

Living the Victorious Christian Life

May 31, 2006

1 Cor. 15:57-58 (NKJV)

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. [58] Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

I want to talk to you tonight about how to live a life of victory in Jesus.

There are a lot of Christians who are saved and who will go to heaven when they die but they are not living the life of faith and victory in the present that we all need to live.

They are like the old iron bedstead: "Firm on both ends but sagging in the middle".

I believe God wants us to live in victory all the time. As Christians, we shouldn't be up one day and down the next. We should live everyday filled with confidence and assurance. We should not allow circumstances to control us. We should realize that we are children of God and He is our Father. He has promised to provide for us and to take care of us and He will do it regardless of the present circumstances.

Romans 8:35-39 (NKJV)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? [36] As it is written:

"For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

[37] Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. [38] For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, [39] nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Tonight, I want to take a look at a very familiar Old Testament story. I want to look at the story of how the nation of Israel came out of Egypt and how they wandered in the desert for forty years and how they finally entered into the land that God had promised to them.

I want us to look at their forty years in the desert as a picture of the kind of life that many Christians are living. God has brought them out of Egypt but they are not enjoying the provision that He has promised. They are wandering in the wilderness of defeat, discouragement and depression when they should be enjoying the overcoming life of victory that God has said is theirs to enjoy.

Jesus said....

John 10:10 (NKJV)

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. **I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

The victorious Christian life should be the normal life for every Christian. Jesus came to give it to us and He purchased it for us with His own precious blood. Then why are so many Christians living in defeat?

The truth is, you can live your Christian life in one of two places. They are represented by The Wilderness and by the Land of Canaan.

There must be the Red Sea experience and the Jordan River experience.

The Red Sea was to the Israelites what the cross is to us.

Crossing the Red Sea was symbolic of their deliverance from the slavery and bondage they were under in Egypt. It is symbolic of our being delivered from the sin that we were bound by before we were saved.

They celebrated their deliverance with the Passover. We celebrate ours with The Lord's Supper.

But it wasn't enough for them to simply get out of Egypt.

Moses said.....

Deut. 6:21-23 (NKJV)

then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; [22] and the Lord showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household. [23] **Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in,** to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.

Notice it says....God brought them out of Egypt that He might bring them in to the Land of Canaan.

God did not bring them out of Egypt to leave them out in the desert. He brought them out of Egypt to bring them in to a place of victory.

You might be under the impression that Canaan is symbolic of heaven. But that is not what Canaan represents. Let me remind you that there were giants in Canaan. There will be no giants in Heaven. There were battles to fight in Canaan. There will be no battles to fight in Heaven. God's people sinned in Canaan. There will be no sin in Heaven.

Canaan does not represent Heaven. It represents the fullness of salvation that God wants us to enjoy here on earth. It represents the fullness of blessings that God has provided for us here on the earth.

God redeemed Israel from Egypt to live in Canaan, not to die in the desert. And He has saved us to live in victory, not to live in defeat and despair.

Let me show you some of the things God has promised to us.

John 14:27 (NLT)

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid.

Ephes. 1:3-6 (NLT)

How we praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we belong to Christ. [4] Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.

[5] His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure.

[6] So we praise God for the wonderful kindness he has poured out on us because we belong to his dearly loved Son.

Romans 8:37 (NKJV)

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

1 Peter 2:9 (NLT)

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are a kingdom of priests, God's holy nation, his very own possession. This is so you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

Those are just a few of the wonderful promises God has given to us. He wants us to possess those promises. He wants us to live in that realm of blessing.

So each of us must ask ourselves whether we are living in the desert, so to speak, or living in the Land of Promise. Are we living in victory or in defeat?

Living in victory does not mean that we will never be tempted by sin or never commit sin. It means that if we sin, instead of plunging into a pit of despair and guilt, we confess our sin to Christ and trust Him to cleanse us from our sin and restore us to fellowship with Him.

Living in victory means that you become super sensitive to sin, and if you sin, the Holy Spirit immediately convicts you, and you deal with it immediately.

Something is wrong if you are a born-again Christian and yet you can sin and not be immediately convicted by the Holy Spirit.

John said.....

1 John 1:8-9 (NKJV)

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. [9] If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Living in victory means that we confess our sins and receive immediate forgiveness.

Living in victory does not mean that we will never get sick.

It does mean that we can be positive in our confession and believe that Jesus Christ is our Healer.

When I get sick, I ask the Lord to heal me. I call for the Elders of the church and ask them to anoint me with oil in the name of Jesus and I claim God's promise of healing. I expect to get well.

Living in victory does not mean that I will never have any problems.

It means that I know that God is my Father and that He will never leave me or forsake me and He will help me deal with the problems that I am confronted with.

That's what living in the Land of Promise is all about. That's what crossing over Jordan is all about.

It's about possessing the promises that God has given to us.

You say, "Wait a minute Pastor Ron, if God has already given us something, why do we have to possess it?"

I know that sounds like a contradiction, but that is what the Bible teaches us that we must do. We must possess the land that has been given to us. We must possess the promises that God has made to us.

God told Joshua, "I have given the land to you." (Past Tense)

Then He said to Joshua, "You must go in and possess the land." (Present Tense)

Matthew 11:28-29 (NLT)

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle, and you will find rest for your souls.

First Jesus told His disciples, "I will give you rest". Then He told them, "You will find rest". Which is it? Does He give it or do we somehow find it?

Both of those statements are true. He gives it and we must find it through applying His word. We find rest for our souls by taking His yoke and learning from Him. He said, "Let Me teach you".

Let me list three things that are necessary if you want to get out of the desert, cross over the Jordan and live in the Land of Promise.

1. Faith.

Joshua had to take God at His word and start walking. That's faith! Faith is acting on the word of God.

1 John 5:4 (NKJV)

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.

Faith recognizes that God has already promised us that we will win the battle. It does not mean that we will not have any battles.

2. Following.

Joshua 1:6-9 (NKJV)

Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. [7] Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. [8] This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

[9] Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

God told Joshua that success depends on him. Again you say, "Wait a minute Pastor Ron, I thought success depends on the Lord."

It does! However, He only gives success as we follow His instructions.

The Bible is God's instruction book. It tells us what we must do to have success. It tells us what we must do to live a life of victory. If you are going to have victory, you are going to have to follow God's instructions.

3. Fighting.

You and I are in a war whether we realize it or not.

Paul told Timothy.....

1 Tim. 6:12 (NKJV)

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Paul's testimony was.....

2 Tim. 4:7 (NKJV)

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

You will never live in the victory that God has promised you until you learn to fight the good fight of faith.

One of the reason that the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for so long was because they had not learned to fight the good fight.

Exodus 13:17-18 (NKJV)

Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt."

[18] So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.

The land of victory, blessings, and fullness is occupied by the enemy. You must be prepared to fight to take possession of it.

The only battles that the Israelites fought in the wilderness were with themselves. But when they entered the promise Land there were battles to fight with the enemy.

Ephes. 6:10-12 (NKJV)

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

The Ship of Zion is a man-of-war not a luxury liner.

At times it is easy to pray and praise. At other times it is an intense struggle.

At times we read the Bible with ease and enjoyment. At other times it requires rigid discipline.

The first victory for Joshua was easy. All he had to do was lead the march around Jericho and have the people shout. But other victories didn't come so easily. There were some tough battles to fight.

You too will face some tough battles. Those battles will require the whole armor of God.

God has already promised us the victory. It belongs to us. But that doesn't mean we won't have to fight for it.

To live in the Land of Promise it takes Faith, and it takes Following God's instructions, and it takes Fighting the good fight.