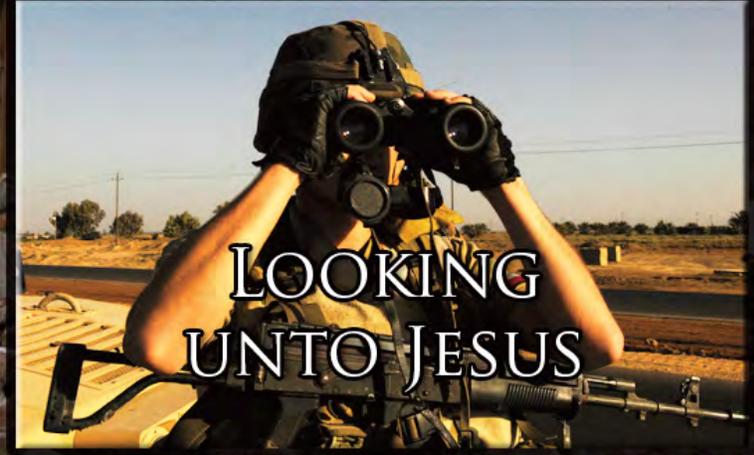


BATTLEFIELD

**FOR THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT CARNAL
BUT MIGHTY THROUGH GOD TO THE PULLING DOWN OF STRONGHOLDS**



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Brother Matthew Cobb
Layout and Editing



Brother Robert Cobb
Printing and Distribution

Contact Information

E-Mail -

battle@rwrenewals.com

**4730 Jute Road,
Seneca, MO 64865**

417-776-4777

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CAPTIVES SET FREE

- Brother Justin Cobb

I was born a free man, and I dwelt in the Lord's land, near the beautiful mountains. There went out a decree from the Lord of the Land, to stay far away from the valleyland. But ever since I was a child, I have been drawn there to play. Thats when the enemy captured me. Here I was, a prisoner for years. The soldiers bound me in a straitjacket and threw me in a concrete cell with an armed guard, where there was no possible way for me to escape.

I was bound in my arms, and my feet were shackled together. My execution unscheduled to my knowledge, but imminent none the less. But when I finally saw that my state was hopeless, I failed within myself. I have lived in this despair for years. The other prisoners around me were occupying themselves.



One of them was getting quite good at the harmonica, another was becoming very skilled at drawing. It seemed like those in the cells around me were oblivious to their bondage, and actually began to even enjoy being provided with 3 meals a day and to fix their time on the vain hobbies they enjoyed. Now, at this time I saw a man sneaking past the guards, going from cell to cell whispering to the prisoners in my complex. the person finally arrived at my cell, whispered to me

through the bars that there was someone He was following up ahead who could set me free and that his name was Jesus. And that if I desired to be delivered all I had to do was believe that He is and He would come around here and set me free.

So I believed He would come, and He came. He told the guard at my cell entrance to leave his post, and the guard left!! He opened my cell, and I saw His hands and His feet, how blood did pour from them.

I then recognized that this was the only begotten Son of the Lord of the Land. I fell to my knees and begged for forgiveness, for I had trespassed on enemy grounds, which was forbidden by the Lord's law, and was captured as a result. He looked at me and spoke, "peace my child, your sins are forgiven" and immediately my restricting clothing and bound feet were loosed and fell away. How had he made it through the complex? there were so many guards that a rescue mission would have been impossible for any other man. As soon as I was set free, He told me to put on a set of body armor and gave me a weapon. "If you're going to get out of here alive, you have to follow right behind me, because only I know the way out.... because I AM the way out. We must be quick, do not turn to the right or to the left, only follow me. We will encounter many difficulties and firefights ahead, and you will need to be alert, and fight."

When He had said these things I began to get nervous, because I was not a seasoned soldier, and I doubted my ability to correctly use the weapon I had been given in an efficient manner. "Be of Good Cheer" said my deliverer, "There are others who I am setting free along the way, they will be your brothers in arms, and will encourage you and build you up. I have given a specific skill before the war even began to each man I am setting free and putting in this company. now, watch each other's backs and do all I have told you, and you will all make it out alive, I tell you the truth, not one man who follows me the whole way will be lost."

Notice that once we have been set free, and able to move about, we have orders to follow! fight! be alert! assist our brothers in arms!

Would it make any sense to just stand in the jail cell, praising God that you have been set free from the straitjacket? It is true that the price that was paid is praiseworthy, and not something we could have done ourselves, but if we just stand there and don't make haste to escape, eventually another enemy guard will come and see you there standing in the jail cell unbound, and with the door wide open, and you'll be bound again, tighter, and thrown deeper into the dungeons, because you didn't follow Jesus out. If He does come to set you free again (and there are NO guarantees for second chances), you'll have more ground to travel and more difficulty crucifying your flesh.

Praise God, that we are participants in this Good fight of Faith! That the Lord is wise in working these trials, producing these traits in us for His good pleasure. We overcome by the Blood of the Lamb, but also because of the word of our testimony, because we have lived it! We will have worked out our own salvation with fear and trembling, and we were able to do it by the power of His blood that sets us free to serve Him!

Walk About Zion



*Brother
Mike
Zaucha*

“Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following” (Ps. 48:12-13).

The manner of the kingdom of God and of His Christ for all His followers is one of increase (Isa. 9:7), particularly in the knowledge of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Tit. 2:13), that we all would grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him (Eph. 1:7), that none of us would neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Pet. 1:8). The Psalmist likened this pursuit of knowing the Only True God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent as walking about Zion - doing so as to becoming more familiar with Him. And it is through the gospel that we know he was not speaking about an earth geographical familiarity, but rather of the One whom the Psalmist was truly testifying of and directing us to - the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 19:10).

Tell the Towers Thereof!

It is surely reasonable that the Psalmist was speaking of something greater and far more effective than earthly towers for what benefit are such to the people of God today?

Can such truly be a place of refuge for us in times of need, or a place where troubles are hasted away? By the grace of God, there is such a provision for the people of God, as He promised there would be: “a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest” (Isa. 32:2). And that man is the Lord from heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ: “The Lord is my rock, and my fortress and my deliverer. The God of my rock, in Him will I trust: He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower and my refuge, my Savior” (II Sam. 22:2-3). Jesus truly is such a high tower and this truth of Him is being made manifest by the church - even today - as they continue to abide in Him having this testimony of God's Christ and our High Tower: “The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth unto it and is safe” (Prov. 18:10). Jesus is a strong tower yesterday, today and for ever.

Consider the Palaces!

The first and foremost consideration of the palaces is that they are the dwelling place of the king, and concerning the King of Heaven, of Jesus alone is it declared: “For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the God Head bodily” (Col. 2:9). Everything - absolutely everything that is God is resident or dwells in the

man Christ Jesus. Each and every divine quality and characteristic of God, and everything that comes from God abides and continues in Him. This is a most powerful and glorious revelation to the believer in Christ Jesus - and must continue to be preached unto them unto their edification, exhortation and comfort - for in the man Christ Jesus, God has made all the benefits, all the blessings and all the promises accessible to the saints - in Him, in Christ Jesus our Lord! (Ps. 68:19; II Cor. 1:20; Eph. 1:3). And these provisions are of an exceeding great and everlasting magnitude.

The palaces are the place where the treasures and the riches of the king kept. And God, in putting them in the man Christ Jesus, reveals that they are not there to be viewed as museum pieces - only to be observed, but rather to be partaken of to the salvation of their souls: the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering (Rom. 2:4); the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God (Rom. 11:33); the riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7); the riches of His glory (Eph. 3:16); the riches of the full assurance of understanding (Col. 2:2). Through Christ Jesus we do partake of these riches according to God's eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus: "For God IS making known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles" (Rom. 9:23-24).

Mark Ye Well the Bulwarks!

The exhortation is to each of the people of God concerning the bulwarks of the faith: mark them well. Inscribe them deeply into your hearts and minds. Assist one another in this glorious ministry among God's people in rehearsing them one to another.

Remind them of their strength and solidity and unchangeableness before the Holy, Holy, Holy God. The bulwarks are sure and steadfast because God Himself has laid them in place: "thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation" (Isa. 28:16). It was the Apostle Peter who revealed that God was speaking of His Christ when the Apostle, quoting the prophet Isaiah, opened up this text of Scripture concerning Jesus: "and he that believeth on Him (Jesus) shall not be cofounded" (I Pet. 2:6).

Mark these bulwarks well: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3). A most powerful enabler of God's people by which they draw nigh unto God. Even though Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 5:6, 13:8), there is no sign of aging or deterioration upon this mighty bulwark. There are no cracks, no breeches at all, no, not even the smallest of beginnings upon it. And next to it is laid another: "now once in the end of the world hath He (Jesus) appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26), and another, "to the praise and glory of His grace, wherein He (God) hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6), and still another "and ye are complete in Him" (Col. 2:10).

Let your faith take hold of the many strong and sure bulwarks of Zion revealed in the Scripture, for you will soon become aware that you are compassed about by them all, to the glory of God and His Christ, and to obtainment of your salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory (II Tim. 2:10). Continue to consider them in your good fight of faith knowing - as the song writer penned - speaking of God and His Christ, "a bulwark never failing" (Martin Luther). Amen.

~~3 DENIALS~~ 3 AFFIRMATIONS

(PETER'S SIFTING AND CONVERSION)



*Sister
Michele
Blakely*

I have been considering the account of Peter's sifting and the time afterward when he was speaking with Jesus. I want to look into each part of Peter's sifting because there is benefit that can be derived from it. (There is much more to be seen than I am going to look into; I'm going to focus on a certain aspect, but this is a fruitful field for consideration in seeing how the Lord worked through this circumstance for Peter's benefit and for our learning.) The account is found in Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and John 18. I'm going to look at Peter's sifting in three parts: Jesus warnings, the denials, and the affirmations after Peter's conversion.

***Jesus' warnings:**

Matt. 26:33-35, Mark 14:29-31, Luke 22:31-32(Jesus praying for Peter), Luke 22:33-34

"Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow (twice), thou shalt deny me thrice. (But he spake the more vehemently), Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee (in any wise). Likewise also said all the disciples." (Matthew and Mark)

We see in this, the desire of Peter (and the other disciples) toward Jesus : *"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."* (Luke 22:31-32)

Jesus, the Son of God, prayed for Peter and told him what He prayed for him. When has Jesus told you He has prayed for you for a particular trial or testing? This was a very great test for Peter, one which required Divine assistance. Peter didn't know the extent of what this meant, but Jesus did. If He hadn't interceded for Peter, he may not have come out of this trial as he did. What is Peter's response to this knowledge?

"And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me." (Luke 22:33-34)

We see Peter's heart for the Lord in his words, but even he did not know how grievous this temptation was going to be. He didn't know that his soul was in the balance. We see, evidenced in Peter's speech toward Jesus' warnings, that he loved the Lord. We see it also in how he acted when Jesus was taken away. Peter knew his heart to be for the Lord, but he couldn't see the areas that needed strengthening.

David spoke of communing with your heart to make diligent search (for that which is lacking). Every believer has the same experience. When we go through trials and temptations the Lord shows us areas that need strengthening, things that need to be discarded, and areas in which much tearing down and rebuilding are needed. At this time in the disciples' lives, Jesus was the one who was showing them what was in their heart more than they knew themselves (because of the time of salvation that they were living in). Satan intended that this time of sifting would be Peter's demise, but in truth, it was ultimately for the growth and strength of Peter. It caused him to fully rely on the Lord and to see there is always room for advancement and growth when it involves following and loving the Lord. I like how Matthew Henry explained this:

"Christ's express prediction of his denying him thrice (Luke 22:34): "I tell thee, Peter (thou dost not know thine own heart, but must be left to thyself a little, that thou mayest know it, and mayest never trust to it again), the cock shall not crow this day before thou even deny that thou knowest me." Note, Christ knows us better than we know ourselves, and knows the evil that is in us, and will be done by us, which we ourselves do not suspect. It is well for us that Christ knows where we are weak better than we do, and therefore where to come in with grace sufficient; that he knows how far a temptation will prevail, and therefore when to say, Hitherto shall it come, and no further."

Peter follows to see what is to become of Jesus: *Matt. 26:58, Mark 14:54, Luke 22:54-62, John 18:15*

"But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in (and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest), and sat with the servants, to see the end (and warmed himself at the fire)." (Matthew, Mark, John)

Again, we can see Peter's heart toward the Lord in that he followed to see what was to become of Jesus. We can also see the beginning of the sifting taking place. Everything is being set up for Peter's demise (from Satan's viewpoint), but God is working in this circumstance.

***Peter's Denials:**

Matt. 26:69-75, Mark 14:66-72, Luke 22:54-62, John 18:15-18, 25-27

*Now Peter sat without (beneath) in the palace: and a damsel (one of the maids of the high priest: And when she saw Peter warming himself, she (earnestly) looked upon him) came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. **But he denied before them all, saying, I know not (neither understand I) what thou sayest.** And when he was gone out into the porch (the cock crew), another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. **And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.** And after a while (about the space of one hour after) came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them (for thou art a Galilaean); for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, **I know not the man.** And immediately (while he yet spake) the cock crew (the second time). (And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.) And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow (twice), thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly." (Matthew, Mark, Luke)*

Peter didn't know the extent of the trial that was going to come upon him. He knew he loved the Lord as evidenced in what he said and did before Jesus' crucifixion and death. Peter said he would never be offended because of Jesus, he even smote off Malchus' ear, when they went to take Jesus in the garden, and followed where Jesus was taken to see how this would end, and then the sifting began.

Continued on Page 7..

**3 Denials 3 Affirmations:
Continued from Page 6..**

We can see the grievousness of this sifting; how hard and difficult it was.

Peter was convicted by a look. He wept bitterly because he remembered Jesus' word and saw that he had fulfilled it (to his sorrow). He didn't think he was capable of this because of his love for the Lord, but Satan was cruel in this sifting. BUT we see Jesus is merciful that when the sifting was over He immediately looked at Peter and Peter was sorrowful. There was no lingering sifting to be done, the trial was over and now the regenerative work could begin. The

converting/restoring of Peter could begin (but Peter was in a much better state than he was in the beginning). Peter probably remembered the words of Jesus (*"I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not..."*) and they ministered to him while he was repenting (holding to the promise that he would be converted). We do the same. Jesus is interceding for us and we hold to that promise when we are tempted and tried.

***Peter's affirmation:** *John 21:15-17*

"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."

I know it states Peter was grieved because Jesus asked him three times. I considered how Jesus gave him the opportunity to avenge his denials with affirmations (to redeem them). Peter denied three times; Jesus gave him three opportunities to affirm his love for Him. This is a merciful Shepherd.

I like the completeness of this: three denials, three affirmations. Nothing was left unredeemed. It is also good to note this was done publically. The denials were public, and the redemption of them was public. These affirmations were an evidence of his conversion. Not

only did he get to affirm his love for Jesus, he now has a charge to feed the flock of God. Good payment for enduring a great trial. This was also a chance for Peter to show that he was truly converted and that he was able to fulfill the word of Jesus again (to strengthen his brethren). This was an opportunity for Peter to revenge the days of disobedience (**2 Cor. 10:6**) and redeem

the time (**Eph. 5:16**) which he had been granted. Each affirmation came with a work to do which required greater responsibility than Peter had previously, but now he was capable of fulfilling what was required of him. He could and would be found faithful.

Some things to take away from this: trust the Lord to show us areas in which we need strengthening and rely on Him for the help we need lest we fall; after we have endured a trial and come out believing, take the understanding that has been given and use it/apply it; let us not be negligent to redeem the time and revenge the days of our disobedience. Let us be continually thankful for a merciful and faithful High Priest that is bringing us to glory and conforming us into a perfect image, His image.

**Let us
continually
be thankful
for a merciful
and faithful
high priest..**

FACING THE GIANT

Brother Robert Cobb

1 Samuel 17:45 -47

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands



David did not fear the enemy, even though by human standards he had no logical reason not to! - David had already been trained by God for this encounter. David had gone to the "Lion and the Bear" school of God!

David did not try to "muster up" some faith on that day, he was already basking in the fulness of the blessings of the Lord, having the testimony in himself that God was able! Even when the King tried to talk David out of this encounter, David used his faith to reassure the King that God was in control! That day had been planned by God for a long time, and David could see that all he needed to do was to put his hand to the sling, and God would do the rest! What a sight it must have been to witness the lad step out onto the battlefield, to stand against insurmountable odds, and yet, to do so with the confidence that victory was not just possible, but it was guaranteed in the Lord!

We too have our giants, today they may be called doubt and unbelief, but just as David overcame by faith, we too can gain the victory when we trust in the God who created all things, when we stand for what we know is right, it really doesn't matter how many come up against us, eternity will prove right as right! We have a very unique opportunity in the world today, many are rising up with strange doctrines of demons, but for those who will stand for what God has revealed to be right, there is a crown of righteousness that the "righteous judge" will give to every man that "holds the fort" and stands for Christ!

PRAISE GOD FOR JESUS!

THE SWORD OF THE LORD



Brother
Gene
Hutchcraft

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:34,38)

God is on the offensive in the earth, a spiritual offensive executed partly in the realm of flesh since that is where man sinned and the enemy so rules the fallen. Yet, God does not war as does the flesh and neither do those who engage the enemy in His name. Paul stated this truth categorically in these words:

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

So, this offensive stance projects from God the Father of our Lord Christ Jesus into those who abide in Him by faith. Heaven stages this battle through God's people according to their measure, engaging the enemy in His name and for His glory as he strengthens or enables them! The created realm is part of the offensive in which God works His will by establishing an earthly, physical environment and inhabiting it with beings made in His image, male and female. He then allowed a spiritual being, who opposed Him to enter its realms, and by deception, corrupt those God made in the divine image.

Such a composition baffles the mind unless you have a revelation of God's purpose in which the earth and the human race are crucial elements, though not the key elements. Scripture also records the culmination of that revelation in Christ Jesus. He is God's essential element in this spiritual conquest. Paul writes of it that believers would have a grounded perspective which they cannot have without a revelation from on high. Apostolic preaching and teaching, especially Paul's, were to this end; "...to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Ephesians 3:9-11) So, in our primary text Jesus declares heavenly battle tactics by which He, 'in the likeness of sinful flesh,' entered the realm of the Prince of Darkness. Christ's statement, of our main text, was when He sent His twelve disciples out two by two at the end of His second year of ministry, previous to the first feeding of thousands with bread and fish. Then, months later, our Lord restated it in other words which Luke records. Jesus' aggressively offensive focus, as He approached the cross, was unflinching. "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother." (Luke 12:51-53)

He does not use the words 'sword' in this statement, yet His point about this current conflict is in both texts. The impact of Jesus' presence in the earth forces human choices based on faith or the lack of it. Heaven engaged spiritual forces of wickedness in the earth, a warfare that is in the field of flesh, that is, the race of men. However, heaven is on the offensive while the forces of wickedness and darkness unsuccessfully attempt to deflect divine progress. These forces are in fact, tools of God's sovereign will and purpose. Paul later declares Jesus' total triumph in these words where he quotes a portion of a Psalm,

"Wherefore he saith, 'When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive.'" (Ephesians 4:8 ... Psalm 68:19). Jesus did this in the earth, where sin controls men, and while in the body or 'found in fashion as a man.' Satan used every deception in his arsenal and they all fell uselessly to the ground in the presence of the Son of God and Man. Nothing was too hard for Jesus as He "went about doing good and healing those oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts 10:38)

Satan had nothing in Jesus, Who pressed forward in the work of God on every front. He often caught the enemy unaware as in the case of the demonized man in Capernaum. "And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, 'Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.' And Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Hold thy peace, and come out of him.' And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, 'What thing is this? what new doctrine is this?'" (Mark 1:23-27)

Another time Jesus confronts the 'Legion' of spirits. This was their reply ; "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matthew 8:28-29) His near presence was a painful and terrifying experience for these spiritual entities because of the reality of His power and glory which oppressed them as they oppressed their weaker victims. Christ blazed a trail through the earth in which believers now make their way to God's presence, that way is Jesus Himself and the power of His indestructible resurrected life.

His way and doing in all things. They are the primary trophies of His triumph over sin and the grave! Those who fear God and love His truth yield to His mercy, kindness, and righteousness in all things. And since we fear nothing as we do God's wrath, we cast ourselves upon the 'Stone' heaven set in the earth that our broken selves will then be restored and recovered on and from the battlefield. The Captain of our salvation gives new life and equips us in His armor for the offensive against the flesh, the world, and the enemy of our souls. This involves cutting loose from earthly and fleshly engagements which distract us from the primary assignment, to daily crucify our flesh by walking in the Spirit. This cutting loose will include separation

from some people 'near and dear' to us in the earth if they refuse the gospel of grace, if they fear other things more than God, if they love the earth more than the promises of God.

Such expressions take many forms. However, faith enlightens the heart and mind of the believer to that which blinded us. Now we see clearly and so love God's truth, wisdom, goodness, and righteousness more than

any earthly bond. The call of God pitches us upward, away from the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. Truth made us free of these things and strengthens us to obtain that which God holds out, through His dear Son, to those who are His by faith!

So, again the words of our Lord provoke us to right thinking. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:34)

Jesus' presence causes decisions in those drawn to Him and in those repelled from Him. Each reveal their decisions by their responses to the life and immortality brought to light in His person, words, and works. Some men react as the demons and run for cover at the threat of exposure to His light. Other men may attempt to fight and overcome the light but they cannot, they cannot even comprehend it!

The Captain of our salvation gives new life and equips us in His armor for the offensive against the flesh, the world, and the enemy of our souls

.. Continued on page 11..

Believers are His happy captives willing to follow

THE SWORD OF THE LORD..

Continued from Page 10..

Yet, even as the demons, they continue on the course of their nature and desires which brings corruption and ultimate destruction. His presence forces such revelations and reactions which glorify God and honor the Son, even when men reject the truth.

This sword of truth and righteousness separates the old and new, it divides that which is above from that which is of the earth, and it even divides people from people. Scripture is one instrument of this work and Jesus, Who is the Word, is the power and wisdom behind God's living and active word! His very words provoke the hearts and minds of the hearers. Those who receive the love of the truth draw nearer and nearer while those who reject it turn away with apathy or disgust. Jesus' did not come to earth to make men happy or contented in it. He came to purchase people from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation as His Father's possession and dwelling forevermore. That involves their turning to Him from their flesh, the world, and the prince of the world. They turn from that which the world loves and values to that which the Father of life loves and values.

So, the presence of godly people in the earth provokes conflict with the world. This world resents, even hates, those who do not love it and share its values. They may speak of tolerance yet they begrudge those who refuse its interests and appetites. And it comes to blows in a spiritual conflict of thought vs. thought 'that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.' It even comes to physical violence in many places still today where believers and followers of Jesus live under a constant threat because of their identity with the One Who came from and returned to heaven. This division enters families and produces resentment, it did throughout the Bible record, from Cain and Able to believers in the first century and continues to do so today. Jesus is not something which a person adds to their life. He is life, nothing and no one else is.

The conflict simply reveals which side the opponents take while in this vale of appearance and shadows.

Jesus states the situation clearly in our primary text, cf. **Matthew 10:34ff**, and its restatement in **Luke 12:51ff**. Faith in Him reveals what the heart loves or desires. It will not turn to another since it knows His voice and wants to follow where He leads. The sheep of His flock will not follow another for He alone has the words of life and gives the water of life which becomes in His people a well of water springing up to eternal life. They want

***This sword of
Truth and
righteousness
separates the
old and new!***

this supply of life more than what the world offers. Also, they are worthy of Him by His working in them and prove it by their allegiance to Him and opposition to any and all who oppose the gospel of His grace. Scripture is full of this partitioning, from Genesis to Revelation. It began when God divided the light from the darkness, the firmament above from that below, and the land from the waters. God makes distinctions in things and

displays the qualities of each, assigning them their nature and all that attends that nature. They do not mix but are purposefully divided in line with God's will and purpose for it. Paul will later declare this aspect of life which also involves human decisions grounded in God's decisions.

"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Timothy 2:20-21)

Men do have decisions to make; however, God's decisions are the ultimate factors. So, let us align ourselves with those which then engage God's pleasure or grace that is in Christ Jesus.

The Savior's words reveal what we need to understand the divisive nature of God's truth and Jesus' identity to the world.

...Lay Hold on Eternal Life...

Then we can count the cost with knowledge and set our face toward Him though the world plague us for doing so. Heaven injected this division in the families of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God commanded Abraham to send Ishmael away from Isaac, Isaac sent Jacob away from Esau, and Jacob's sons lived in contention toward Joseph and each other for years. They did reconcile, to some degree, but still lived in fear of Joseph, thinking he was like them and would seek revenge after Jacob's death. He did not though when young most of them hated and planned his death. Joseph accepted these things as from God's hand leading to the present deliverance Joseph provided for them. This is a type of God's salvation provided by the One hated of many in His own people! Joseph and Jesus took up their cross and followed God's will for their earthly work which separated them from natural earthly involvements and enabled them to do the work God called them to do and bring about God's promised deliverance. Those enemies were as dogs or bulls attaching at every opportunity. However, earthly circumstance could not interfere with God's purpose and will to have His people and dwell among them. God did this in Israel and has fulfilled this also in the people of His flock in Christ Jesus the Great Shepherd of the sheep. And it will have its ultimate fulfillment when the Son delivers up the Kingdom to the Father, **cf. 1 Corinthians 15:20-28.**

Jesus divided those who heard His words and saw His works. Believers clung to Him at all cost while unbelievers turned away in apathy or reviled Him and worked to damage Him as they could. Later some (who claimed to follow Him) twisted or distorted His word and works to make it appear His kingdom has an earthly focus or emphasis, a here and now agenda. Yet, John declared this reality in the opening words of his gospel, which are part of Jesus' earthly experience and that of His people as they follow Him.

"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:10-13)

Those words are a few which confirm this nature of the truth as people believe or turn away from Him. The Scripture contains much more as to this work of division in the heart! The separation begins when one is born again from above. Life from above is separate from the old life or the old man. And so the apostle commands the believers in this vein, drawing a contrast with the ways of the world and life in Christ. *"But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."* (Ephesians 4:20-24) Paul, earlier in the letter, reminded the readers, *"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* (Ephesians 2:2-3)

Finally, we separate from all who are not in Christ Jesus and following Him in truth. Yet, our Savior assures that, *"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."* (John 15:18-19) Jesus lived this and those who belong to Him do as well. So, *"the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."* (1 Peter 5:10)

You belong to the Lord of heaven and earth Who by this truth prepares you for His presence from which you will not go out but abide in glory, strength, and peace forevermore. The conflict is only for this world and will not endure long! Lift up your heads, redemption draweth nigh!

"Words"



**Sister
Mattie
Blakely**

Words are powerful implements that can be wielded for either good or evil. A man's words can burst forth from his lips having the same force as a cannon that upon impact will cause such damage as to tear and rend all those in their path. Words can also be unobtrusive, not obviously destructive, but damaging nonetheless, in the same manner in which a light tap can crack the shell of an egg. The effects of such an attack may not be immediately apparent, it's damage being so slight as to seem inconsequential. And, indeed, one such blow inflicted by the word of our mouths may not cause catastrophic destruction, but, when blow is followed by blow, over and over, this method may be equally as effective as some more blatant means. Words are not only capable of being used as a means for destruction, but can, and should much more so, be used to build, establish and to edify and support life! Were not all things made by "The Word of God"?

Consider the power of God, that by speaking, He has created all things from the vast expanses of the universe to the smallest atomic particle! We certainly do not possess such power in our words or thoughts. Jesus asked the question, "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" (**Matthew 6:27**) The Great God whom we serve and follow after is great, and created all things by the word of His mouth. Indeed He alone possesses such power!

Psalms 33:6 tells us "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." We would not have it to be any other way! Who can fully imagine the chaos that would ensue were lesser beings than God, who alone is wise, were able to create and destroy life simply by speaking a word!

Psalms 33:4 says "For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth." He alone is able to cause his purpose to be worked out in the Earth and everywhere, unchallenged by any equal power (for He alone is God). We can fully trust such a God who will never be thwarted in His purpose and whose purpose will always be good and right. We cannot alter or change the course of things that God has purposed with our words or thoughts. We cannot create or ultimately destroy life with our words. We can, however, by our words, direct those who hear us to turn toward one direction or another. If we speak or preach false doctrine, then we are directing men to follow after the source of all that is false, the father of lies, and our enemy, the devil. If we allow corrupt communication to proceed out of our mouths then we will, by our words, be working to spread corruption and death. **Ephesians 4:29** says, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

If we speak or preach what is true then we are directing men to follow after the source of truth, Jesus Christ! Seeing then, that we can and will make a difference with the words we speak, let us be sober concerning such things and be sure that our hearts are right before God. We know that it is what we love that we will talk about, what is in our hearts will manifest itself in our speech.

(Luke 6:45) "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

If evil speaking can and will cause damage to the hearer consider how much more speaking what is good and right can and will minister grace to the hearers. Let us see to it that our speech may always be seasoned with salt, **(Colossians 4:6)** that it may be useful for preservation and the edification of the saints of God.

Sister Adah Hutchcraft



Praying With All Prayer

Sister Adah is an acting Chaplain for Via Christi Hospital, and regularly ministers to those who are in need of Prayer and a word of comfort. She has been given an exceptional ability to lift up those who need lifting up to the throne of grace to find help in time of need. We are thankful to have her as a comrad in arms in this good fight of faith!

Gracious Father in Heaven,

Your presence is Life and health and peace: be near in grief and in joy, be near in the valley and on the mountaintop, be near in times of peace and in times of war. Be near in our sickness and in our health; in times of plenty and in times of need. Be near when we struggle and when we soar; when we are disappointed and when we are satisfied. Be near whether we are with others or whether we are alone; with strangers or familiars; with friends or with enemies. Our need for Your presence does not change with our circumstance. You know, You see, and as we turn to You in faith You continually walk with us in power. Thank You for Your promise to never leave or forsake us. As we continue to trust in Christ, we find there is no time that we can not call upon You, and never a time we would be without You. In Christ we know You as the God Who is Near. Be near to us, O God.

In the Name of Christ, AMEN

TEN SPIES TELL LIES!

Numbers 13:30-31: *And Caleb stilled the people before Moses and said, Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it : but the men that went up with him said, we be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.*

I encourage you today Brethren, to make it a concerted effort in your own heart and mind to not listen to what the contemporary descendants of the ten spies have to say! There are a great many witnesses in our day that have had the same effect that these ten spies had upon the host of Israel. So much so has this happened, that in any number of churches you will hear men talk about how doubt is actually healthy, that it is part of the natural cycle of faith.

Let us sound a hearty "GOD FORBID" to that notion, and get re-grounded in reality. Faith is faith, and doubt is doubt. This is the kind of thing that happens when we spend in inordinate amount of time thinking about the nature of our enemy. If we spend too much time considering our opposition, if we make the focus of our teaching and preaching the massive and powerful nature of the enemy which we are facing,

then we will inevitably find ourselves coming to the conclusion that our fight is an impossible one to win.

But brethren, praise God, it is not impossible! In fact, all things are possible to him that believeth! In truth, the fight in which we now find ourselves in, is one that has already been won! Christ has made sure the victory. He has spoiled principalities and powers. He has placed a mortal bruise upon the head of the serpent, and has ascended to the right hand of God.

So, as you find yourselves , as the hymn writer put it "in the battle for the Lord and right", just "keep on the firing line", knowing that if you fight there is no way you can lose! He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. Take to heart the words of our Brother John, "who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God"?

I exhort you brethren, take much time to consider in your own heart and mind the fruits and the land that lies before us. Don't be as the spies who gave this evil report, but rather be as Caleb. See the goodness of the Lord, see the glory that awaits the faithful - and reason that he who begun a good work in you is able to perform it. Regardless of what opposition may lie between you and the obtaining of the reward.

A WORD CONCERNING REST

(Excerpt from "Grapes of Eshcol : gleanings from the land of promise"
by Brother John R. Macduff cir 1801)

Oh how sweet the music of this first heavenly chime floating across the waters
of death from the towers of the new Jerusalem!

Pilgrim, faint under thy long and arduous pilgrimage, hear it! **It is REST.**

Soldier, carrying still upon thee the blood and dust of battle, hear it! **It is REST.**

Voyager, tossed on the waves of sin and sorrow, driven hither and
thither on the world's heaving ocean of vicissitude, **hear it!**

The haven is in sight; the very waves that are breaking on the shore
seem to murmur " So giveth He His beloved **REST.**"

It is the long-drawn sigh of existence at last answered. The toil and travail of
earth's protracted week is at an end. The calm of its unbroken Sabbath is
begun. Man, weary man, has found at last the long-sought- for rest in the
bosom of his God! This Heavenly Rest will be a rest from sin.

Sin is the great disturber of the moral universe. The world, the soul was once
like an aeolian harp; every passing zephyr woke it into melody. Now it is tune-
less, unstrung; its notes dissonant and harsh. Not till the Sabbatic morning of
heaven dawn, will the old harmonies be restored. Joyful anticipation! perfect
and entire emancipation, not only from all temptation without, but from all bias
to evil within. No latent principle of corruption, no depressing consciousness of
inherent sin, no germinating seeds or roots that can develop themselves into
fruit, no languid frames, no guilty fears and apprehensions, no sorrowful es-
trangements from that Love whose smile is heaven; a rest from Satan's deceit-
ful wiles and insidious snares; these no longer felt or feared. What more can
be needed ? A rest from sin, and a rest in God. As the needle in the compass,
after many tremulous vibrations, at last settles in steady repose in the direction
of its pole, so the redeemed spirit — all its tremblings, and faintings, and fitful
aberrations at an end, shall remain, with its refined energies, its ennobled
powers, and purified aspirations undeviatingly fixed and centered on

Jehovah Himself. Its eternal motto will be;

This Is My Rest Forever!

Faith And Works Together

Brother
Robert
Cobb



James 2:14 (KJVS)

What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

How can you possibly read this verse and come away still believing that faith can live in a person and yet they remain inactive in the pursuit of "holiness" and righteousness before God? Yet, when I read the writings of many it is evident that a lot of people who would openly argue against election, yet they teach that God is actively saving those who are totally disinterested in the things of God.

James asked the question *"Can faith save him?"*

It would behoove all in the body of Christ to take this question serious. We must allow the Holy Spirit (through complete submission to him) to open up the application of this teaching to our *"pure minds"* God is not sending James to cloud the issues of faith and works, but actually, these words will cause a division between those who really want to live a life that is pleasing to God and those who only want some temporal advantage.

James is asking every believer to settle the answer to this question, that all who profess faith in Christ would be like-minded on this matter in their minds and hearts. Can Christ author a faith in someone that produces dull responses and disinterest in the things of God? The Holy Spirit would say *"Certainly Not"* or *"God forbid"* - A person must be basically dishonest to come to a conclusion that would point to the problem with mens actions resulting from the faith that God gives.

James is speaking strongly because all those who would say they have faith *"without the works that faith produces being evident in them"* are in fact liars! Even those who are just beginning in the faith of Christ are perfect in their obedience of the gospel, I am not saying that they are perfect in their ability to do righteousness, but they are perfect in their ability to believe that Christ has accomplished all that was required of God to bring salvation. We are told to *"work out"* our salvation - Christ works in in through our faith, and we are involved in the *"working out"* process.

James initial question is a very powerful argument! *"What profit does it"* or we might say *"to what profit"* will this kind of thinking bring? If a person can merely make a profession of faith, and yet, their lives are continuing to bring forth *"poison fruit"* then to what eternal profit is that? - James relies on the Holy Spirit to bring the right answer to those who have a true heart to know. It is of no profit for a man to merely profess faith, and then continue down the road to perdition, actually, if you can see it, the profit of spiritual life in Christ can only be realized after we *"take up our cross"* and follow after Him, not before!

James is nowhere suggesting that our works are in order to be saved, but the rather, he is teaching that *"real faith"* does *"real works"* and they are works that God will accept. The profitability of being in Christ finds its expression in all aspects of our lives, both now, and in the ages to come. One may say, and rightly so, that in the world to come we will not need faith, but that does not mean that we will cease to *"believe on"* or totally rely on Christ for grace to believe, the point is that we will not have this dual nature residing in us, those who end up in heaven will have been fully prepared by a life of faith here in the body to fully enjoy and prosper in a *"heavenly body"* wherein righteousness and peace will forever reign.

*Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.
(Romans 3:27, 28 KJV)*

This is a mystery to a great many, and is something that even those who have had any measurable amount of insight into must be constantly reminded of. And that is that, primarily It's not what we do that makes us acceptable before God, our acceptance is founded upon our belief in what Jesus did. That being said, With this affirmation comes a certain amount of protestation by those reading something into what is said that is not there.

In saying this, I am not saying that what we do does not matter. I am saying that from the standpoint of our justification, we cannot work ourselves into favor with God. Rather, our working comes from a realization that we are accepted in the beloved. As we continue in this accepted, reconciled state we walk in these good works "which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10) As James affirmed "faith without works is dead", that is to say true faith does not leave a person to inactivity, rather it accelerates it. Those who believe Jesus has done all that he could not do to be justified by the law of Moses can now use all of his time and energy that would be used in quest of acceptance by God to labor to glorify him in their accepted state.

After all, faith is not as an object that can be had like a trophy you can place upon your shelf to be called upon at your convenience. Faith must be kept, and in its very essence it denotes action - faith believes. And when you believe, all things are possible. I am agreeing with James when he wrote "faith without works is dead." And yet I am also agreeing with Paul when he states in our text "a man is justified without the deeds of the law". While it may appear to some there is a contradiction, it is merely an exposition of the same aspect of truth from two different perspectives. I for one am edified to be able to consider them.

- Brother Matthew Cobb.

Rejoice in the Lord!

Seeking the face of God is not a bucket list event to cross off once accomplished! He is always the object of our deepest need, our greatest desire, and the only source of life and joy! Finding Him is not a one-time event, but an eternal quest that grows richer as the years go by and will continue forever in heavenly bliss. Such is the true nature of our fellowship by worshipping Him in Spirit and in Truth. Only when we seek no other and stop trying to fit God into our own agendas, which means touching base with Him then "moving on" to other things (idols) will we be filled with His Spirit and conform to His image. God isn't a means to the end of finding happiness, but is the End and the Beginning, Himself! All my sources of joy are in You, Lord! - **Brother Jeff Hostetter**



*Sister
Nicole
Cobb*

PARTAKERS OF SUFFERING

1 Peter 4:12-13

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

In a day when men speak in general terms such as these concerning life in this world (if I am experiencing pain, or discomfort - that is bad, and if I am experiencing joy or pleasure, comfort in the flesh - it is good.) It is necessary for us to clarify the nature of the experience of the child of God in this world. Not only will we not necessarily always enjoy good and pleasant circumstances in life, on the contrary we will most certainly experience some hard and troublesome circumstances.

As ones who are following Christ, we must expect for the world to respond to our walk in a manner that is similar to how they responded to Jesus. The apostle Paul said it this way when he wrote to Timothy in **2 Timothy 3:12**, : *(Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.)* Rather than be discouraged, or cast down by these things, the apostle actually

exhorts the believers to respond in the way that the apostles did. When the Jewish counsel seized them for preaching Christ, and rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer for Christ. Understand, we do not glory in partaking of suffering merely for the sake of suffering, but for the glory that The Lord gets in this, as well as the reward that will follow. Also, when we talk about this suffering, we are talking about partaking of the suffering of Christ - suffering for righteousness sake, suffering as one who is experiencing the enmity of the world against the one who chooses to live a holy life. There is a suffering which can be experienced which is common to all men living in this world, as well as suffering that is a result of one's own disobedience or foolish choices. This is not the suffering of which we are speaking, and this suffering does not carry along with it glory, or an anticipation for a reward for having suffered it. See to it that this cannot be said of you, make sure that you are not one who must suffer as an evil doer.

Having said these things brethren, as you find yourself experiencing this suffering, this weight and opposition of the world and the devil, take courage! Do not be worried, but hope! Do not be discouraged, but confident! Knowing that these things are a evidence of who you belong to, and that in the end, regardless of what the enemy may attempt to do to you now, if you trust in Christ, you will not be confounded.

SUPPLIES FOR THE SOLDIER SAINT

-BROTHER MATTHEW COBB

The Lord has made it clear in his word that the call to follow him is not an on and off, here and there, whenever we feel like it kind of calling. We are told to take up our cross, and follow him. To "follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth" Whether in hardness and sorrow, or in joy and abundance, we are to take up our cross, to deny our selves, die to sin and self, to bear about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that we may one day participate in the eternal reign of Christ.

However, having said this - we also recognize that this and will not be done outside of an extensive amount of divine underpinning. Much is required to lead us from now to eternity that we cannot obtain by our own means. A man in and of himself, in his own power of will and strength of arm, will not get very far in this good fight of faith.

Having been rescued from the POW camp of the enemy, so to speak, and put in a place where we stand a fighting chance - We must rely upon constant supplies and reinforcement if we expect to make it through the battle victorious. God, in his excellent wisdom, has provided for us a great many things that make it possible for us to overcome. we have been granted to have within ourselves a means to make in stant communications with headquarters, so to speak. in the form of his holy spirit.

He has given us the means to come boldly before him to ask for grace to help in the time of need. more than this even, the spirit intercedes for us on our behalf concerning matters that we are not even aware. He provides for us a witness within ourselves that we belong to him who has redeemed us for his own name. We never have to find ourselves wandering unawares into enemy territory, for we

have a internal spiritual GPS, to update us on the status of the enemies position, and our most favorable route to travel to avoid entanglements with our foe.

Should we find ourselves in a battle, we have been granted weapons of warfare that will allow us to ably fight against our opposition. We have

means to avoid being overtaken and recaptured again. There is ammunition at our disposal to teat down the structures that the enemy uses to attempt to gain a foothold even amongst us in our encampment.

Should there be an extended period of assault, where it seems that no help is in sight - We have the resources needed to "stand in the evil day!". We have as it were, spiritual rations. Tools of survival. In the time when things are hard, we endure the hardness as a good soldier, knowing that our commander has not left us alone to die. Sometimes sorrow may endure for the night, but we look forward to the joy that comes in the morning!





Brother Jeff and Sister Sherrie Hostetter

Have served as evangelists and missionaries in Ghana, Africa for over 30 years. We have been blessed to be able to make their acquaintance and spend some quality time with them, to hear them testify of the work that the Lord has enabled them to do. Here is a word from Brother Jeff Concerning the effect that he has desired to have on those who are partakers of the ministry which he has been given to do:

We need more "Here's what the Spirit has revealed in the Word, and I can confirm that in my own life too" sort of leading, and less theory. We need show & tell leadership, sharing what the Spirit within them is enabling them to do, not just think about! That's not to claim "having arrived" on every front, but still, as one who is actually "arriving" at better behavior and deeper understanding of both God and of His perfect will. (Rom.12:2) We don't need to lead or be led as if in a maze, or as if there are just more questions than answers, and all we can do is ask for forgiveness acting ignorantly of that will!

For me personally, at times I do wonder "Why me Why did He call me to lead as a missionary/evangelist?" Sometimes like Paul, I feel like a "chief of sinners". Like Isaiah, a "man of unclean lips". But then, here is a word from God: *"Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need some letters (degrees/diplomas/references) to you or from you? You are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ."* The proof really is in the pudding, yes in the observable track record of a real spiritual leader.... which are the real life, flesh and blood disciples whom are made through him.

"Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. NOT that we are adequate (competent) in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God who has made us adequate as servants of a new covenant...." (II Cor.3:1-6)

We know we are God's true leaders and/or are being led by such, by the doors that He opens, by the seed that is sown, by the fruit that grows. Obviously, the more perfectly we follow the Spirit, the better that fruit and the more door that open, the more seed that is sown. In a sense, the circumstances or opportunities of life provided by God reveal this calling.

Being a leader is a scary thing! But God makes us what we are, and as Paul said, "I am what I am by the grace of God". (I Cor.15:10) From our perspective, he certainly didn't deserve to be a leader, from a human perspective. Neither did David. But by our faith in God, and by God's calling, the Spirit selects, equips and then helps the right men to lead by example, to rebuke, correct, exhort and encourage the saints and equip them to be disciples for Jesus, who become like Jesus! Show and tell leaders are needed, not just "telling leaders" who talk but don't show!

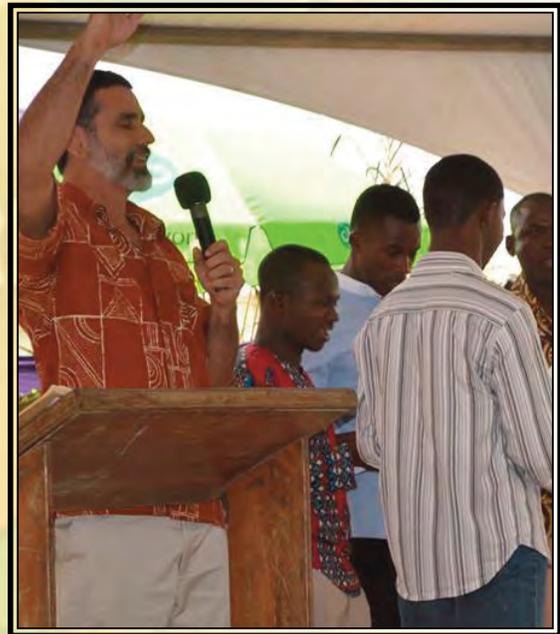
P.S - II Corinthians is all about Paul defending his leadership. We know he could do miracles! (He spoke inspired words that became Scripture. How "better" could he have been, how much more qualified by God? What does it say about the hearts of men, generally, and specifically of the Corinthians, that false men could create so many question marks about this premier apostle? *"For I am the least of the apostles and not fit to be called a missionary, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."*

O Lord, grant us Thy mercy to have those among us who can truly say: "Follow me, even as I imitate and follow Christ Jesus". (I Cor.11:1) And please, for your own glorious name's sake, grant us the discernment to know them by their fruit, and even to be them by Your grace and calling, and to bring many to You through the efforts done by the power of Your own Holy Spirit of Jesus working within! You are our adequacy and apart from You we can do nothing! Jesus is our vine, we are merely the branches, and thus I pray in Jesus' name, name above all names, at which every knee shall bow, that He is LORD! Amen



Jeff and Sherrie left for Ghana in March 1983.

Since then, they have learned the Twi language, adapted to life there, raised a family of spiritual warriors, and started over 20 churches. Over the years they have immersed hundreds, started Christian Schools, trained many Africans, developing faith and love in them by precept and example, so that they may go out and make more disciples for Jesus. So that one by one they may all become more like him.



Ghana

Contact Brother Jeff at
jeff.hostetter.54@facebook.com



COMMENTS FROM THE FOXHOLE

“God is able to keep the feet of His saints, even though the enemy may attempt to draw us away from our God, we must trust that He is "well able" to bring us into the promised land!”

- **Brother Robert Cobb**

“We should be immensely grateful that we are not getting what we all richly deserve - which is hell - but rather heaven, by grace.”

- **Brother Jeff Hostetter**

“If people really can see the surpassing value of what lies ahead, they will have no problem with letting go of the temporal.”

- **Brother Matthew Cobb**

“It is during times of great adversity when we see clearly that it is the Lord who brings us through by His mighty, delivering hand. The power of God is never stronger seen than when the enemy is in hot pursuit of us”

- **Sister Deborah Byrns**

“The fundamental desire of a person reveals who he is and where he is going”.

- **Brother Given O. Blakely**

"The darkness of despair is no match for the Light of blessed Hope."

- **Sister Adah Hutchcraft**

“No believer should be hesitant to live in view of the liberty that is theirs in Christ Jesus.”

- **Brother Ricky Sims**

“Jesus made it clear that the peace He gives is not the same peace that comes from good circumstances in the world. The real difference is that the world's peace is dependent upon the elimination of problems and difficulties, but the peace given by Jesus endures tribulation.”

- **Brother Tony Parker**