

Christ is Victor

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“He Grew and Waxed Strong in Spirit”

“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.” Luke 1:80

When we talk of somebody growing, we like to know how tall the person has grown, how muscular he is and so on. But here the Bible speaks of waxing strong in the spirit. I have been seeing very carefully how when people wax strong in their purses or wallets, they become weak in the spirit. The father of faith Abraham was not like that. God blessed him materially, but it did not mean that there was any neglect on his part of his spiritual life.

I see a very great danger to us here. When a man is converted, he says, “How I have wasted so much money on smoking and drinking and other such things. Now God has given me a new heart, I will be careful with my money.” He is careful not only with his money, but with his time too. He gives one tenth of his income to God, and that brings more blessings. There will not be room enough to receive the blessings. Handling the blessings of God needs a deep training. Seeing our indebtedness to God, we ought to say, “God has given me so much, I am all the more indebted to God.”

In the case of John the Baptist, we are not told of any worldly blessings at all. From the earthly standpoint, he was a poor man. His food was very simple, so was his clothing. All his youth, till almost thirty years he lived in the desert. He did not seem to have any special earthly privileges, but the Bible says that he “waxed strong in the spirit.” Sometimes our prayers do not appear to be answered. We wonder, “Where is my prayer going?” When your prayer seems to be stopping at the roof, you must say, “God has promised, ‘Call on Me and I will answer you and I will show you great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.’ I

will not walk by my feelings or even by fast answers to my prayers. I will walk by the promises of God.” But this calls for great spiritual strength. Otherwise, we tend to get discouraged and depressed. But when you walk by the promises of God, your spirit gets stronger.

When John the Baptist became strong in the spirit, he did not care for the things of this world. He did not say, “I must live in a city.” He never grumbled saying, “I do not have this, I do not have that.” No, he had a message for every class of people. Now that to me is a wonder. Sometimes I feel I do not have the right message for a certain class of people. Some people are so full of the world, so full of the flesh, with no thought about God. I say, “I do not seem to have the right message for these people.” that means my spirit is not really strong. I had a great chance in this Fellowship to grow strong in the spirit. There were men and women of faith around me and the Word of God was given to me again and again. I ought to have been full of God’s word for all kinds of people.

John the Baptist had a message even for King Herod. He did not bother about the consequences. That is one of the marks of those that are strong in the spirit. If we are strong in the spirit, we will not be afraid of consequences of taking a stand for righteousness. When God blesses us materially, we are tempted to buy this and that and be a little more comfortable. Every such accumulation of material things will only make your spirit weaker. I do not know how many people are going to tell the Lord, “Lord, because of the TV I lost my prayer and thus my spirit became weak.” Everywhere people have become weak because of these material acquisitions. As far as I am concerned, I am prepared to lose everything. It will not bother me at all. Everywhere people are becoming weak in spirit. Their houses are full of things and new things. But the spirit is weak. What did John the Baptist have of things? Nothing. He had the word of God. Sometimes I feel very sad that many are slipping. By this time there should have been people in our midst who have walked in the streets of heaven and come back to their bodies like Sundar Singh, people who knew the deep things of God. Somehow when responsibilities increase

our spiritual strength seems to decrease. When responsibilities increase, our prayer life and thus our spiritual strength should also increase. But unspiritual and soulish people whose Christianity is just their own effort – they are the people who, when responsibilities increase find their spiritual strength and faith decreasing. With soul power we cannot do spiritual work. When a Christian work becomes large, some develop the strength of good habits and good discipline. Their souls become stronger. But they are not necessarily spirit-led people. They can preach good sermons or may enjoy nice messages but they have no real strength in the spirit. What is the use of being like that? John the Baptist grew and waxed strong in the spirit.

The same thing is said of our Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 2:40, “And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom.” When a child is growing, we never speak of strength of spirit. He is a good runner, good tennis-player, hockey player, and so on. But when a child or a boy is growing, who talks about his spirit growing? Sometimes when we see a church growing, we think, “Oh, there are five hundred people! Oh, there are ten thousand people! Oh, it is growing.” No! It may be dying! What is the use of ten thousand dead people? How many are strong in spirit? That is what matters. Today everywhere people want land. I hate lands. The history of missions will show, wherever there were big lands and great buildings, the ministry broke down quickly. So the strength of buildings and lands are not indications of spiritual strength. How do we talk with God? How closely do we walk with God? How strong is our spirit when we face temptations? How many words can we speak that bring encouragement and blessing to others? These are the things that indicate strength in the spirit.

Today, thousands of people listen to the Word of God. Unless we travail in prayer for these multitudes, we cannot really achieve much for God. Our prayers will affect the nations if we are a self-effacing people with a heart-cry for revival. Are we strong in the spirit? May God help us in this New Year and guide us in every step of our way!

- Joshua Daniel

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“Crown of Thorns”

“Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down” (Amos 9:2)

God is speaking to the Israelites. Some of them thought that they could escape God. But God says they cannot escape Him. Young people forget that God is watching them and searching them so that He may bless them. How is He trying to bless them? He wishes to give them His nature. But people are afraid of coming into a living touch with God. When people were worshiping other gods in the Old Testament times, He told them, “Seek ye first the Lord.” Then He gave them the law. After the people were given the law through Moses, He taught them, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God.” He could not teach both at the same time. You cannot teach Calculus till you have first taught Algebra. You must know Algebra to understand Calculus.

A lawless people were given the law and they became a moral people. “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command

him.” (Deut 18:18) They were to receive a spiritual law through Jesus. When Christ came, He brought them the true life- His very life. In Him was the promise, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26)

Moses saw God in the burning bush. We see God in the bleeding cross. They are both very different. They present two different facets of God. The cross is a new aspect of God. The people of the Old Testament saw God as a disciplinarian. They did not see the God of love. No one but Jesus could reveal the God of love. Neither Elijah nor Moses nor any of the prophets of the Old Testament times could represent the God of love.

In Christ, mercy and truth are met together. (Psalm 85:10). David was blessed of God. He obtained a kingly crown. But Jesus appears to us with a crown of thorns and suffering. Yet He is the King of kings. Unfortunately, Christians go only some distance in religion. They want blessings from God. But what do they do for God? Nothing!

If one of your children chooses to do God’s work, you are distressed. There is no sacrifice. When it comes to sacrifice you step back. You seek God for health and happiness for yourself. Are you seeking God when it means many more things in the package? Or are you seeking God at all costs? If the Government were to go against you, would you still seek God? You want to see the mighty God doing great things for you but the bleeding Saviour you do not want. “And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.” (Jer.45:5)

Do not seek God for a reward. If you are willing to bear the crown of thorns for your neighbor, it is the proper thing. If you are ready to be put to shame for Christ, it is the right thing. The final teaching of the Lord is not a kingly crown but a crown of thorns. Have you desired to do anything for Christ? When you seek God first other things will follow. Those who seek God will not seek things for themselves. Some of us have only seen God in the fiery bush. We have to see Him on the bleeding Cross.

-N. Daniel

“The Devil’s Best Tool”

Once upon a time- so the story goes- the devil decided it was time for him to retire. He planned to sell all his tools of trade- malice, hatred, jealousy, lust, envy, sloth- and arranged them, price tags and all, in the most attractive manner possible.

One of the devil’s tools was a seemingly harmless, wedge-shaped object. But it was the highest priced of all the items on display. Moved with curiosity, someone approached the devil and asked what he called this particular tool.

The devil’s smile became a cunning smirk. “That’s discouragement,” he replied.

“But why is it priced so high?” his interrogator persisted.

“Because,” answered the devil, “it is the most useful tool I have ever possessed. I can do more with discouragement than with any of the others. With it I can pry open a man’s

conscience, and once inside it’s no trick at all to get him to do anything I want.

“And though you’d hardly believe it,” the devil added, “very few even suspects that it belongs to me.”

No sensible person expects life to be a bed of roses, but for all that, a tendency to discouragement seems to be one of the most prevalent of human traits. Sometimes, when troubles and disappointments seem to pile up, when the future seems dark and foreboding, there is a great temptation to break down and confess defeat. It is at just such times that the utmost efforts should be made to shake off the weight of discouragement. Otherwise, despair, which is the ultimate defeat, may seize upon the soul and destroy it.

The best antidote to discouragement is trust in God. God is never blind to the afflictions of His creatures. While He permits us to suffer, for His own good reasons, He never

allows the burden to become too heavy for any individual shoulder. Discouragement, there, is merely a sign that we have not kept close to Him as we should; that we have, in fact, neglected Him and refused to accept His offers of help.

Every life will have its share of discouragement. But discouragement will never overcome a soul, which keeps its vision fixed on the eternal reality of God and His truths. Paul sounded a challenge to all when he declared that nothing on earth- grief, pain, temptation or disappointment- could ever separate him from the love of God. The love of God remains the impenetrable armor against which the devil will strike in vain with the weapon of discouragement.

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (Ephesians 6:11)

-Selected

REALITY CHECK!

**“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.”
-Proverbs 29:2**

“Corrie ten Boom”

Corrie ten Boom was born in Holland in 1892, the youngest child in a loving Christian family whose hearts, hands, and home were always open to anyone in need. As she grew older, it was only natural that Corrie also reached out to those around her. In addition to working in her father's watch repair shop, she started Christian clubs for girls, worked with the mentally retarded, helped care for foster children, and taught Bible lessons in the schools.

After Germany invaded Holland in World War Two, helping the people who needed her aid became very dangerous. Germany's cruel dictator, Adolph Hitler, sent soldiers to Holland to round up all the Jewish people and take them to prison camps, where they were later killed by the millions. Anyone found helping the Jews could suffer the same fate.

But Corrie and her family could not turn their backs on people in need. They became part of the Dutch “underground” movement, which hid Jews and helped them escape to safer places.

The ten Booms built a secret room in their home with a hidden panel to open it. They put in an alarm system so that they could quickly buzz a warning throughout the house. They also had the Jews, who stayed with them, practice disappearing quickly into the secret room.

Corrie and her team of eighty workers helped hundreds of Jews escape before a fellow Dutchman turned them in to the Germans. On February 28, 1944, German soldiers stormed into the ten Boom home. One of them asked Corrie where

they were hiding the Jews. When she didn't answer, he slapped her again and again. She and her family were arrested and taken to different prison camps. Her father, was quite old, died ten days later.

After three months, Corrie was moved to Ravensbruck, a well-known death camp for women. There she was reunited with her sister, Betsie. Ravensbruck was their worst nightmare come true: long hours of very hard work, crowded, rat-filled, unheated buildings; little food; and cruel guards. Before the war ended, 96,000 women died there.

A guard once hit Corrie in the neck with a whip when she was too sick to push a heavy cart. But the hardest thing for her was seeing Betsie mistreated. Betsie had never been healthy. In prison she became much worse. Still, she was forced to keep working and to stand at attention for hours at a time, in bitterly cold weather.

Their strong faith in God helped them get through each terrible day. They lovingly reached out to the other women, encouraged them to trust God, and prayed together. Even in that awful place, they felt God's love. In fact, Betsie told Corrie that they would travel all over after they got out, telling people that no place on earth is so dark that God's love cannot shine into it. She also hoped to start homes in Holland and Germany where people broken by the war could heal.

Betsie never saw her dreams come true. She died in prison. But Corrie went on to carry out her sister's wishes. Corrie was set free because

of a typing error- which she said was a miracle- shortly before the other women of her age were killed.

After the war, she went to Germany. She spoke to large groups there, telling them about the hope God had given her and how Jesus can help us forgive our enemies and even love them.

One day after speaking, she stood at the door shaking hands with people. A man walked up to her and told her he had become a Christian after the war. Corrie recognized the man. He had been one of the cruelest guards at Ravensbruck. The man said he knew God had forgiven him for everything he had done in the past, but he wanted her forgiveness, too.

As he held out his hand, Corrie remembered the misery he had caused Betsie and thousands of others. She wrestled with her answer. She didn't think she could forgive him, but she knew God wanted her to. Silently she prayed, “Lord, I can take his hand, but I can't change my feelings. Only You can do that.”

She took his hand in hers, and a sudden feeling of warmth went through her arm and then her whole body, melting the bitter memories. With tears in her eyes, she told the man who had once tormented her, “I forgive you with all my heart.”

Dear reader, what is the worst thing anyone ever did to you? Have you forgiven that person? What is the worst thing you've ever done to someone else? Have you asked that person to forgive you?

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This Fellowship is an inter-denominational missionary and prayer group working for revival in churches and amongst students in several countries. We invite every layperson to become God's ally in changing his or her corner of the world. We train people in evangelistic work and to be self-supporting missionaries

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“The Importance of Restitution”

If you have ever taken money dishonestly, you need not pray God to forgive you and fill you with the Holy Spirit until you make restitution. If you have not got the money now to pay back, will to do it, and God accepts the willing mind. Many people are kept in darkness and unrest because they fail to obey God on this point. If the plough has gone deep, if the repentance is true, it will bring forth fruit. What use is there in my coming to God until I am willing, like Zacchaeus, to make it go, if I have done any person wrong or have taken anything falsely? Confession and restitution

are the steps that lead up to forgiveness.

There was a friend of mine who had come to Christ and was trying to consecrate himself and his wealth to God. He had formerly had transactions with the government, and had taken advantage of them. This came to memory, and his conscience troubled him. At last he drew a check for the amount he had underpaid and sent it to the Treasury of the government. He told me he received great blessing after he had done it. That is bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. I believe a great many men are crying to God for light; and many are not getting it because they are not honest.

A man came to one of our meetings, when the subject of restitution was touched upon. The memory of a dishonest transaction flashed into his mind. He saw at once how

it was that his prayers were not answered, but “returned into his own bosom,” as the Scripture phrase puts it. He left the meeting, took the train, and went to a distant city, where he had defrauded his employer years before. He went straight to this man, confessed the wrong, and offered to make restitution. Then he remembered another transaction, in which he had failed to meet the just demands upon him; he at once made arrangements to have a large amount repaid. He came back to the place where we were holding the meetings, and God blessed him wonderfully in his

own soul. I have not met a man for a long time who seemed to have received such a blessing.

When I was in Canada a man told me that when he was a boy a man gave him by mistake of money that was called in Canada a “ten shilling” piece. It was just about the size of a quarter of a dollar, and it was gold. Instead of giving the boy a silver shilling, as intended, then man gave him a gold ten shilling piece by mistake, and the boy kept it. The next day the man came back to the boy and said, “When I made change with you yesterday, didn’t I give you a ten shilling piece instead of a one shilling piece?” The boy lied, “No, sir, you did not.”

For forty-three years that man had that lie on his conscience. At last the Spirit of God got hold of him and he became a Christian. He no longer knew where to find the man so he just figured up to interest and

handed principal and interest to an orphanage. So he got it off his conscience at last. If you have anything on your conscience, straighten it out at once. If your mind goes back to some transaction with your neighbor in which you cheated him, pay back every dollar at once.

-D.L. Moody

Weekly Meetings —Welcome to All—

Sunday Morning Worship at 10:00 am at:

Community Christ Church in Novi, MI
46200 West Ten Mile Rd.

Call (248) 486-6326 or (248) 380-8633

University of Michigan Mondays 7:00pm
Angell Hall, Room G-144
Call (248) 486-6326

University of Windsor Sundays 5:00pm
University Community Church.
Call (519) 978-1495

Oakland University: (248) 374-5565

For info on other meetings, call:

South Lyon, MI: (248) 446-3080

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Hear “The Lord’s Challenge” Weekly Gospel Radio

Buffalo, NY: 99.5 FM (WDCX) Sat. 8:45 am

Detroit, MI: 560 AM (WMUZ) Sat. 5:00 pm

Shortwave (Sundays 2:15 pm, EST)

WHRI 19 Metre band 15.355 MHz

Des Moines, IA: 1460 (KDMI)

Sat. 7:30 am, Sun. 11:00 pm

Fort Wayne, IN: 1090 AM (WFCV) & FM 93.7
Sat. 5:30 pm

Council Bluffs, IA: 1560 AM (KLNG)
Sun. 8:00am

Atlanta, GA: 86 AM (LOVE 86) Sun. 2:00 pm

Toronto, Ont: 1250 AM (CJYE) Thurs 3.15 pm

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