothers have come to Egypt for grain—the seven years of plenty have passed and the second year of famine is about to end
- Joseph and his older brothers have not seen each other for nearly 25 years—23 years to be exact
- They are grown men and each have their own families now—Joseph too
- But Joseph knows these are his brothers, yet they do not know this young governor of Egypt is their “kid brother”
- They remember Joseph as an obnoxious 17 year old—now he’s dressed in his Egyptian governor wardrobe
- Joseph questions his brothers—asking questions they did not expect, presenting suspicions in his questions
- His brothers bowed low as they had entered, and Joseph remembered his dreams
 - A. Where are you from?
 - B. Looking at them guardedly he said, “You are spies! You have come to see how vulnerable our land has become?”
- “No, my lord!” We are honest men, sir! We are not spies!”
- Joseph sat and took in all that they said—
 - A. There are actually 12 of us
 - B. We are all brothers, sons of a man living in Canaan
 - C. Our youngest brother is back with our father
 - D. One of our brothers is no longer with us
- Imagine, here is Joseph’s opportunity to literally lord it over his own brothers
- But Joseph has learned to check his lips and stay his heart—permitting God to lead and being careful not to get ahead of God
- I am reminded of our Scripture lesson today in Deuteronomy

D. Scripture Lesson – Deuteronomy 30:10

“The Lord your God will delight in you if you obey his voice and keep the commands and decrees written in this Book of instruction, and if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul.”

- E. How do you do this? These are leverage moments with either momentous or disastrous outcomes
- F. With Moses’ help here and the story of Joseph meeting his brothers, let’s discover the application of today’s message

III. Application

A. Moses’ Final Words

- The final chapters of Deuteronomy are Moses’ final words to the Children of Israel
- Moses has taken Israel and divided the twelve tribes in half and positioned them between two mountain tops—in a valley in between
- Then he has leaders from six of the tribes on one mountain (Gerizim) proclaim blessings and on the other mountain, (Ebal) pronounce curses
- And each blessing and curse has a leverage point, an *if* that introduces each blessing and each curse
- Can’t you just picture their heads going like this—looking to the right, a blessing, then to the left, a curse—almost makes me dizzy thinking about it

- Moses' appeal comes to a climax in Deuteronomy 30, verse 6
- TEXT: Deuteronomy 30:6 Let's read it...

“The Lord your God will change (circumcise) your heart and the hearts of your descendants, so that you will love him with all your heart and soul, and so you will live.”

- Is this command doable? Possible?
- Watch as Moses answers these questions—
- TEXT: Deuteronomy 30:11-14 READ

“This command I am giving you today is not too difficult for you, it is not beyond your reach. It is not kept in heaven, so distant that you must ask, “Who will go up to heaven and bring it down so we can hear it and obey? It is kept beyond the sea, so far away that you must ask, “Who will cross the sea to bring it to us so we can hear it and obey?” No, the message is very close at hand, it is on your lips and in your heart so that you can obey it.”

- The message is very close—On your lips and in your heart
- **[CC] Point—taking on leverage points from God, His ifs, must be done on your lips and in your heart**
- You see, Joseph had pressed the point of them being spies and in the end, he chose Simeon to remain as surety that his brothers would return with “Benjamin” on their return trip
- Why had they let their lips go and tell of Benjamin! How were they going to get their father to let Benjamin go back with them
- But into each of his 9 brother's grain sacks, Joseph got all the grain he could get inside and then he had placed the amount each sack was worth in coinage in the top of each of their sacks
- The brothers were beside themselves with fear when they saw this on their way home
- Their families were waiting on their return—their survival depended on them returning with the grain—so they pressed on
- Egypt! Leaving Simeon as a prisoner, exact cost in *each* of their sacks, telling of Benjamin...of Jacob, their father
- None of them were looking forward to this return home
- Just as the grain poured out, so did their story—Jacob was unyielding, Benjamin would not be going with them
- But sooner than they'd hoped, the last sack of grain was being dipped into—the return trip to Egypt was eminent
- What to do? What do you do when your choices are no good? Not one good choice presents itself?
- Well, Rueben offered up a price—the lives of his two sons—if Benjamin and Simeon did not return with them from this next trip
- No, Jacob would not agree to losing two grandsons—no more losing sons or grandsons
- Finally, with things becoming desperate—the survival of the entire encampment at risk
- Here is what we read happened— **[CC]**
- TEXT: Genesis 43:8, 9 READ

“Send the boy with me, and we will be on our way...I personally guarantee his safety. You may hold me responsible if I don't bring him back to you. Then let me bear the blame forever.”

- **[CC] Point –Leverage points always appear with that powerful little word—if**
- They left soon afterwards, and with haste made their way back to Egypt *with* Benjamin
- Once there the brothers sought to make things right with the money found in each sack—strange thing is, the head clerk told them —“I know I received your payment.”

- It becomes clear, when you know God is *for you*, you don't hold any resentment when wronged
- Instead, you are generous to a fault and don't give it another thought –*Joseph* had bank-rolled his brothers
- But Joseph has not taken this whole process to its completion till he has done two more things
- He wants to see how his brothers reacted when he favors Benjamin over them
- Joseph sits them down to eat, each according to their age and as they eat, Joseph has Benjamin served five times as much food
- Then, as they leave the second time, with Simeon and Benjamin, Joseph again, places the value in each sack, and this time has his ceremonial silver goblet placed in Benjamin's sack
- What will his brothers do? They are not even a few hours on the road and Joseph sends a group of guards after them
- When they return this time, they are all distraught, Benjamin is singled out, and not one of Joseph's brothers is thinking, let's just leave him and get out of here—as with years before and Joseph
- No, instead of saying—let's leave Benjamin and go home, he will pay with his life
- Judah steps up and pleads, “Our father's life is bound up in the boy's life.”
- And Judah could have said, “And my life too is bound up in the boy's life.”
- Let me close by asking us each this question—“Is your life bound up in Jesus' life?”

B. On our lips and in our hearts

- Only when—
 - A. The Christ, the Savior of the world becomes knit with our heart
 - B. The love for Jesus, the passion for the living Savior is what our lips are first to voice
 - C. The things of this world are stripped away and all we have to rest our hearts upon, is Him
- Only then can we say, “My life is bound up in Jesus' life.”

IV. Prayer – Lord God, what is our *if*, our leverage point? Jesus, Is He on our lips, in our hearts? He is near, close to you and me, and he wants us to lisp him on our lips and have him and his life beating in our hearts. Enter Lord Jesus! And then, out of our hearts, past our lips, shine out of us we pray. AMEN