

# TAKEN BY STORM



VOLUME 4

*Fighting the Good  
Fight of Faith*

RANDALL J. BREWER



# **TAKEN BY STORM**

**VOLUME FOUR**

**RANDALL J. BREWER**

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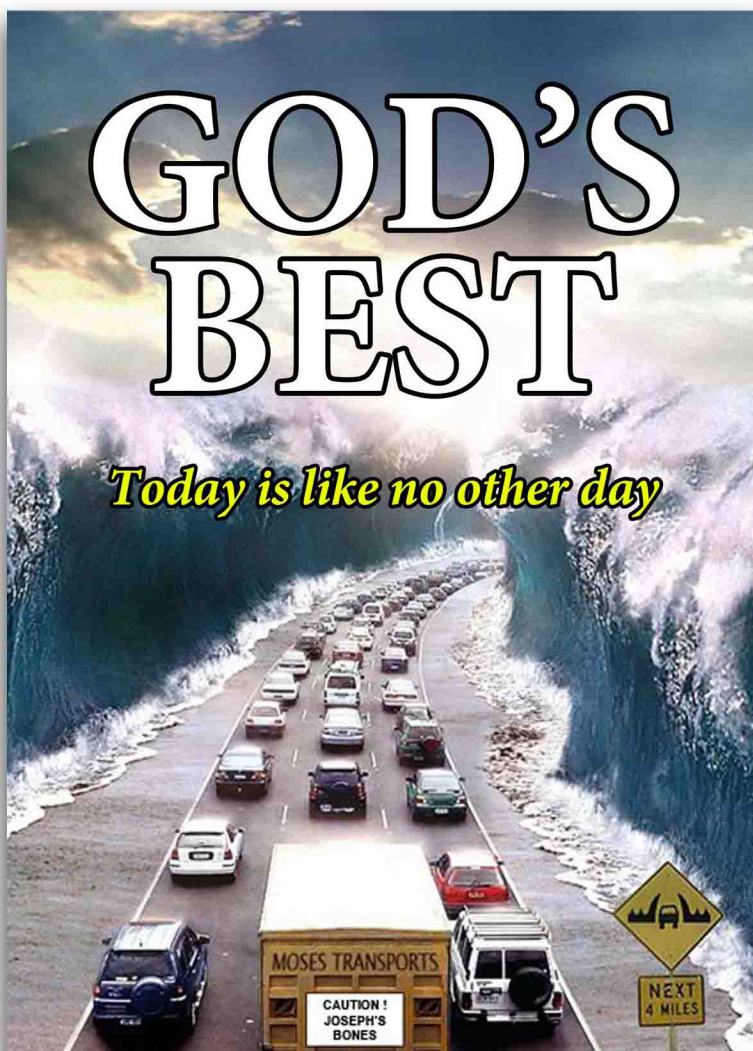
This book and the complete  
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dedicated to my publisher,  
Paul Baker, a friend who  
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# GOD'S BEST

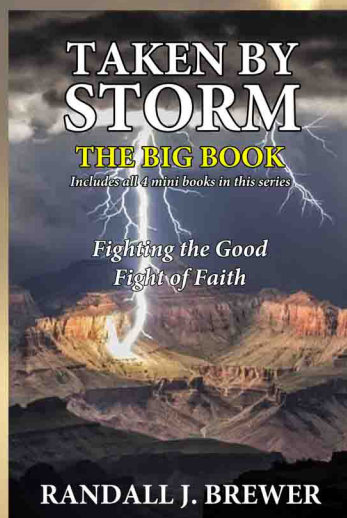
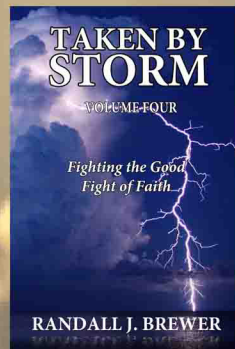
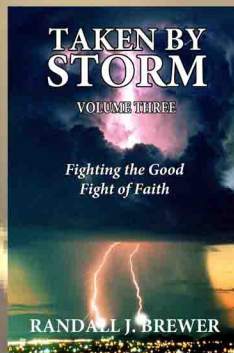
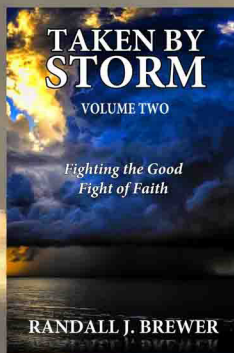
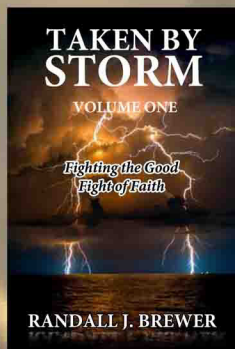
*Today is like no other day*



**RANDALL J. BREWER**

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The background of the entire image is a dramatic landscape. In the foreground, there is a field of tall, dry grass. In the middle ground, there are rolling hills or low mountains. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, suggesting an approaching storm. A faint rainbow is visible in the distance, behind the mountains. The overall mood is somber and powerful.

# THE **KINGDOM** OF GOD

**suffers violence,  
and the violent  
take it by storm.**

Matthew 11:12

**THE TAKEN BY STORM SERIES**

## REST FOR THE FAITHFUL

---

**H**ave you ever heard the phrase, “Life is only a dress rehearsal?” In a sense that statement is true. If eternity exists, and I believe it does, then this life on Earth cannot measure up to the quantum expanse of the never ending day.

Imagine, if you can, time without end; life with the assurance that its flame will never go out. Life in eternity is the dream that the dreams of man are made of.

But there is a tragedy that is connected to this dream. Billions of people will never see the shores of Heaven, because walking the narrow road of faith and righteousness is far too difficult for them. (Indeed, it is difficult.) A pastor once told me that the majority of mankind will certainly make it into heaven. Really? Is that why Hell has widened its borders? <sup>Isa. 5:14</sup> The Bible talks about the wide path and its gate that leads to destruction and the many that will follow it; and the few that take the narrow road, passing through its gate to life eternal. <sup>Matthew 7:13-14</sup>

Randall Brewer continues to coach us on how to faithfully live this dress rehearsal, in this fourth and last volume of the *Taken By Storm* series. Faith is trust, believing, honor, and devotion to the One True God.

Get your copy of this complete series or the Big Book, and begin your journey back to the Holy City from whence you came. The reunion celebration is going to be held off planet in our Father’s mansion, and by invitation only: the call to Salvation.

Paul Baker,  
Publisher and Covenant Partner of Randall J. Brewer

INTRODUCTION

## FRESH FAITH

by Randall J. Brewer

**T**he good life! Aaahhh! Yes! Yes! The good life! I have often said that, the good life is when today is better than yesterday and tomorrow will be better than today. With Jesus, life just keeps getting better and better. If tomorrow is going to be better than today, then that means we've always got something good to look forward to. And that, my friend, is called "the good life!"

An illustration comes to my mind. When people fly long distances by plane, they sometimes stop off in another city and change planes so they can continue their journey. They're heading for the same destination, but a different vehicle is used to take them there. The fuel tank of the old plane is empty and it's worn out and tired. But the new plane is fueled up and ready to go. It's fresh, stirred up, and is waiting to take you where you want to go. The second half of your journey just got better than your first half.

This is also how it is as we seek to fulfill the call of God on our lives. We flow in the anointing, but sometimes we have to change over

to a newer and fresher anointing. God says, "Behold, I do a new thing."

I also hear the Lord telling me that I need to face the challenge of life with a "fresh faith." What is "fresh faith"? It's faith that is stirred up! It's faith with an exclamation point (!) after it.

There's a difference between saying "I love you" (La-De-Da) and "I love you!!!!!" (Hubba! Hubba!). Badda-bing! Badda-boom! Likewise, there is a difference between "I believe You, God" (La-De-Da) and "I believe You, God" (Hubba! Hubba!). Fresh faith is "Hubba! Hubba!" faith!! It raises the level of your expectancy and always give you something good to look forward to.

Fresh faith grows exceedingly and has the power to bring to pass that which you are believing for. The faith you walked in yesterday was great. It did its job. It got you to where you're at today. But now it's time to go forward and complete your journey in the Lord. It's time to stir yourself up once again and

climb aboard the “fresh faith” airplane that is owned by “Hubba! Hubba! Airlines.”

The pilot of the plane is the Holy Spirit and He’ll take you wherever the Heavenly Father wants you to go. The atmosphere in this plane is fresh and alive like the morning dew. It’s time to go on to bigger and better things. “Old things have passed away, behold, all things become new.” <sup>2 COR. 5:17</sup>

Up until now you’ve traveled on a smaller plane, but now you’re on board a giant-sized 747! You’re filled with glee because your journey just got better. You anxiously look forward to your next changeover, because waiting for you will be a Space Shuttle that will take you to the stars.

The journey of life just keeps getting better and better. For sure, the good life is life with an exclamation point (!) after it.

Interesting enough, as I was meditating on this message I was driving my car down the highway when I heard a “ping” go off as a warning light appeared on the instrument panel. The car’s computer was telling me that I needed to put some air in my tires. The symbol for this problem was a deflated tire with an exclamation point (!) in the

center of it. I laughed all the way to my destination.



# 1

## THE COMPASSION OF FAITH

*"Faith works through love."* Galatians 5:6

**T**he time drew near for Jesus to fulfill His calling and purpose for coming to planet earth in human form. Within a few short hours He would be beaten, ridiculed, spat upon, and shamefully hung naked on a cross between two thieves. And for what reason did He come to die for you and me?

In the upper room during the last supper, Jesus prayed these words, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You,

that they also may be one in Us..."

John 17:20,21a

The Message® Bible says, "The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind - just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so they might be one heart and mind with us."

Jesus came to bridge the gap of sin between us and the Father, and to bring unity amongst ourselves. Jesus came to make us into one big happy family, and unity in the body of Christ begins when we realize that we are all individual members of God's household.

Paul says in Eph. 3:14,15, "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ from Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

We are all one family in Christ. He is the vine, we are the branches John 15:5. Together as joint heirs with Christ we are to



become “like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” <sup>Phil. 2:2</sup>. This is called the “law of unity” and is so vital today in the body of Christ. Jesus Himself said, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand” <sup>Matt. 12:25</sup>.

We are joined together in a covenant relationship with one another, because of the shed blood of Jesus and the bonding element that holds and binds us together is love, the “bond of perfection” <sup>Col. 3:14</sup>. Jesus came to make us a family, and Paul tells us that as a member of the family of God, we need to be “rooted and grounded in love” <sup>Eph. 3:17</sup>. This is the foundation of our walk with Christ and will cause us to be filled with the fullness of God. If we are rooted in love, we are rooted in God, for God is love <sup>1 John 4:8</sup>.

### GOD IS NOT ORDINARY

The love of God is no ordinary love. It is a love that continues loving no matter what. The love of God will always focus on the one loved with thought of

self secondary.

Jude 21 says to “keep yourself in the love of God.” If we will do this, the body of Christ will be undivided because the love of God always seeks and desires unity. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” <sup>Ps. 133:1</sup>. Dwelling together in unity means to have a “continual courtship” with one another. When we are courting somebody in the natural, we are always on our best behavior and we will do anything to win the affection of the other person.

Likewise, we need to delight to be in the presence of one another and

strive to promote and further each others welfare and calling in life. Paul says, “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others” <sup>Phil. 2:4</sup>.

It is God’s desire that we dwell together as a holy family having one heart, one soul, and one interest. To do this is a rare thing and is therefore admirable. It is “good” and it is “pleasant.” It is heaven on earth and is agreeable to the will of God.

People who love are a blessed

*We are all one family  
in Christ. He is the  
vine and we are  
the branches.*



people and it brings constant delight and comfort to those who are living in harmony and unity with one another. Ps. 133:2 says dwelling together in unity "... is like the precious oil upon the head, running down the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments."

Believers are taught by God to love one another <sup>1 Thess. 4:9</sup>, and it is His grace working through us. It is like the precious oil running down the beard of Aaron. This ointment was holy and was not made for common use.

## **BROTHERLY LOVE IS UNITY**

So must our brotherly love be. To dwell together in unity we must love with a pure heart that is solely devoted to God and the fulfillment of His will.

As with the anointing oil, holy love is also of great price and is precious indeed. It is like ointment and perfume which will rejoice the heart. It is the "oil of gladness" that brings exaltation, celebration, and exceeding joy.

Jesus said, "**This is My commandment, that you love one another**" <sup>John 15:12</sup>. If we will take the

time to develop a love relationship with one another, then dwelling together in unity will be "like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion" <sup>Ps. 133:3</sup>.

The morning dew represents fertility and growth. 1 John 4:12 says, "If we love one another, God abides in us and His love has been perfected in us." And how is God's love perfected in us? By practicing love and hospitality on one another. This causes love to grow. Love is not selfish and we are to manifest the love of God and His nature to

others. Jesus said we are to love "**as I have loved you**" <sup>John 13:34</sup>.

Peter says, "Above all things have intense and unending love for one another" <sup>1 Peter 4:8</sup>.

Love is a Spiritual force that takes residence in the hearts of every believer. Rom. 5:5 tells us that "the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit Who was given to us." Love is a commandment and it must be foremost in the center of our will.

As believers, our first responsibility is to draw close to God and develop a love relationship with Him. You will

*To dwell together in unity we must love with a pure heart.*

quickly realize that...

***The love you have for  
others will always be in  
direct proportion to your  
love for God.***

The way you love God is the same way you will love others. You can always tell where a person is in their walk with the Lord by the way they love and treat others. 1 John 4:7 says, "...everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." Do you want to know the love of God more? Then practice loving one another more. This will help us to build up a greater degree and measure of love for God, which in turn helps us to love one another more. It is a continuous cycle of love.

God is love and His greatest desire is for us to love Him with all our hearts, and in turn to love one another. This is how unity comes to the body of Christ.

"Therefore be followers of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma" Eph. 5:1,2.

***As born-again believers  
we are to be imitators***

***of God as dear children  
imitate their parents.***

Jesus came to lay down His life for us and we ought to do the same. John 15:13 says, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." Become to others "a friend who sticks closer than a brother" Prov. 18:24.

### COVENANT LOVE

Our God is a covenant God, and we need to begin to love one another with a covenant love that comes as a result of knowing Him.

We need to become "zealous for good works" Titus 2:14. So what does covenant

love do? How does covenant love act? The entire Bible is a book of love and throughout its pages are recorded several principles of covenant love that should govern the thoughts, words, and actions of every born-again child of God.

One of the first things we learn about the love of God is that it always gives. John 3:16, probably the most famous verse in all of scripture, begins by saying, "**For God so loved the world that He gave...**" Our God is a giving God and there is no better indicator of

*The love of God  
always gives.*

His presence in our hearts than in the attitude we develop about giving. Love always gives and we need to make a quality decision to become a quality giver. 1 Tim. 6:18 says, “Let them do good that they may be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share.” Giving should be the lifestyle of every born-again believer. Giving is what we do. Jesus said, **“Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away”** Matt. 5:42.

## NO MAN IS AN ISLAND<sup>1</sup>

2 Cor. 9:7 says that “God loves, cherishes above all things, a cheerful giver.” Even though this verse is referring to money, the principle is the same in all areas of giving. Before money can be given, we need to first be willing to cheerfully give of ourselves. We need to get involved in the lives of other people. When we do, we’ll quickly realize that there is always something we can give to promote the lives of others.

Love always gives. And what precisely does love give? Whatever is needed. Money is only a small part of giving. We can give people our love, time, fellowship, counsel,

prayers, and any natural resource we have at our disposal.

Also, we need to be consistent in our giving. Daily look for ways to give and enrich those around you. You were born to love and can develop in your life the ministry of being nice to other people. Buy a coworker a cup of coffee or bake a dozen cookies and give them to a neighbor. Give somebody you know a phone call and tell them how blessed you are to have them as a friend. Offer to baby

sit for a mother of six children who never gets a chance to be by herself and do the things she likes

to do. Take an elderly person to the shopping mall with you, or a fatherless child to a ballgame. And if nothing else, you can always give somebody a smile and a friendly “hello.”

Let people see the joy that is within you. And who knows? These acts of kindness may birth in them the desire to know the same God you know. What more can a person offer another than the opportunity to receive eternal life?

Covenant love treats people as God treats us. Rom. 5:8 says,

*We need to get involved in the lives of other people.*

1. John Dunne, 1573-1631, an English cleric & poet.

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

In 1 John 3:16 we’re told, “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” Love is not selfish, and we too need to die to ourselves so we can have the freedom to love and bless others.

We need to engage our time and effort into what others like to do and get involved in what interests them. If we are willing, God will see to it that we will always have the resources from which to give and He will also provide the opportunities to do so. Daily look for those opportunities. Surely they are there.

## **PRAISE: THE SIGN OF ACCEPTANCE**

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him” <sup>John 4:23</sup>. Everybody likes praise. God likes praise. People like praise. Cats and dogs like praise. Praise

is a sign of acceptance. Is not acceptance the primary need of all people? Throughout history people have gone to great lengths to accomplish great deeds all for the sole purpose of being noticed and accepted by others. People have a craving to be received willingly and favorably. They want to be approved of and believed in. We need to learn to accept people not based on our preference or their performance, but because God has accepted them <sup>Rom. 14:3</sup>.

Paul says in Rom. 15:7, “Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.” As we praise and worship God for His worthiness, so must we also compliment and lift up one another. Eph. 4:29 tells us, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification that it may impart grace to the hearers.”

Compliments make a person feel good about themselves, and births in them the desire to respond back to the person giving the compliment. This leads to unity. A compliment spoken from the heart can “break the ice” between strangers and can open

*Love is not selfish.*

up the doorway to a life of love, fellowship, and faithful service to our Heavenly Father.

The Bible in Phil. 4:8 even tells us what types of compliments we are to give people, “Finally, brethren,

- Whatever things are true,
- Whatever things are noble,
- Whatever things are just,
- Whatever things are pure,
- Whatever things are lovely,
- Whatever things are of good report,
- If there is any virtue and
- If there is anything praise-worthy –

*meditate on these things.”*

If you will meditate on these type of things concerning other people it will eventually get down into your heart and Jesus said, “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matt. 12:34). If you will take the time and make the effort you will always be able to find something good in the lives of other people to compliment them about. And, by all means, be sincere in your praise giving.

Nobody likes false praise. Nobody likes to be lied to.

Covenant love means you will be real and sincere in your relationships. Let your compliments come from a conviction in your heart that you really believe what you’re saying. And if you will remain honest and sincere, you also will be blessed as you heap praises upon those around you. “A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is” <sup>Prov. 15:23</sup>.

*Be real and sincere in your relationships.*

***Blessing and ministering to one another is***

***what “loving thy neighbor” is all about.***

But if we are to please God in our quest for unity, then we will have to get our faith involved, for “without faith it is impossible to please Him...” <sup>Heb. 11:6</sup>. The household of God <sup>Eph 2:19</sup> is called the “household of faith” <sup>Gal.6:10</sup>, and to please God we need to be actively engaged in the lifestyle of faith. Faith is the confidence of knowing *that you know*. It is a firm conviction based upon hearing, and in the confidence you have in the speaker.

## WALKING BY FAITH

The first step in walking by faith is to develop faith in the faith you have.

Too many people focus on the mountain in front of them instead of using their faith to focus on the mountain-mover, Jesus Christ.

When faced with the privilege and opportunity to use their faith, people should realize that their faith produced in them the greatest miracle of all when they got born-again. And if their faith can snatch them out of the jaws of spiritual death and get them born-again, then that same faith can get for them anything else.

Realize and believe that the faith already inside of you can produce the desired results for which you are believing.

“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” <sup>1 Cor.13:13</sup>. Love is the answer to every problem we face and faith works by the same love that has been shed abroad in our hearts <sup>Gal. 5:6</sup>.

Love is not selfish. It does not seek its own <sup>1 Cor. 13:5</sup>. Likewise, God did not give us faith to consume

it all on ourselves. We all too often use our faith to get our own needs met with no regard for the needs of others. If a problem or an obstacle arises in our lives we immediately put our faith to work on it. But if this is all we do with our faith, then we have missed the heartbeat of God.

Faith always used on oneself is called *immature faith*. We need to grow beyond that and use our faith to help others. Gal. 6:2 says, “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ,” which is the law of love. “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are in the household of faith” <sup>Gal.6:9,10</sup>.

*We need to grow beyond immature faith.*

## WORK IT, OR IT DIES

Faith always proves itself by works. James 2:26 tells us that “faith without works is dead.” We need to believe and confess the Word of God concerning the needs of others and also provide works and actions to help meet those needs. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, said, “He

who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise” Luke 3:11.

James asks what does it profit if a brother or sister who is naked and destitute of daily food comes to you and all you do is pray for them and send them on their way James 2: 14-17? The answer is obvious. It profits nothing! 1 John 3: 17,18 says, “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

True Biblical faith and Godly love will feed and clothe those in need, and will find shelter for them and help them find a job. This is faith and love in action. Yes, we were born to love but we are called to serve. For sure, faith without works is dead, and dead faith is definitely not pleasing to God.

Jesus taught that the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed that is planted in the ground. And when it is sown “it grows up and becomes greater than all the herbs, and shoots out large

branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade” Mark 4:32.

As the mustard seed of faith grows up, it will reach out beyond itself and help provide shelter for the birds of the air. Likewise, our faith should be used to help sustain life in others.

If our faith is not being used to help other people, then it has not yet grown up to maturity. As with the birds of the air, the ultimate goal of our faith should be to help produce positive results in the lives of other people.

One example is when we give by faith. We don’t give of our resources to get our own needs met. No, we give to help other people get their needs met. Rom. 15:1,2 says, “We then who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.” Doing this on a consistent basis will bring great joy to the body of Christ and unity among those in the household of faith.

*My little children,  
let us not love in  
word or in tongue,  
but in deed and in  
truth.*



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## 2

### THE JOY OF FAITH

*“My brethren, count it all joy  
when you fall in to various trials.” James 1:2*

**D**o you know what a trial is? It's a distraction. That's all it is, plain and simple. A trial is the devil's attempt to distract you from doing what God has called you to do. How can a person focus on fulfilling their dreams if all they do is sit around all the time and worry about their problems? The answer is they can't. This is why many are called but few are chosen.

The hardest part of faith is the final half hour, and the closer a person gets to the fulfillment of their dream, the bigger and more consistent the distractions will be. This is why the servants of God so desperately need to learn to

cast all their care onto the Lord. It is so easy to get distracted. You're trying so hard to serve the Lord when you hear that a major layoff is about to happen at your job. Your children get sick, your spouse is mad at you, the in-laws come for a visit, your car breaks down. These are all distractions. Nothing more, nothing less.

What should you do?

1. Press on!
2. Remain focused on the call.
3. Do what you can in the natural and leave the rest in God's very capable hands. Let Him lead you beside the still waters.

As you rest and lay down in green pastures you'll sense a song rising up from the inside of you. It's a song of praise and worship and thanksgiving. It's a new song. It's a song of joy.

All during David's reign over Israel, the Philistines were continually a thorn in his flesh. 2 Sam. 21:15 says,



“When the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David and his servants with him went down and fought against the Philistines; and David grew faint.” David is now old and he had been a man of war his entire life. Almost non-stop he had been in battle after battle after battle. At this time in his life his nation was in famine, his son had been killed, and once again he was at war with the Philistines.

### SING A NEW SONG

The Bible says David grew faint. He became weary and exhausted. Does this passage describe you?

Do you need a miracle right now? If so, then consider what

David did in 2 Sam. 22:1a, “Then David spoke to the Lord the words of this song...” David sang a new song to the Lord, and when you read and study the entire chapter you will see that it is indeed a song of joy. It was a psalm of thanksgiving. Verses 2-4 says, “The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my strength, in Him I will trust, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My Savior, You save me from violence. I will call upon

the Lord, Who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies.”

When you sing a new song to the Lord, a song of joy, you also shall be saved from your enemies.

In Ps. 144:9,10 David wrote, “I will sing a new song to You, O God; on a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You, the One Who gives salvation to kings, Who delivers David His servant from the deadly sword.”

David was a man after God’s own heart and often he labeled himself the Lord’s servant. He knew that his God was

a covenant-keeping God and this is why he was able to rise up and sing a song of

joy during times of peril.

Ps. 89:34, 37 says, “My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David; His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me; It shall be established forever like the moon, even like the faithful witness in the sky.”

David knew that God is not a man that He should lie <sup>Num. 23:19</sup>, so he was able to stand firm on

*The hardest part of faith  
is the final half hour.*

what God had said to him. Over and over again God had delivered David from his enemies and he remembered these victories often. Before he faced Goliath he told Saul how the Lord had delivered him from the lion and the bear <sup>1</sup> Sam. 17:34-37. He was saying that he had seen God work before. If he delivered him once, He can do it again. And again. And again.

### THE DEVIL IS STILL THERE

The devil wants us to have tunnel vision and see only the problem, but like David we need to broaden the horizon of our vision and see the God Who is more than enough.

Habakkuk put his trust in the same God David served when he wrote, "Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vine; Though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; Though the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls - Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills" Hab. 3:17-<sup>19</sup>.

This was Habakkuk's song of joy. We need to sing a song of joy during times of trial and not only when things are going good. We can have the confidence that God will never leave us or forsake us. He is always there. He is the great "I AM"! He does not take His children out on a limb and leave them there. No, He is an ever present help in time of need.

David wrote in Ps. 27:9,10, "Do not hide Your face from me; Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me." This was why David was always singing songs of joy unto His Lord. We should also do the same.

Paul wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" Phil. 4:4. James said, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials..." James 1:2. Even Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you will have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" John 16:33.

*The devil wants us to see only the problem.*

Do you think God is trying to tell us something here? He is! He is saying that your breakthrough doesn't come when the storm clouds pass from over your head. No, it comes when you learn to sing and dance in the rain. During times of trial we need to lie down beside the still waters and sing unto the Lord a song of joy. In other words, calm down and cheer up!

***Rest assured, it is not the will of God for His servants to suffer defeat.***

Just as He leads us beside the still waters, we can sing a song of joy because He “always leads us in triumph in Christ” <sup>2 Cor. 2:14</sup>. Ps. 23:3 says, “He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake.” Yes, David grew faint but he was able to sing a song of joy because the words he wrote in Ps. 37:23, 24 were burning in his heart,

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand.”

This is why David could write

in Ps. 40:1-3,

“I waited patiently for the Lord; And He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and sit my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth - Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, and will trust in the Lord.”

*The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.*

### THE CHRISTIAN WALK IS DIFFICULT

Never forget that Satan is a thief and like a roaring lion he roams

about seeking whom he may devour. He's after...

- The Word in your heart,
- Your joy and power,
- Your peace,
- Courage
- Comfort,
- Your physical belongings and, more than anything else...
- The call of God that is on your life.

This is why when the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over all Israel, they rose up in battle against him <sup>1 Chron. 14:8</sup>.

The devil is trying to discourage you, and if he can't defeat you in the spiritual realm, he'll attack you in the natural realm. Read what the writer of Hebrews says in Heb. 10:32-35,

## THE JOY OF THE LORD IS A MIGHTY POWER

"But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven."

The Message® Bible bears even more light on what the writer is saying, "Remember those early days after you first saw the light? Those were the hard times! Kicked around in public, targets of every kind of abuse - some days it was you, other days your friends. If some friends went to prison, you stuck by them. If some enemies

broke in and seized your goods, you let them go with a smile, knowing they couldn't touch your real treasure. Nothing they did bothered you, nothing set you back. So don't throw it all away now. You were sure of yourselves then. It's still a sure thing! But you need to stick it out, staying with God's plan so you'll be there for the promised completion."

In the midst of this long passage of scriptures is the key to having victory in your life.

*The devil can't beat a believer who is joyful.*

Vs. 34 says they "joyfully accepted the plundering" of their goods. When the enemy broke into their homes and took everything they had a song of joy rose up on the inside of them. The only way Satan can defeat you and stop you from going forward is to prevent you from singing your song of joy.

Neh. 8:10b says, "Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

***The devil can't beat a believer who is joyful.***

He wants you weak and powerless, so he attacks your joy because there is no power without it. Jesus spoke to the Heavenly Father in John 17:13, 14a, "But now I come



to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your Word..." Jesus also said in John 15:11, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."

The Word of God produces joy. His Word is good news and good news produces joy. When you've been robbed of your joy you've been robbed of the Word, because it's the Word that produces joy. So be of good cheer. The Word of God and the joy of the Lord gives you the strength to secure for yourself victory every time the devil attacks you.

Jesus came from the tribe of Judah and this word means "praise." We are joint-heirs with Jesus, so all of us should shout praises unto our God and sing to Him a song of joy. For sure, God can work in the lives of those who praise Him. The game's not over as long as you're still praising Him.

The Message® Bible says in 1 Thess. 1:5,6, "When the Message we preached came to you, it wasn't just words. Something happened in you. The Holy Spirit

put steel in your convictions. You paid careful attention to the way we lived among you, and determined to live that way yourselves. In imitating us, you imitated the Master. Although great trouble accompanied the Word you were able to take great joy from the Holy Spirit! - taking the trouble with the joy, the joy with the trouble."

Paul went on to say in 1 Thess. 2:1,2, "So, friends, it's obvious that our visit to you was no waste of time. We had just been given rough treatment in Philippi, as you know, but that didn't slow us down. We were sure of ourselves in God, and went right ahead and said our piece, presenting God's message to you, defiant of the opposition."

How is it that Paul was able to write these words? Because he continually had a song of joy in his heart. Acts 16:25 says, "But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them." Joy has a voice. It can't be kept quiet. Jer.33:11 talks about "the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice

*[Satan] attacks  
your joy because  
there is no power  
without it.*



of the bride, the voice of those who will say: 'Praise the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for His mercy endures forever' - and of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord." Jer. 33:11

David wrote in Ps. 16:11, "In Your presence is fullness of joy." Joy must be expressed! Paul and Silas sang praises at the midnight hour. In 2 Sam. 6 David brought the ark to Jerusalem, and verses 14 & 15 says, "Then David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet." Verse 16 says David was "leaping and whirling before the Lord."

Ps. 33:1-3 says, "Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! For praise from the upright is beautiful. Praise the Lord with the harp; Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy."

A crippled man received a healing miracle and Acts 3:8,9 says, "So he, leaping up, stood and

walked and entered the temple with them - walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God."

These are all expressions of joy. Even Jesus said in the Beatitudes, "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven..." Luke 6:21b-23a

*In [God's] presence is the fullness of joy.*

If you will follow these examples and give expressions to your joy, there is no way the devil or anybody else can defeat you. That is good news.

Ps. 2:11 says, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." The Amplified® Bible adds, "lest you displease Him." God does not want you down and depressed. He's the glory and the lifter of your head and it displeases Him when you don't give expression to joy. So be happy on purpose, because you can't have strength without rejoicing.

Joy has nothing to do with

how you feel so don't wait for some emotion to bring you goosebumps. Paul said in Rom. 5:3 that we are to "glory in tribulations" and the Amplified® Bible says to do it "NOW!" The Message® Bible says, "We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles." Be joyful at all times!

From a jail cell filled with raw sewage Paul wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice!" Phil. 4:4. You must keep your joy or you won't win your battle. You don't win being depressed or negative-minded. No, you win by being filled with the joy of the Lord. Job 5:22 says, "You shall laugh at destruction and famine, and you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth."

You laugh so you don't lose your joy. Laughter releases joy and joy is a spiritual force that makes you unafraid of what the enemy can do to you. It gives you the courage to run through a troop and leap over a wall. God shows up with power and might when you give expression to joy. And when God shows up, problems leave. Is. 64:5 says, "For since the beginning of the world men

have not heard or perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You, Who acts for the one who waits for Him. You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness." God will meet you where you're at when you rejoice and sing unto Him a song of joy.

### JOY: A MAJOR SPIRITUAL FORCE

1 Cor. 4:20 says "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Joy is a major spiritual force and the joy of the Lord is your strength. Joy causes you to be "strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" Eph. 3:16 and this translates into having the ability to do anything. Phil. 1:25 talks about the "joy of faith."

Trusting God should make you happy and full of good cheer. Faith is the dynamite that defeats the enemy, but joy is the fuse. Joy comes from having the confidence that your faith is working and this confidence comes from knowing God.

Paul wrote in 2 Tim. 1:12, "... for I know Whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that day."

*Joy has nothing to do with how you feel.*

Paul was fully persuaded, because he knew God. Knowing God comes from fellowship with Him on a daily basis, and fellowship in turn produces fullness of joy. A wealth of spiritual might and power to overcome the enemy is available to you through the joy of the Lord.

Understand that joy is not the same thing as happiness. Happiness is a state of well-being and contentment. It is dependent upon the condition of the circumstances that surround you. If things are going good for you, you're happy. If they're not, you're not happy.

***Joy, on the other hand, has very little to do with how happy you are.***

You can be joyful in the midst of the most adverse circumstances. The joy of the Lord is one of the fruits of the Spirit <sup>Gal. 5:22,23</sup> and is the one fruit from which we get our strength. Joy is not a state of mind. It is a force that gives strength to all the other fruit. It is the strength of peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and of temperance.

Joy will cause you to have a

proper attitude when trials come your way. It will keep you out of self-pity so you can be strong in the Lord and the power of His might. Whatever circumstances you face, you can always be full of the joy of the Lord.

Be confident knowing that the devil can't oppose you with anything powerful enough to defeat you when you are walking in the joy of the Lord.

Remember always that *Jesus is everything!* He's the...

*Happiness is a state of wellbeing and contentment.*

- *Origin of life,*
- *The essence of life,*
- *The aim of life,*  
*and*
- *The reward of life.*

In His presence is fullness of joy. And it is Jesus Who will bless you every day of the week. In Him you'll have a happy Monday, a blessed Tuesday, a joyful Wednesday, a delightful Thursday, a good Friday, a glorious Saturday, and a heavenly Sunday. This is what your life will be like when you sing to the Lord a new song, a song of joy.

### 3

## THE TRANQUILITY OF FAITH

*“Be still, and know that I am God.”* Psalm 46:1

The pastor of a large church told his congregation that one day the burdens of life and the ministry were bearing down on him, so he decided to go jogging to help relieve some of the stress.

It was the fall season and the route he was on brought him to a park where all the trees were dropping their colorful leaves in majestic splendor. It was a sight to behold, so the pastor stopped running so he could take it all in.

He then decided to try to catch one of the falling leaves so he jumped and stretched and did everything he could but the light breeze kept blowing them out of his reach. Becoming more determined he tried harder and harder to catch one to no avail, and frustration began to set in. “This isn’t right,” he said. “I come out here to get rid of my stress but instead I’m getting more stressed out than I was before.”

He stopped his efforts and stood still for a moment,

when something on the inside of him told him to stick out his hand with his palm upward. He obeyed and in almost no time at all a single leaf fell and landed dead center in the palm of his hand. He stood there amazed and down in his heart he heard God say, “Be still, and know that I am God” Ps.

46:1.

### LET GO AND LET GOD

This story illustrates what it means to “let go and let God.” Jesus said in John 15:5, **“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing.”**

We must all learn to live by grace through faith and when we



do, the struggle is over. Works of the flesh are when we try to do God's job with our own power and abilities, and it is impossible to accomplish anything worthwhile this way. God's grace, however, along with His divine anointing, is supernatural power coming to us free of charge enabling us with ease to do what we could never do with struggle and effort.

### BE AT PEACE

John 15:7 says, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you." We must put God first in everything we do and make ourselves at home in His loving presence.

Daily we need prayer, fellowship, and a consistent study of His holy Word. When we give our all to God, He will give His all to us. God's grace will always be there for us when we step out in faith and do what He tells us to do.

Jesus said in John 15:11, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." In other words, enjoy the journey. Relax, lighten up, and don't be so

rigid. Receive grace and mercy to help in time of need. Act like a receptacle and take in all that's being offered. Be still and know that He is God.

Everybody, it seems, is frustrated and stressed out. People are always in a hurry and get worn out trying to solve their own problems. For reasons hard to understand they refuse to take heed to the Lord's instructions to "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" <sup>Matt. 11:28</sup>.

*"Get away with Me  
and you'll recover  
your life."*

The Message<sup>©</sup> Bible says, "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to Me. Get away with Me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with Me and work with Me - watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with Me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

That is an offer you can't refuse. He says if you'll only but come to Him, He will lead you out of frustration and doubt and into the land of rest and belief.

## WHAT IS PEACE?

David wrote in Ps. 23:2, “He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.” He later wrote in vs. 4, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for You are with me...”

This verse is a source of great comfort, but it only applies when we dwell beside the still waters. It is when we are in a peaceful calm that we come under the protection of God, and receive from Him divine direction.

Jesus is called the “Prince of Peace”

Is. 9:6, and the word

“peace” means ‘a deep, inner silence.’ The rest (i.e., the peace) of God is spiritual warfare and if you’re peaceful on the inside, you can be peaceful on the outside.

1 Peter 3:4 says that a quiet spirit is very precious in the sight of God. To remain calm and not panic in times of adversity is a sign that you are wholly trusting God for your breakthrough. Heb. 4:3a says, “For we who have believed do enter that rest...”

Resting in God is the evidence of faith, and it is faith alone that will see you through

the trial.

- You enter into rest, because you’re no longer struggling, murmuring, and complaining.
- You are committed to God;
- Your soul is at rest; and
- You are no longer trying to figure everything out.

There is a quiet assurance on the inside of you, a spiritual peace. A heavenly tranquility gives you relief and freedom from anything that worries, troubles

and disturbs you.

You are not walking in faith unless you come to a place where there is no

anxiety, no worry, no frets, no looking at circumstances, and no feeling of being overwhelmed by the impossibilities of life. Is. 26:3 says, “You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because He trusts in You.”

If you’re going to walk by faith, you have to forever remove from your vocabulary the words “why” and “when”. You have to trust God completely and resist the temptation to tell God how to fix your problem.

A powerful life is one that can face and deal with whatever happens in life and still remain

*“I will fear no evil  
for You are with  
me...”*

the same. A calm spirit destroys evil. It's how you win the battle. It's how you have breakthrough in your life.

## PEACE IS REST AND COURAGE

The prophet Isaiah knew something about entering into the rest of God. Is. 7:4 says, "Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted..." We also read in Is. 28:12, "To whom He said, 'This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest.' And, 'This is the refreshing.'" God also said in Is. 30:15, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength..."

No matter what's going on, always stay calm during your storm. Don't let the devil scare you. Paul says in Phil. 1:28 that we are to be "not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God."

The Message® Bible says we are "not flinching or dodging in the slightest before the opposition. Your courage and unity will show them what they're up against:

defeat for them, victory for you - and both because of God."

Staying calm is a sign that the devil is defeated. This is why we need to be addicted to peace. It is part of the armor of God <sup>Eph. 6:15</sup> and Phil. 4:7 says, "and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

The Message® Bible says, "Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life."

In verse 9 God is called "the God of peace" and we read in Is. 41:10, "Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." Col. 3:15a says, "And let the peace of God rule in your heart..."

Satan sets you up to try to

*Remove from your  
vocabulary  
the words  
"why" and "when."*



get you upset. When you're upset you are not able to walk and flow in the anointing that is necessary to fulfill your call. Thankfully, the God of peace gives us peace that passes all understanding.

***He leads us beside the still waters. It is there that He'll speak to us and give us divine direction.***

God told Elijah, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. So it was, when Elijah heard it..." 1 Kings 19: 11-

13a

## PEACE IS THE QUIET LIFE

God speaks in a soft, delicate whisper and we must be peaceful and still in order to hear it. When we get still, He speaks, and what He says will reveal to us that He indeed is God.

If you don't follow God as He

leads you beside the still waters, you'll never go any further in your walk with the Lord. So many people want God to listen to them, but they don't want to slow down to the point where they can listen to God. This is sad because the secret things belong to God <sup>Deut. 29:29</sup> and He reveals them to us in a whisper, a gentle stillness.

1 Thess. 4:11 tells us to study to lead a quiet life. Why does Paul say this? So we can hear from God! Prov. 4:20 says, "My sons, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings." You are to incline your ear and not engage your mouth. It is hard to listen if you're always talking. Yes, God reveals secrets, but in order to hear what they are, you must first get quiet. Be still, calm down, have peace, keep quiet and know that He is God.

David wrote in Ps. 29:11, "The Lord will give strength to His people; The Lord will bless His people with peace." There is strength to be found when you dwell beside the still waters. Ps. 119:165 says, "Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to

*The God of peace gives us peace that passes all understanding.*

stumble.”

## PEACE IS PROTECTION & PROVISION

Peace is a place of protection. If we remain peaceful in the time of adversity, the devil can't harm us. It renders him ineffective. Ps. 94:12,13 tells us, “Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O Lord, and teach out of Your law, that You may give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit is dug for the wicked.”

Stop looking for solutions all the time. Be still and let God work on your problem. Stay cool, calm, and collected. Before you do anything, wait on God and give Him an opportunity to lead you beside the still waters.

***Waiting on God means you're expecting Him to do something. Expect Him to move at any minute.***

Look for and long for Him to provide for you the victory that only He can give. Get excited and stay excited for what God has planned for your life. Get out of bed and say, “Something good is going to happen to me today.” If you remain hopeful and get still

before the Lord, then you can be sure that He will do something special for you.

God is waiting, looking, and longing to show favor to those who are waiting, looking, and longing for Him. Ps. 25:1-3 records these words of David, a man who was led beside the still waters, “To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed; Let not my enemies triumph over me. Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.”

*It is hard to listen if you're always talking.*

It is important to understand that having the peace of God in your heart does not mean that all your problems will instantly go away. No, peace is not the absence of conflict, but instead is the presence of God in your life. Jesus said in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Why does Jesus want us to dwell in His peace? Because peace precedes power!! Jesus was sleeping peacefully in the boat while the storm raged around

Him. When awakened by the fearful disciples, He had the power to calm the storm. He said, "Peace! Be still!" <sup>Mark 4:39</sup>. Jesus had authority *over* the storm, because He had peace *in* the storm.

## PEACE PRECEDES POWER

Everything we do should be centered around peace. Matt. 10:1 says, "And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease."

Jesus gave them power to perform mighty miracles, but notice what He said in vs. 11,12, "And when you go into a household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you."

In other words, peace precedes power! This is why God wants us to have peace in the midst of the storm. It is wonderful to have a problem and not have to care or worry about it. So learn to enter into the rest of God. For sure, there is not a more wonderful place to be.

Moses knew that peace precedes power. When the Egyptian army was closing in on the children of Israel he said, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace" <sup>Ex. 14:13,14</sup>.

Moses was saying to...

Be still;

Be firm;

Be confident;

Not dismayed.

He said to hold your peace and remain at rest. This tells God that you're trusting Him. The battle is the Lord's and Rom. 16:20a says, "And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet..." Ps. 34:14b says, "Seek peace, and pursue it."

Stop trying to figure everything out. Instead, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" <sup>Prov. 3:5, 6</sup>.

At the Red Sea God told Moses, "Why do you cry to Me?"

*Stop trying to figure everything out.*

Tell the children of Israel to go forward.” Direction came when they got still and held their peace.

God can do in a single moment what we can’t do in fifty years. So why try? Instead, lie down in green pastures and rest beside the still waters. Be peaceful on purpose. Seek, pursue, and crave peace as a vital necessity to your well being.

Is. 40:31 says, “But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” Consider also what David said in Ps. 62:1,2, “Truly my soul silently waits for God; From Him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved.” Strength comes when you silently wait on God beside the still waters.

Ps. 33:20-22 says, “Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name. Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we hope in You.”

Wait hopefully and put your trust in God. Get passionate once

again with your faith. Let a holy fervor rise up on the inside of you. Refuse to live without passion and enthusiasm. Get white hot for God. Fan your flame and don’t let your fire go out.

Paul told Timothy to “stir up the gift of God which is in you” <sup>2</sup> Tim. 1:6. Get sick and tired of being sick and tired. Get the fire back. Don’t just do something for God, enjoy it! Don’t let your problems get you down and cause you to give God a half-hearted effort. No, rest beside the still waters and give God everything you’ve got, and do it with passion.

*Be peaceful on purpose.*

God put a need and a desire in your heart for freshness, so don’t let the things of God in your life get dull and stale. Instead, stir yourself up and get out of the boat. Take a risk and watch what God will do.

Rom. 12:11 says we are “not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” Zeal is a driving force, an intense joy, eagerness and ardent interest. Zeal motivates you to keep going forward and to never give up.

Serving God is so much easier and more fun if you enjoy what you’re doing. All this

happens when you get quiet and  
rest beside the still waters.

## 4 THE DIRECTION OF FAITH

*“Do not look behind you...”* Genesis 19:17b

**I**t has been said that if there were no problems there would be no solutions. Finding solutions can be very rewarding, but sometimes you reach a point where you would gladly give up the reward if the problem would only go away by itself. But such is not the case and this is how it is in life as well.

Problems come and they cannot be ignored. The worst thing a person can do is sit back and do nothing, for this gives the enemy free reign to wreck havoc in your life. No, to win the battle of life and the good fight of faith, one must forever be moving forward.

The trials of life are often

compared to storms. Many times we encounter hurricane type conditions such as what was described by the apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 1:8 when he said he was “burdened beyond measure, above \_\_\_\_\_ strength, so that we despaired even of life.”

One thing to learn in the midst of all these trials is, life goes on. The clock is always ticking and any meteorologist will tell you that all storms move forward as well. In the center of all hurricanes is a peaceful, calm harbor of rest known as the “eye of the hurricane” and this is where you will find the throne room of God. You see, as long as we are here in this earth-suit we will have problems that will not go away on their own but thankfully we can go to Jesus Who is our “refuge and strength”. And where do we find Him? In the eye of the hurricane.

You \_\_\_\_\_ will  
always find Jesus in the



center of your storm. The problem many people have is, once they've taken refuge in this "eye", they want to strip themselves of their armor and rest awhile. This is not bad in and of itself, because we all need a season of rest from time to time. However, we cannot set up camp here and discontinue the good fight of faith, because our enemy does not know what the word "rest" means.

### REMAIN AWAKE, ALERT

That storm is always moving and with it so is its peaceful center. If we remain still in our comfort zone and don't move forward also, then the eye of the hurricane will pass over us and the turbulent winds of the violent storm will hit us from behind when we least expect it.

If we would all take inventory of those times when we've been wounded in battle, we would realize that it happened when our shield of faith was so full of arrows that we just had to lay it down, and we rested longer than we should have.

Resting too long brings with it the temptation to fall asleep on

our watch, and this we cannot do. To remain in the center of the eye of the hurricane we must continue to confess God's Word and always keep going forward.

In World War II the great General George S. Patton was known for his relentless drive to keep going forward even in the heat of battle. "No retreat, no surrender" was his motto and this must be ours as well. There is, of course, a reason for this.

*"Now thanks be to  
God Who always  
leads us in triumph  
in Christ..."*

Shortly after Paul wrote of his hardships at the beginning of his second letter to the Corinthian church, he went on to write

these encouraging words, "Now thanks be to God Who always leads us in triumph in Christ..." 2 Cor. 2:14a. This verse doesn't say that God will take a victory and instantly drop it in your lap. No, it says that God will "lead" you to that victory.

The reason we must keep going forward is because that's where our victory is. It's out there in front of us. Even while Jesus was hanging on the cross He was looking forward to the victory that would be His and ours at the resurrection.



Therefore, don't look at what you're going "through," but focus on where you're going "to."

***Don't look at what it is, but look at what it is going to become.***

Being led to victory can be compared to when you ask a taxi driver to take you someplace. There are many routes he can take to get you to the proper destination, but you don't concern yourself with that. You know where you want to go and you trust the driver to get you there.

### THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

This is how it is when God "leads us in triumph" and likewise we must put our total trust in Him to get us where we want to go. If a trial comes our way and we find ourselves in "the valley of the shadow of death," then we must trust God and realize that this valley is on the route that leads to our victory.

Sometimes you may feel like you're on a rugged obstacle course going through a maze of difficulties, and the end to your problem is nowhere in sight. Once

again, the only thing you can do is put your total trust in the One Who is leading you. This may seem confusing at times, but thankfully we don't have to understand it in our mind in order to believe it in our heart.

Prov. 20:24 says, "A man's steps are of the Lord; how then can a man understand his own way?" Nobody said this journey was easy. It's not. We are in a war and even Jesus said to **"count the cost."** What He also said is that He would never leave us or forsake us.

A valley is not a bad place to be if you and Jesus are going through it together. Ps. 37:23,24 tells us, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down for the Lord upholds him with His hand."

At all times you must believe that you are on the road to victory and are being led every step of the way by the One you call your Lord. Remember, the only way out of the valley is to march forward and go through the valley.

Someone once said that "great people are ordinary people

*The "valley of the shadow of death" is on the route that leads to our victory.*

with extra ordinary amounts of determination.” Obey the Lord’s command to “Rise up!” and never allow that trial to keep you idle.

Doing nothing only increases the opportunity for you to feel sorry for yourself and we all know that will get you nowhere. Keep going forward and take hold of that victory that rightfully belongs to you. And where is that victory at? It’s on the path you’re already on, so keep your head held high knowing that trials and hardships are on the road to your miracle. And, by all means, never look back and always keep your eyes in front of you, because that is where your victory is.

### ADJUST YOUR THINKING

A pastor once told his congregation, “When you’ve had a setback...don’t take a step back...get ready for a comeback.” Though the wind may blow and the rain will fall, we find comfort in the eye of the hurricane by putting our confidence in the words spoken in Nahum 1:3, “But the Lord has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm.” Rest assured, the victory is there but you must march

forward to get it. Put one foot in front of the other and go after it. Shout aloud the battle cry of the overcomer, “Onward!”

The Word of God is powerful. It is sharper than any two-edged sword and will turn you into the type of person who believes that, whatever you do will prosper and succeed. The Bible says you can do all things in Christ, but first you must adjust your thinking to line up and agree with the thoughts of God. Rom. 12:2a says, “And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...” The way you think can either cause you to press forward in the midst of a trial, or it can become a roadblock that prevents your advancement in life.

Thomas Edison once performed ten thousand experiments in his quest to invent the light bulb, and none produced the results he wanted. “I have not failed,” he said. “I have successfully found ten thousand ways that will not work.” When you think like that, there is no way the enemy can stop you from accomplishing what you set out to do.

*Keep your eyes  
in front of you.  
That is where  
your victory is.*

Paul said in 2 Cor. 4:8,9, “We are hard pressed on every side yet not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed.”

The Message® Bible puts it this way, “We’ve been surrounded and battered by troubles, but we’re not demoralized; we’re not sure what to do, but we know that God knows what to do; we’ve been spiritually terrorized, but God hasn’t left our side; we’ve been thrown down, but we haven’t broken.”

A winner is not a person who has never suffered a setback. A winner is someone who knows that when the setback comes he or she must rise to the occasion and continue forward.

The thoughts, words, and actions of a winner will always be in agree-ment with the Word of God. This, in turn, will determine whether you will be a success or failure because what happens “in” you is more important than what happens “to” you.

You can have the attitude that God is bigger than any obstacle you face or you can believe that He’s not. The former will allow

you to release the power of God into your situation through faith, whereas the latter will confine you to a life of fear and failure. This truth is illustrated in Num. 13 which tells the story of when Moses sent twelve people to spy out the Promised Land. After being gone for several weeks the spies came back and told of seeing huge fortified cities there and strong giants dwelling in the land. Everything the spies said about the land was true, the difference being Joshua and Caleb came back with a good report while the remaining ten returned bearing a bad report.

*What happens **in** you  
is more important  
than what happens  
**to** you.*

Num 13:30,31 says, “Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, ‘Let us go up at once and take possession for we are well able to overcome it.’ But the men who had gone up with him said, ‘We are not able to go up against the people for they are stronger than we are.’”

***We need to understand  
that faith is not a denial  
of the circumstances.***

Joshua and Caleb saw the same giants as the other spies, but they knew God had given them

the land and refused to allow the circumstances to dictate to them how things were going to be. This is called faith and faith always has a good report.

### GIVE A GOOD REPORT

To walk victorious we need to feed on the Word of God continually and maintain a good report on the evil day when circumstantial giants block our path. Num. 14:36-38 tells us that because the ten spies brought back a bad report, they immediately died by the plague before the Lord, whereas Joshua and Caleb were the only members of their evil generation who entered into the Promised Land. This reward was given to Joshua and Caleb because they believed God in spite of the circumstances, and as a result brought back to the people a good report.

There is another story in the Bible where under grave circumstances a woman overlooked a tragic event in her life and won a major victory by confessing a good report and going forward with her faith. Her

story is found in 2 Kings 4:8-37.

One day Elisha traveled to the city of Shunem where he met a woman who constrained him to come into her home and eat some food. This happened regularly and this same woman persuaded her husband to build an upper bedroom onto their house so that the prophet of God could have a comfortable dwelling place whenever he traveled to that region.

*A person's faith is most tested when all they have is taken away.*

During one of his visits, Elisha decided to bless the family for their kindness and upon hearing that the woman and her elderly husband had no children, he foretold that in about a year's time they would have and embrace a baby son. In time the child grew, and one day he ran out into the field to be with his father and immediately complained of a pain in his head. The boy was taken to his mother where he sat on her lap and eventually died. Now was the moment of truth for this woman who longed to be in the presence of the man of God.

A person's faith is most tested when all they have is taken away.

Oftentimes a person is required to use their faith when they are drained emotionally, mentally, and physically. The young boy's mother did this by not preparing her son for burial, but instead went and laid him on the bed of the prophet. She immediately got ready to run to the man of God, and when asked why she was going, all she said was, "It is well." She made a good report in spite of the loss a mother is sure to feel at the death of one of her children.

For this mother there was no turning back, and without delay she departed and went to Mount Carmel to see the man of God. Elisha instructed his servant when he saw her approaching, "Please run now to meet her, and say to her, 'Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?' And she answered, 'It is well.'" For the second time this woman gave a good report and confessed, "It is well."

### FAITH IS NOW FAITH

It is interesting to compare what this mother said to Elisha to what Martha said to Jesus at the death of her brother, Lazarus. Jesus

was not present when Lazarus passed away, and the first thing Martha said was, "Lord, if You had been here my brother would not have died." When Jesus responded that her brother would rise again Martha said, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Martha had faith for the past and for the future whereas the dead boy's mother displayed a "now" faith by twice saying "It is well." The timing of faith is vitally important to those who desire to live a victorious life that is pleasing to God.

*It is well with my soul.*

To walk by faith you must forget about yesterday and look beyond tomorrow in order to focus on today. Faith is a present tense reality and the first three words of Heb. 11:1 say, "Now faith is..."

When Moses asked God what His Name was, He said "I Am Who I Am." Our God is a "now" God, and so also is His faith which He gives us when we confess and believe His Word.

Knowing this is what compelled the young boy's mother to confess "It is well" and as a result of her "now" faith the prophet went and ministered the miracle-

working power of God into the body of her lifeless son. The lad was raised up and went on to live a rich full life, and it all began when his mother gave a good report in the face of adversity.

The ten spies who brought back the evil report and Martha walked by sight, while the young boy's mother was able to walk by faith because of the commitment she made to be in the presence of the man of God.

On the other hand, it was Martha's younger sister Mary who sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to everything He said, while Martha chose instead to busy herself with the task of serving her guests. It is this commitment to the Word of God what will enable you to give a good report on the evil day and will cause you to rise up and boldly proclaim, "It is well!"

When God told Moses to lift up his rod and split the Red Sea, He first told him to "tell the children of Israel to go forward" <sup>Ex. 14:15</sup>. God demands participation! Faith without works is dead <sup>James 2:17</sup>. Moses had to lift up the rod, but the people had to go forward. Faith never backs up, it only goes

forward.

When the time came to enter the Promised Land, the people refused to go forward and cross over the Jordan River. The result of their disobedience is that with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, that entire generation died off in the wilderness. They refused to fight the good fight of faith and take the land by storm, and did not enter in because of unbelief <sup>Heb. 3:19</sup>.

On the contrary, if our faith is genuine, then we must persistently heed the words of Heb. 10:39 <sup>NIV</sup>, "But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed but of those who believe and are saved."

*God demands participation!*

## **NOTHING MYSTERIOUS ABOUT FAITH**

True Biblical faith is simply believing God and acting on what you believe. Although people may fail you, faith in God is a sure thing, but in the natural it does involve taking a risk, because faith deals with the unseen. In fact, faith is the "evidence of things not seen" <sup>Heb. 11:1</sup>.

The problem many people have is that they live in a type of comfort zone and, like doubting

Thomas, only believe and feel secure in what they can see, taste, smell, hear, and touch. To walk by faith, however, one must be willing to let go of what looks like security to them and take what appears to be a risk. People who walk by faith must be willing to burn the bridges they cross over, because in the good fight of faith there is no turning back.

Julius Ceasar once sent explorers to a foreign land, and to assure the mission's success, he gave the command for the ships to be burned once his men arrived at their destination. For him, there was no turning back. The farmer Elisha, when called to follow Elijah, went back to his farm and slaughtered his oxen and burned his plowing equipment <sup>1</sup> Kings 19:21. He destroyed his means of income, because he was not willing to start something for God that he was not willing to finish. For him, there was no turning back.

Mark 10:50 tells how blind Bartimaeus threw aside his garment when called by Jesus, to Whom he had cried out for mercy. This piece of cloth signified that

he was legitimately blind and was his license to be a legal beggar. Bartimaeus, however, had faith in his Lord and he knew he would no longer need his garment so he threw it aside. This blind beggar stepped out in faith and for him there was no turning back.

God has put in the hearts of all His children a burning desire to do something in and for the kingdom of God. As one grows in their walk with the Lord, they will find that the things God tells them to do will more than likely be impossible by human standards.

This is so, because if it were possible in the natural realm, then it wouldn't require any faith, and Heb. 11:6 says it is impossible to please God without it. In order to please God we must be willing to face the impossible and take a risk. Even a farmer who has faith in his crop must take a risk and hire laborers to reap his fields before he receives payment for his harvest.

A risk taker is a person who doesn't consider the circumstances surrounding them, but instead is able to use their faith to hook up with the supernatural power of God. They are the ones willing

*Faith deals with the unseen.*



to burn the bridges behind them and put their trust in God and His Word, even when the odds seem to be against them. Jesus said in Mark 9:23, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.”

The question is, do you believe and do you trust God? Down in your heart do you really, truly trust Him? If so, then take that match and turn around and set fire to that bridge you just crossed over, because in the good fight of faith...

*there is no turning back.*





**Randall J. Brewer** has been faithfully serving the Lord since the day he first bowed his knees before Him in the summer of 1974.

Since that time Randall has stepped through every door that the Lord has opened for him and over time he has been involved with a children's ministry, a teenage street ministry, and has led a Christian singles ministry. He has been involved with an outreach to those in prison and many inmates have been blessed as the result of his efforts.

Randall has also managed a church bookstore, has been the substitute host of a three hour Christian radio program, and has taught Bible classes at church and hosted many home cell groups.

Recently the Lord had him write the eye opening story "Heaven: The Great Adventure" with the promise that it would open doors all over the world, giving those who read the message the incentive to grow closer and stronger in their own personal walk with the Lord. Since the completion of this book, Randall's work has been translated into several languages, and invitations have come in to teach all over the world.



Randall and his beautiful wife Anne Marie have been bonded together by one God, with one love, for one purpose. They know firsthand the trials and pain that come with having a sincere desire to serve the Lord.

The result of going through many harsh battles is that the Lord has anointed them to lift up and exhort those who are also serving the Lord and going through similar circumstances.

Their mission in life is to encourage all believers to rise up in the midst of their adversity and become all they were meant to be in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Their heartfelt prayer is that once you read this book, your life will never be the same.