

(1). "The Problems of the Victorious Christian."

Introd:- (1). I have for some time pondered over the title ..the key-words given to this Conference.."ONWARD IN VICTORY." Those words presume a number of things.

First:- That we know what Christian victory is, and are experiencing it. Secondly:- That such a life is not the "I have arrived" kind of living..there is some "onward" still possible. Thirdly:- that any of us might fail to reach onward..and may even fall into reverse gear.

(2). The proposed schedule of subjects ahead of us prophesi that we shall hear about the mighty essentials of this theme...Listening to God...Receiving from God the daily touch of His Spirit...Praying to God for others, and for ourselves..and Living in God as we abide in Jesus Christ. Sounds good, doesn't it? Too good? Christian life a bed of ease, surrounded by all the goodies, protected from all the baddies? I haven't found it that way. Have you? e.g. Mature X'n was asked by zealous young soul-winner.. "Have you found peace?" "No, I have found war." Perhaps we can improve on that. "Yes, I have found peace with God. peace within my soul..but I have also found war on planet earth..this territory usurped by Satan." And because I find this true..I want speak about...TOPIC.... Any of you victory-enjoying X'ns got problems? What do we do about them? Why does God send them? Can we find the solutions? Is it possible to flunk out bec. of them?

I. Let me introduce you to a victorious man with problems.

(a). No, you don't need introd. You know him well...maybe...VIP..named 68 times in OT..30 times in NT..ELIJAH...ELIAS. Great man of God..and he had problems. At least 6 biggies.

1. In time of drought..prob. was "NO RAIN"
2. When sent to widow of Zarephath.."NO CAKE". (DEFICIENCY)
3. When her son died prob. was "NO BREATH". (DEATH)
4. When faced Baal-worshipping Israel.."NO RESPONSE" ^{DIFFERENCE} Not wo
5. As prayed for rain..sent servant 7 times.."NO CLOUD" ^{DELAY}
6. Under juniper tree..in despondancy.."NO SUCCESS" (seeming

(b). Those six records could form basic study for this whole Conf..the problems and their solutions that would plot the path to continuing Onward in Victory. And in other ways we shall certainly hear those basics presented. Tonight..I want touch on half of them..No.1, 4 and 6.. and try search out the success or failure of E's "Onward..."

II. Start with No. 1..Problem of drought..I Kings 17:1-7.

(a). Elijah was not much impressed with his lordship Ahab.

He had already been in the presence of the King of Kings and Lord of lords. Although he said "no rain ~~by~~ according to my word" that "word was from God". In OT the time-length of drought not stated. That depended on repentance of Israel. I suggest this applies to spiritual drought also.

"If my people, which are called by my name" is applicable.

(b). We ought to und. Law of Reciprocation in God's dealings with His people... "Them that honour me, I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." This is often stated in a "command-covenant couplet". God says, "You do this in obed. to me..and I covenant to bless you." INFALLIBLE program! And in that way Elijah faced his

problem..vs. 5 "So he went and did according to the WORD OF THE LORD." Onward in victory comes when a man, woman LISTENS to God..and then OBEYS HIM in exuberant FAITH.

(c). Not always the easy way. Often hard way. Elijah had to be willing to be fed by ravens..He knew they were birds of prey..feeding on carrion..geedy creatures. Very likely his meat not very fresh! But Elijah gladly OBEYED GOD. Willing be fed by black, dirty bird..Later by a starving woman..but at last by angel from heaven..--it's getting better and better, isn't it?

(d). Yes, there was another testing..vs.7 #And it came to pass"..Well, that's alright. Hard times come..but pass..they don't come to STAY. "After a while the brook dried up." And again here is God's provision. The test didn't come day he arrived at Cherith..but after a while of learning to rest on the God whose resources never dry up. And Elijah met his first problem by OBEDIENCE IN LOVING FAITH.

III. Now we skip probs of Deficiency and Death..to DIFFIDENCE

(a). I choose this one today bec..if never face those other probs..every servant of God will face this one. Here it is:- I Kings 18:21. "Not a word" NORESPONSE... How about that, evangelists..exhorters..teachers? We thank God when some respond..but grieve that others will not. Not a soul stirred in Elijah's crowd..Not a word, when invitation given to make a choice.

(b). So preacher Elijah said "O.K., Let's have a demonstration." Would I have risked that? Facing bitter enemies ..and confused people bec. true prophets had not been preaching..They were hiding in caves. Maybe today the caves are churches with no outreach to those around. I am sure you know the story of what happened..the noisy demonstration put on by priests of Baal..and the calmness of Elijah. God's man doesn't have to be sensational.. promote..scream..wave banners..blow bugles. IF HE HEARS

GOD'S WORD..Obeys Him in abandonment of faith..the
"Command-Covenant couplet" will work. INFALLIBLY.
 (c). It did. The fire of God fell on water-soaked offer-
 ing made on REBUILT ALTAR (Today)..from top down..not
 other way like man-built fire which begins at bottom.
FORE FROM HEAVEN! And response came THEN. What Elijah's
 preaching didn't do..His prayer..and God's answer by fire
 turned people to Himself. Don't we need this today?
A FIRE UPON OUR PREACHING..THE STIR OF SPIRIT OF GOD..
ON REBUILT ALTARS..IN HOMES..CHURCHES..Remember this:-
Before refreshing rain fell, the REFINING FIRE FELL...
 (d). Now I read the key verse..vs.36 "Lord God of Abraham
 Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou
 art the God of Israel, and that I AM THY SERVANT, and
 that I HAVE DONE all these things AT THY WORD." Obedience
 to God..in unswerving faith! It couldn't fail!

IV. Look briefly with me at 6th problem..DESPONDANCY.

(a). I don't like this..but there it is. A man of God
 despondant..thru fear, self-pity..phys, mental, spir.
depression. Anybody NEVER faced that problem? You men
 and women of God?

(b). It was a bad one. Expecting acclaim..and Jezebel
 threatened to kill him. And Elijah ran for life. I have
 wondered what would have happened if he had stuck it out
another day??? Killed? I think not. He is one of two
 men who never died. Jezebel did..horribly. But Elijah
 ran..into wilderness..under juniper tree..and wanted to
 die (Jezebel would gladly have accomodated him!)
Weary..even suicidal..worried by a word from evil person.
 Let's be careful what we listen to. Satan uses words!
 And Elijah said "It is enough".."I've had it..I quit".
"NO SUCCESS". No more Onward in Victory.

(c). How did he come out of it? He did! How? First
 God gave sleep..and food..physical refreshment. THAT IS
REAL NEED FOR US. Second, went to mountains where God
 could talk to him..alone. Thirdly..listened to God.
 At first with complaint..but how graciously God dealt..
"7,000 faithful left..and I have work for you yet to do..
Anoint a king and a prophet..Rebuke Ahab's son..and then
I'll give you a glorious ride home..with fiery chariot
escort!" " " + ~~life~~ - more preaching -

(d). NO SUCCESS? That is dirty lie of dirty devil.
 The man who listens to God..obeys with rejoicing faith..
CANNOT FAIL..He WILL go onward in victory! "Elijah..had
 you forgotten Carmel..and Israel's turn to God? No
 success? Thousands of people converted? Will God's Word
 return void? NEVER! And beside you stands fine young

man Elisha..asking God to give him a double portion of the Spirit that rested on you? Turn you into twins! That means Sutera twins will have to leave ^{S.P.R.} quadruplets behind them! Praise God for success, and let God banish despondancy!" Let's indeed go ONWARD IN VICTORY!

Conclus:- 1. Two last words. First, the best is yet ahead. Some day Elijah will be back in action on earth. Almost certainly one of those two mighty Witnesses coming as described in Rev.11. Never quit! I believe God has plans for the saving of millions in this day:- as personal, victory moves onward to outreach.
2. Never forget the key to true, God-pleasing living..
LISTEN TO HIM..AND THEN OBEY IMPLICITLY WITH EAGER FAITH. All the rest will fall into place. THIS IS INFALLIBLE. And it meets every problem of life. God grant that all of us may so live!

THE COMMAND -
COVENANT COUPLET -

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