

Finishing Well

Lesson # 42

I Brought You Out To Bring You In

Oct. 25, 2023

Rev. 3:1-4 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. ² Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

³ Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.

If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

⁴ Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

Sardis, the Reformation Church, perfectly represents what happened to the Church between the years 1517 and 1790. It's sad news since, after the period of spiritual darkness and generalized apostasy of 538 to 1517, the Reformation was announcing better days.

The first years of the Reformation, a movement initiated by Martin Luther in 1517 with the rediscovery of "The Just shall live by Faith," brought about the resurgence and interest of the Bible and its message of salvation by grace in Jesus Christ.

The 5 Solas: Saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone according to Scripture alone for the glory of God alone.

Prior to that time the reading of the Bible had been forbidden by the "laity" or "people." Bibles were not available to the vast majority of people and available ones were in Latin. Wycliffe attacked the papacy and translated the Bible into English. The Gutenberg press enhanced the spread of the reformation. Sardis is a picture of the Reformation churches that came out of the Roman Church of Pergamum and Thyatira -

- The Ones escaping from the Roman Church.

But this spiritual awakening didn't last. Why?

1. Protestantism soon politicized itself and became a national religion [state churches], thus making the same errors as the Church it had left.

- They had escaped bondage only to place themselves back under legalism.

Martin Luther worked with and sought out the approval of the political leaders.

The Lutheran Church became the State Church of Germany. Entire countries became Protestant [Anglican Church of England] without being Born-Again. This mirrors Constantine when he made Christianity the official religion of Rome and strongly encouraged all citizens to convert. The Reformation church included the entire population of the country, often without a true conversion and personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior.

Rev. 3:2 I have not found your works perfect [complete] before God.

2. They did not change much of what they left in the Roman Church.

The Reformers came out of the Roman Church of Pergamum and Thyatira and therefore brought much of the old with them.

a. Infant baptism and baptism by sprinkling were continued.

b. They kept much of the ritualism of the Roman Church and the Sacraments.

c. Theologians became more preoccupied with defining the Gospel.

d. Piety was transformed into a cold formalism, without any meaning or power.

e. The Denominational church denied the Millennial Reign of Christ and denied Israel's prophetic destiny.

It was well known as an active, vigorous Christian congregation, characterized by good works and charitable activities. But in the sight of God, all of these religious activities were a failure because they were only formal and external, and not infused with the life-giving Holy Spirit.

Sardis may well be the first church in history to have been filled with what we call today nominal Christians. They were Christians in name only.

I Cor. 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Deut. 6:23 Then He brought us out from there [Egypt = type of world, bondage, sin = Pt. A], that He might bring us in [Promise Land = Abundant Life = Pt. B], to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.

What happened between Egypt (Pt. A) and the Promised Land (Pt. B) ?

1. He brought them to Kadesh-Barnea to take them into the Promise Land and give them victory. However, they wanted to send in spies to check it out.

2. The bad report shook their faith, and, in their unbelief, the majority refused to walk by faith and they walked by sight. They rebelled against God's command and promise.

3. God's chastisement for not entering their land > Die in the wilderness > NO inheritance.

4. They "repented" [due to the punishment?]. NOW we will obey, enter and fight on our own.

5. Moses warned them it would be disastrous without the LORD on their side.

The enemy soundly defeated them.

6. The wilderness lies ahead. The tragedy of Israel was to spend 40 years in the wilderness.

A people who lived in self-imposed poverty! Every day they spent in the wilderness was a day they could have spent in Canaan - for God had already given them the land.

However, they did not believe the God that brought them out could also bring them in.

7. The Israelites grew tired and weary of God's provision, the manna which was of oil [type of Holy Spirit] and honey [foretaste of the Promised Land].

Their intense cravings caused them to tempt God in the desert. Consequences followed.

God gave them their request for meat. [Num. 11:31-34]

They stayed up all day, night and the next day gathering the quail.

They were diligent to find satisfaction and completeness in the temporal.

Ps. 106:13-15 They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel:

¹⁴ But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

¹⁵ And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

Note: God will sometime permit what is not in His direct will, but the individual loses out spiritually.

8. While the meat was still between the teeth, God's wrath was aroused, and He sent a plague and killed them. > Graves of Desire & Covetousness

After 38 years in the wilderness, there is a new point of entrance to the Promised Land. At the burning bush, God pledged Himself not only to deliver the Israelites from Egypt, but to bring them into the Promised Land.

God's promise to Moses in Ex. 33:14: "My Presence will go with you and I will give you rest."

➤ There was NO rest in Egypt or the years in the wilderness.

Deut. 12:9 Moses farewell address: "For as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you."

Josh. 1:10-15 Go in to possess the LAND which the LORD your God is giving you to possess... The LORD your God is giving you REST and is giving you this LAND. [Joshua's challenge]

Does Canaan, the Promised Land = Heaven? NO! Enemies; Bloodshed; Wars

Canaan = Spiritual Promised Land; God's Rest; Our Abundant Life

- Canaan was the goal to which God was leading His people.
- Deliverance from Egypt was in preparation for the enjoyment of Canaan.
- The Passover, shedding of the blood, crossing of the Red Sea, the destruction of Pharaoh's armies...all of this would have been useless unless they led to the Promised Land.
- "Canaan rest" is a picture of the rest that Christian believers experience when they yield all to Christ and claim their inheritance by faith."
- The victorious Christian life is a series of conflicts and victories as we defeat one enemy after another and claim more of our inheritance in Christ to the glory of God.

In Hebrews 3 & 4, the land of Canaan is a picture of the spiritual rest and victory which may be enjoyed here on earth by every believer.

Ephesians speaks of life "in the heavenly places" - not in heaven, but in the experience of the abundant life with our Risen Lord in His victory here and now.

Joshua & the Battle For The Inheritance
3 Principles Necessary To Possess Our Possessions

1. Preparation

Truth: We do not drift into God's will. It is a planned and disciplined life with determination and perseverance. Requires walking in the Spirit.

Joshua 1:11 Prepare you victuals = vittles or food

- Israelites are preparing to cross the swollen Jordan River and enter their Promised Land
- They were supposed to eat manna for about 11 days before entering the land flowing with milk and honey.
- They had eaten manna for 40 years in the wilderness. [Unbelief & rebellion]

Truth: If I am going to be victorious and live in my Promised Land, I must change my diet and daily feed on God's Word which is always available. Am I daily hungry for God's Word?

Ps. 81:10 I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.

- What I receive at church, SS, Bible study, etc. is only an appetizer which should whet my appetite to dig in for more on my own. Am I obedient to the command...?

II Tim. 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Can't live the Christian life in your own strength. Plug in to the real power source! [John 15:5] Joshua's strength and courage would come from meditating on the Word of God, believing its promises, and obeying its precepts.

2. The Power to Possess My Possessions

Joshua 1:11 for within 3 days ye shall pass over this Jordan,... [Gaze on it for 3 days!]

- 3 days of death THEN the resurrection power

Remember: Crossing the Jordan is symbolic of dying to self - the old is gone - the new is come.

- Just as Jonah came out of the belly of a great fish in 3 days so...

Matt. 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

- Jesus came forth from the dead after 3 days.
- Abraham took Isaac to the mountain to sacrifice him, but they both returned alive after 3 days. [Isaac was dead to Abraham for 3 days.]

Heb. 11:19a Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead;

- Joshua said we're making our move in 3 days...they were going in with God's power!

Truth: We do not have the will power or personal power to live the abundant Christian life. We MUST plug in to the Holy Spirit who is the real power source!

Phil. 3:10 That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings being conformed to His death.

Raising Jesus from the dead was the greatest power display because that paves the way for God to do it for each of us.

Phil. 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.

3. Possess Your Possessions

Joshua 11:23 The whole land was taken.

Joshua 13:1 There remained very much land to be possessed.

Contradiction? NO! It is the declaration of a basic spiritual truth.

- In Christ, we have ALL we need for a victorious life, but we must possess our inheritance by faith...one step at a time, a day at a time.

Joshua 18:3 So Joshua said to the sons of Israel, "How long will you put off entering to take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you?"

- They reaffirmed their commitment to God by obediently setting out across the Jordan to possess their promised land. [God had given. It was already theirs. Claim it by faith]

1. Cross the Jordan River > a type of reckoning our old man to be dead.

2. When they crossed the Jordan River, Joshua had them carry 12 stones from the depths of the Jordan to Gilgal. The memorial at Gilgal was to remind them of:

- the miracle of the crossing
- the death of the old man and
- the new life they were to live in the Promised Land.
- God would lead and give the victory.

3. It is sad 2 ½ tribes did not want to cross the Jordan. All the tribes did not have the same degree of separation from the evil around them or the same degree of surrender to God.

4. The Israelites conquered Sihon & Og on the east side of Jordan and took possession of those lands. [Deut. 1:4] It was good land with strong, walled cities and countryside ideal for the raising their large number of cattle. "Please do not make us cross the Jordan, but let us possess these fertile lands on the east side of Jordan" [Num. 32:5]. Walking by sight!

- This request shows their sinful rejection of the covenant obligations of community life.
- They rejected God's plan. Living by sight and not by faith.
- They placed their own interests and that of their cattle over the interests of all the other tribes.

5. They were refusing to cross over the Jordan, to die to self and selfish wants.

- Rejecting God's Plan!

6. They were eventually trapped and ensnared by their decision.

This is the danger for those who would live on the border and not get into the land.

Consequences For Not Crossing The Jordan - Staying On The East Side

1. Where are their ARMED MEN? They crossed the Jordan.

2. The wives and children they left behind were deprived of witnessing divine miracles >
a. the parting of the Jordan River; b. the destruction of the walls of Jericho, and
c. the many battles fought and won.

3. They missed observing Passover and the Barley harvest.

4. Due to their great distance from the temple, these tribes came more and more under pagan influence, and were the first to go into captivity.

Josh. 24: 13 And I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.'

- 'East-siders' settle for less than God's best.

They may have marched the football all the way down the field, but they allow the devil's goal line stand to keep them out. With the Promised Land in sight, they give up and are shut down, just inches away from victory!

Heb. 4:1-2 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

I Brought You Out To Bring You In - Not For You To Go Back In Bondage

The wilderness is a picture of the carnal Christian who lives in self-imposed poverty under the subtle influence of a defeated foe - the flesh - which Christ took with Him into the grave. We, like the Israelites, do not enjoy the fleshpots of Egypt or the golden corn of Canaan. We are dumped in the desert. It is quite pathetic as a Christian to be vested with "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" in Christ, and have available all the illimitable resources of heaven, yet in ignorance or in defiance, scratch out a mere existence with our meager resources due to unbelief. We have no sense of direction or finality of our purpose because we will not take or possess what God has already given.

He provides the way of escape through the gift of the Holy Spirit (part of my birthright) who will empower us to live the abundant life in the fullness of Jesus Christ.

Wiersbe: The Canaan rest for Israel is a picture of the spiritual rest we find in Christ when we surrender to Him. When we come to Christ by faith, we find salvation rest [Matt. 11:28]. This is "peace with God" [Rom. 5:1]. When we yield and learn of Him and obey Him by faith, we enjoy submission rest [Matt. 11:29-30]. This is the "peace of God" [Phil. 4:6-8]. It is by believing that we enter into rest [Heb. 4:3].

It is by obeying God by faith and surrendering to His will that the rest enters into us.

Where Are You In Your Journey?

Life is far from easy. In this life, we are usually in one of four places:

1. In Egypt, still in slavery to sin, and need to be saved.

2. In the wilderness, redeemed, but going nowhere other than in circles. Time of testing, dealing with the flesh, a time where the Holy Spirit is dealing with fleshly habits that keep you wandering. Been saved for years but you still aren't really digging into your Bible, still not really praying, still not making commitments to be faithful and to serve. You're not much closer to God than you were the day you got saved.
3. In Canaan, excited, growing, having the joy of the Lord. They're not a wilderness wanderer, but a giant conqueror! You struggle with enemies, with the flesh, but you are in the Word and abiding in the Vine, Jesus Christ.
4. An "EASTSIDER" living on the wrong side of Jordan. You are saved, but in the world, living for the flesh. Occasionally you eat some of the milk and honey from the Lord.

God did not save Israel out of Egypt to live a life of defeat in the desert.

God did not save us so we could stumble around in our wilderness of defeat.

He saved us to take us into our Canaan [spiritual inheritance - the fullness of Christ]

He brought us out [justification] that He might bring us in [sanctification.]

Consider: Jesus Christ wants to lead us in conquest now and share with us all the treasures of His wonderful inheritance. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing, but too often we live like defeated paupers.

Believers are part of an inheritance that spans all of creation, all of time.

Our inheritance is far beyond our finite mind.

Consider: Satan is having a heyday stealing your inheritance.

Heb. 4:11 Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. Labor = "Give diligence which is the opposite of "drifting" [Heb. 2:1-3]. How do we give diligence? By paying close attention to the Word of God.

Redpath: Full blessing in the Christian life is not bestowed except to eager, hungry people who press in against the assaults of the enemy to receive it.

You are as close to God as you want to be. No one is holding you back.

God calls us to Enter & Claim.

Don't settle for less than God's best!