
Pilgrims Journal

“They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city.” (Heb 11:13–16)

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WALK ON WATER

Have you ever wondered how thrilling it might be to have been one of the disciples who lived with Jesus for over three years? Supernatural forces at work, making the impossible possible—incredible feats were to be expected from those who kept company with Jesus. The multitudes could be fed with a boy’s lunch, demon hordes could be exorcised with a single word, the dead and buried could make grand exits from the grave!

Seeing such raw power at work made Christ to be worshiped, adored, revered, *for He could do what none other could do*. Usually He used His power for the obvious good of man, with compassion, attending to their immediate needs, in feeding, healing, and delivering. Though Jesus had the ability to do anything He pleased, it seemed, He didn’t merely make a show of it, as a magician might. Even when tempted to turn stones to bread, or to use His powers to save Himself from falling from the temple, or from the death of the cross, Jesus exercised restraint. Yet the occasion of Christ walking on water could seem a bit on the side of superfluous. He sat in boats, rode donkeys, or walked when He wanted to get from point A to point B: was it necessary to seemingly flaunt His

power? In fact, one gospel writer observes that Jesus was going to walk past His struggling disciples that night, had they not cried out to Him. Powers of the world to come have been entrusted to us through the gifts of the Spirit. But should we use such force for personal gain? We’ll “dive in,” so to speak, and see what lessons can be learned from walking on water.

This story starts off with a very human portrait of Jesus. He had heard of John’s beheading, and sought to be alone for a while. Unfortunately, the crowds didn’t have the same idea, and came to Him with their sick. Christ immediately forgot about Himself, and was moved with compassion to heal those afflicted, and to teach all of them. Towards the evening, the disciples expressed their burden for the multitude to be fed, and suggested sending them home so they could buy something before it got too late. Perhaps, just perhaps, the disciples were hoping to grab a bite themselves once the crowd dispersed, as they hadn’t had time to eat themselves with all that was going on. Jesus instead insisted that the people be fed before being sent away. A miracle of multiplied loaves and fishes to multiplied thousands occurred, as the disciples distributed the food, and collected the leftovers.

The Other Side

The multitudes had been healed, taught, and fed; yet Christ had not yet had His own “alone” time. He asked the disciples to go to the other side of the lake by boat, while He sent the multitudes back to their homes. So it is spiritually with those who come to Christ now. Many come for material needs, for the things of this life: and very few have a vision for what is on “the other side.” The disciples were with Jesus to follow Him all the way, not just for loaves and fishes. Jesus, Who sent them across the lake after feeding the multitude, went to a mountain to pray. He sees us in our striving to reach the other side, and prays for us as well.

The disciples, no doubt, were exhausted. They were tired before the day began, and they ended up hosting an impromptu convention on what was supposed to have been their day off. After distributing thousands of bread and fish portions, now they had to spend the night rowing this boat across a lake. And to top it all off, the wind and waves were against them. The multitudes which they had fed would already be sleeping on full stomachs, but the disciples who served them were yet laboring to get to the other side. Do you wonder sometimes why it seems that some Christians are blessed on every side in things

pertaining to this life, while those of us with a vision for what is on the other side seem to be struggling to get there?

Going Forward

With the elements against the disciples, they rowed through three watches of the night, and were still struggling in the final watch—and still had only reached halfway! Having rowed for so long, and seeing that there was not much progress, they could have decided to just go back to land, and to try again in the morning. This is our predicament as well: the night is far spent, the morning of Christ’s coming is at hand. We’re so close to the rapture, yet do you feel like you’re not even halfway to the point of being ready? Have you thought of giving up, and trying once more after the “morning” (rapture) to be a tribulation martyr, since trying to be the bride is so hard? Again, the majority of those who had come to Christ that day were now slumbering in the night, while the disciples had to remain watchful, sober, and vigilant. Like the small minority in the ship, so also we might be but a little “fellow-ship” with this vision to reach the other side.

Thank God the disciples kept going forward. These disciples knew what Jesus had asked of them, and did not

change their minds to go back. Yet something negative *was* stirring in their hearts.

Other voices were speaking to them now. They had heard Jesus' voice a long time ago, asking them to make this journey...but now they're not hearing His voice. And other voices would have been speaking: "Why are we the only ones like this? No one else is struggling like we are." After many hours of struggling, and realizing that day was at hand, these voices would have grown in their dominance. And when we listen to the wrong voices, something is birthed in our heart. *Listening to the voice of Jesus brings faith: listening to the voice of the enemy brings fear.*

His Voice, His Words

If we're honest, we've heard voices that have told us different things than the Voice that started us on our journey. We're in this journey because of the first Voice, but we doubt our journey and its outcome now because of other voices. We're still trying to get across, but in fear.

The gospels tell us that Jesus saw them toiling while He was yet on the land. In that dark night, He Who has eyes like a flame of fire could see what they were going through. And Christ decided to walk out there where they were, in the middle of the boisterous weather. Jesus coming to them

was the greatest possible blessing in their trial—and yet they cried out in fear, thinking He was a spirit. Fear causes us to see even God's blessings as problems. Do you also have the wrong kind of fear when you see signs of Jesus' coming?

Just as wrong voices cause fear, faith comes by hearing the word of the Lord. ***To counter the disciples' fear, Jesus spoke.*** Jesus wants us to take our eyes off of our troubles, and look to the Author and Finisher of our faith. That's the only way we can finish this journey, and get to the other side.

Jesus' words to them were exactly the opposite of what the situation was telling them: Be of good cheer; It is I; Be not afraid. "It is I," or "I AM." *Though waves and wind are against you, I AM, and I am with you. I will never leave you nor forsake you.* Have you heard this voice in the middle of your trials? He didn't say, "I'll stop the winds and the waves." Winds can keep raging, waves can keep crashing, but "I AM." In your sickness that won't go away, in your troubles that continue without end—even in the middle of your own unsanctified natures (the wicked are like the troubled sea, the double minded tossed by the waves)—hear Him say, "I AM." The fire shall not kindle upon you, the waters shall not overflow you, because I AM with you.

He Who is peace wants to speak to you while the storm is still raging.

Ask Me To Come

Although John and Mark also tell the story of this boat trip, only Matthew's rendition tells of one disciple's personal response to the words of Jesus. Peter was in the "safety" of the boat, with experienced fishermen. Surely that would be the best place to be in such a treacherous storm. Or was it?

"It is I," Jesus had said, while walking *on* the water. They were *in* the water trying to get across, but Jesus had a walk *above* the waters, and Peter wanted that too. *You have a peace out there on the water, that we don't have inside the boat. There is a calmness in Your voice that I don't have here in my comfort zone. I want to learn how to live a heavenly life above my trials and problems: far above principalities and powers.* "Lord, if that's You, ask me to come to You on the waters." Do you have that desire in you?

Yes, you've understood the calling to the other side, and you're with others of the same vision. But you're scared, and they're just as scared as you are. Jesus was walking, and Mark's gospel says Jesus was going to pass them by. (Of

course, Jesus knew they would make it: He hadn't called them to go out into the middle and drown. He knew the good work He started would be completed.) But Peter said, No! I'm not letting You pass me by. Lord, if that's You, I want to be where You are. You spoke the words to get me on this journey. You're telling me to be of good cheer, to not be afraid: no one on this boat has that. Tell me to come out there where You are!

Knowing His Voice

It's somewhat strange, that the disciples had just thought that it was some apparition on the water, and now Peter asked that "ghost" to tell him to come. If that had been some evil spirit, then this would be the perfect opportunity to get Peter to drown. This was not Peter's typical impetuous behavior. He was not simply asking for an invite to go swimming: Peter wanted to come *on* the water towards this creature. Peter had just cried in fear with the others when this thing first appeared. What had made the difference, why was he now wanting to leave the boat, during a raging storm, to attempt the impossible: to walk on water, towards this mysterious being?

Because Peter recognized that Voice: that same Voice had called him to leave his boat before. At that time,

Peter had been just a fisherman, and an unsuccessful one at that. He had spent an entire night catching nothing, and that same Voice first taught him how to fill his boat with fishes: and then asked him to walk away from it all. Peter had left everything for that Voice before, and he was willing to leave everything that he knew to be safe and comfortable, to follow that Voice again.

Peter was surrounded in his current boat with those who had the same vision to get to the other side—but right now they were all afraid, unsure of the outcome of their journey. Peter decided in a moment: Why not just be with the One Who called us on this journey? I don't want to live a life of struggling *in* the water, I want to walk *on* the water. "If that's You, call me to come."

Where did Peter's fear go? Faith came by hearing the voice of Jesus—and then there was also love. For faith to work, it must work by love. Peter had this love for Jesus that kept pulling him out of boats, that would put action to his faith. Love was casting out fear from his heart: to not fear the waves, to not fear the wind, to step out of his comfort zone into the unknown where Jesus was.

"If that's You, call me to come." Jesus didn't give Peter a Bible study on the blessings of walking with God, or on how He will be with us in trials. What did He say?

Just One Word

"And He said, 'Come.'" Jesus just said one word; and that one word was enough. Peter didn't ask for a confirmation: "Say it one more time, and this time let lightning flash... let someone on the boat prophesy the same thing..." Just one word from Jesus was enough. We ask God to speak so many times, and yet remain unsure. Yet He hasn't changed his mind about what He said. It's settled forever in heaven. What the Lord spoke to you back then, He still means it now. Peter had such a love for Jesus, that just one word was enough.

Faith is the "substance" of things hoped for: it is something substantial, something real. Peter took each step upon the substance of that one word: "Come." Peter didn't need a word for each step. "Lord, You told me to come, and I'm coming."

Incredible as Peter's faith walk was, we know it didn't last long. Yet from his attempt to do the impossible, there are lessons to be salvaged even from his failure. Peter "saw the wind boisterous." He had already seen that from the boat, and had still stepped out. But now he had taken his eyes off Jesus, and the wind caught his attention with a vengeance. "What in the world made you think you could walk like Jesus?"

Walking Towards Jesus

However, Peter was walking towards Jesus; and if you're walking in His direction, you can't go wrong. Even if you stumble and fall, you're stumbling and falling towards Jesus.

Earlier, when the disciples could not identify Jesus, they cried in fear. Peter was afraid now that he was sinking, but his cry was a cry of faith. And Jesus' response to faith was immediate. Now faith is—faith is now!

When we call upon the Lord, immediately He responds. You may say, "No, I cry, and I'm still in trouble." Well, so was Peter! The winds and waves were still there, the problems were still there, but the Problem Solver had arrived.

See the beauty of Jesus' immediate intervention. Jesus didn't correct Peter right away; first He helped him. Jesus is not going to watch you drown. If you're walking towards Jesus, He will immediately respond. Jesus loves to see someone who loves Him enough to come towards Him, even in the face of great difficulty. Peter left all that was familiar to him, the safety of the ship and the friends that he had grown close to, just to be where Jesus was.

Peter started out with this insane idea of walking on the water, but now things weren't working out. He had fallen in his walk of faith, yet there was a beauty in his reaction.

Jesus made mention of it in His correction, calling Peter a person of "little faith." What was this little faith of a sinking man? Look what he *didn't* do. In the same situation, we might have started shouting to our friends in the boat: "Oh, man, this isn't working! Somebody help me!" Sometimes we try trusting God for a particular situation—we try walking on water—and it doesn't work, so we start calling for the boat again.

Little Faith

What was Peter's little faith? To just keep coming to Jesus. Even when I fail, even when I fall, I have faith that I can still call on Jesus, and that He will still help me. He called me to come, so I'm going to call Him. Even if I fail, He won't fail me. "I messed up, but I believe that You love me enough that I can still call upon You, that I don't need to look to another."

Peter had that little bit of faith: and perhaps that's the lesson to be learned here. That though we can't do the impossible like Jesus, when we go out on a limb in our desire to be like Him, He will reward a faith that calls out to Him, and save us from making complete fools of ourselves.

On the other hand, how foolish of Peter to think he could live like Jesus, to think that he could live above all

those things? In the end, he couldn't walk on water. Our place is *in* the water, and Jesus alone walks *on* the water. What a strange thing that he even tried, right? Because in the end, he couldn't walk on water, right?

Wrong.

Peter with his little bit of faith had tried, and had failed. And Jesus knew that Peter didn't have enough faith to stay on top of the water. But Jesus also knew that what Peter couldn't do by himself, he could do with Jesus.

Have you ever thought about how Peter went back to the boat? Immediately Jesus caught him, and then? Peter didn't swim back to the boat: **Jesus and Peter walked together to the boat.**

You've tried to live this life, and started sinking, and everyone in the boat is watching you drown. "With this little bit of faith, even while sinking, I'm holding on to this faith, that You asked me to come." When you're walking with Jesus, you don't even need a boat. Jesus had already walked half the lake, and He could have walked the rest with Peter.

Walking Together

They both walked together in the storm, and when they reached the boat, the wind ceased. The whole purpose of that storm was to show that we can walk on water. It's not

just "sink or swim" in this journey to the other side: Christ has introduced to us a third option, of walking on water.

The testimony had been established for those in the boat. The others in the fellow-ship watched with stunned disbelief as Peter conversed with this being on the water, and then stepped out of the boat towards it. With waves raging and wind tossing, they looked at first in awe, and then in horror, as Peter first walked, and then sank. And then they witnessed Jesus raising him up, and observed in hushed wonder, as Jesus and Peter walked together, on the storm-driven waters, to the boat. The message was clear. If Jesus could help Peter to walk to the boat in this storm, then He can also help us get to the other side before morning.

Peter first went alone to Jesus on the water: when he returned with Jesus, walking on the water, all on the boat came to Jesus and worshiped Him. People can be inspired to true worship when they witness a Peter who is willing to trust God. Many will receive a fresh revelation of the Son of God when there's a Peter who walks on water.

We have all had our share of daunting trials and haunting fears, intimidating voices that say we'll never make it to the other side. But the One Who walks the stormy seas says to us, "If you come to Me, I can take you there, no matter the circumstance."

The same ones who had earlier cried out in fear seeing Jesus coming to them on the water, now willingly received Him into the boat. And as soon as they received Jesus, the boat immediately reached the other side. What they could not do in three watches without Jesus, was done in one moment with Jesus. When Jesus reached Peter, his struggles ended; when Jesus reached the boat, their struggles ended.

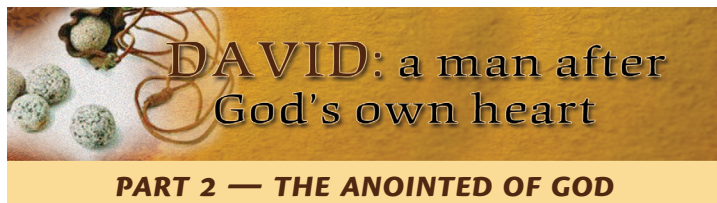
Looking For A Peter

There is a life above the waters. But Jesus needs a Peter. “Lord, I just want to be where You are. If I’m with You, I’ll make it to the other side.” Perfect love is supposed to cast out fear, but Peter who loved Jesus still got afraid and started sinking. Yet he had this faith: though my love is not perfect towards Him, His love is perfect towards me. I’m keeping myself in that love of God, and He’ll keep me from falling and will get me to the other side!”

Jesus brought peace to the sea, peace to the boat, and the boat to the other side. Once Peter was on the boat, the storm was over: the trial was over for everyone. Jesus needs a Peter, who will take that step of faith, to encourage the faith of everyone else, and Jesus will take the believing to the other side.

It’s the fourth watch; the morning has almost come. Do you see Jesus walking on the water? Come to Him. Keep looking to Jesus. One word is enough to take you all the way! □

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Out of all those who were anointed of God in the Old Testament period, in their various offices, David is called the “anointed of the God of Jacob” (2Sam 23:1) mainly because he was such an outstanding man of God. David’s anointing was unique among the Old Testament kings. He was anointed thrice and the blessings of God were promised to him “as the sure mercies of David” (Isa 55:3). Through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, David was elevated from the lowly estate of a shepherd boy to the throne as the crowned king of Israel, and he maintained his kingship till the end.

Anointed In The Midst Of His Brethren

According to the specific instruction of the God of Israel, the prophet Samuel anointed David in the midst of his brethren. The purpose of this anointing was to make him a king. *“Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons”* (1Sam 16:1). *“Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his*

brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward” (1Sam 16:13).

Although David was anointed to be king over Israel, he could not immediately ascend to the throne nor exercise authority as a king. What may have been the reason for it? It may have been because David lacked divine character. So God permitted many trials in his life to shape David’s character. **“Proven character through adversities of life is indispensable for divine rule.”** Therefore, God allowed many years of tribulations, temptations, humiliations, and rejections in David’s life. Various tests and trials of life formed godly characteristics such as humility, obedience, and the fear of God. David said, *“he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God”* (2 Sam 23:3).

David ascended to the throne of the kingdom with executive powers at the age of thirty. By this time, he had developed and demonstrated excellent leadership qualities such as patience and obedience. David knew quite well that his predecessor, king Saul, lost his kingdom and ruined his ministry, due to impatience and disobedience. ***To obey is better than sacrifice and the patient in spirit is better than hasty in spirit.*** One aspect of the spirit of Christ is the spirit of obedience and patience.

King David is a type of Jesus Christ, who is the King of kings. The Father anointed Him to be the King of Zion. **Christ**

neither grasped after any position nor climbed up Zion. It was the Father's perfect will that His humble and obedient Son be appointed as the Ruler of Eternity. The Lord Jesus Christ was exalted to be at the right hand of the Majesty on high for His excellent submission and implicit obedience to the whole will of God. *"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion"* (Psa 2:6). It is the Father's good pleasure for the Son to rule in the midst of His enemies. *"The Lord said unto my Lord, 'Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies"* (Psa 110:1-2).

When we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we are made kings unto God. *"And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father"* (Rev 1:6). As spiritual kings, we are to rule over fallen human natures or spirits such as anger, lust, pride, rebellion, etc. Through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, we must mortify (put to death) all the wrong deeds of the body. When we surrender every part of our body as instruments of righteousness to God, the anointing will mightily operate in our lives, which in turn will enable us to live a life above the world, the devil, and the flesh. The anointing in us is greater than the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Therefore, the anointing should be renewed in our life day by day through waiting upon the Lord in fervent prayers.

The Psalmist says, *"I shall be anointed with fresh oil."* A fresh anointing can renew our strength.

Second Anointing: In Hebron

Hebron means "fellowship." The book of Psalms reveals the intimate fellowship and sweet communion David had with God through the anointing. David was ever a lover of God who had a great passion to behold the beauty of the Lord. *"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple"* (Psa 27:4).

David was anointed for the second time, as he had been led by the Spirit of God, in Hebron. This unique anointing enabled him to rule over the house of Judah. *"And it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the Lord, saying, 'Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?' And the Lord said unto him, 'Go up.' And David said, 'Whither shall I go up?' And he said, 'Unto Hebron.' And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah"* (2Sam 2:1,4). **Judah means "praise."** The precious anointing in David made him a man of prayer, praise, and worship. He worshipped the Lord in the beauty of holiness, and caused the kingdom of Judah also to do the same. *"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness"* (Psa 29:2). As David sought the Lord, he

overflowed with the anointing, which allowed him to triumph in praise.

One of the primary reasons why God has anointed us is that we might be fully joined to Christ in unbroken communion and fellowship. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Heavenly Bridegroom, and the New Testament saints are His holy bride. Therefore, we are expected to live in close communion with Christ. God walked in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day. This signifies how Adam had fellowship with God, which brought refreshing to his soul. Jesus said, **“abide in Me.”** As we abide in Christ, we will never feel lonely. Our spiritual union with Christ brings satisfaction, security, and contentment into our life. Hallelujah!

Judah Rules With God

The saints of God who have a disciplined life of prayer and praise are given the ability and the authority to rule. *“But Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints”* (Hos 11:12). God rules, and the saints who worship Him in humble adoration rule with Him. The more we praise God, the more power will be given to us to execute vengeance upon the enemy. *“Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and*

their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord” (Psa 149:6-9).

The Father told the Son to “rule in the midst of His enemies” (Psa 110:2). Christ was given authority to rule over His enemies, as He maintained unceasing fellowship with the Father. Jesus sought the Father’s face with tears, that He might not be separated from the Father’s love. That is why it is written, *“Who [Christ] in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared”* (Heb 5:7). The death here signifies separation from the Father’s love.

Christ is spoken of as Shiloh in the scriptures. *“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be”* (Gen 49:10). The saints of God are gathered to Shiloh [Christ], to worship Him in spirit and in truth. The scepter signifies authority and rulership. So the people of praise and worship are authorized to rule over all the powers of darkness. Our calling is to be overcomers.

Third Anointing: In Hebron

David was anointed king the third time in Hebron. *“So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king*

David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they anointed David king over Israel” (2Sam 5:3). The purpose of this third anointing was for David to reign over all Israel and Judah. Spiritually, this refers to conquering heavenly Jerusalem and Zion.

New Jerusalem

The earthly Jerusalem which David conquered through the anointing is a type and shadow of the heavenly Jerusalem. Before David captured Jerusalem and made it the capital of his kingdom, it was inhabited and controlled by the Jebusites. Although defeating the Jebusites was no easy task for David, they were subdued and conquered by David and his men. The Jebusites can speak of the spirit of discouragement. **Unless we overcome discouragement, we cannot conquer Jerusalem.**

The Lord Jesus Christ overcame all the trials involving rejection, humiliation, and despising—without being discouraged. The anointing worked mightily in Him so that the spirit of discouragement found no room in Christ’s life. *“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. **He shall not fail nor be discouraged**”* (Isa 42:1,4).

The root cause of discouragement is unbelief. Therefore, we should place our faith in Christ and in His word. Jesus is

the Author and Finisher of our faith. The words of Christ are infallible, and therefore, can be fully trusted. Also, through anointed prayer, our faith and trust in God must be built up. The spirit of faith can conquer all doubts and discouragement in our lives. *“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost”* (Jude 1:20).

Even as David defeated the Jebusites, and conquered Jerusalem, we too can overcome the spirit of discouragement and inherit the holy city, New Jerusalem. *“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son**”* (Rev 21:1,7).

Mount Zion

The fortress of Zion was situated within the city of Jerusalem. All around Jerusalem there was a wall, strongly built and guarded. So the city of Zion was doubly protected, and considered to be invincible by the enemy. But David conquered the stronghold of Zion and made it to be his own. *“Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David”* (2Sam 5:7).

How did David capture Zion? He found entrance into the city through the gutters. The anointing in David granted

him the wisdom and the understanding to conquer the city by entering in through the gutters. What is the spiritual significance of the gutters? This speaks of perfect humility which is found in Christ. ***So our pathway to Zion is not ability, but humility.*** The servants of God who are called for Zion must practice Christ-like humility every day. The Apostle John was carried to Mount Zion. That meant he became like a little child in the arms of God to be carried. We must remain humble in God's hands and truly the Lord will carry us to the holy hill of Zion. *"He carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God"* (Rev 21:10).

The anointing of the New Testament saints is greater than that of David. The purpose of the anointing in our lives is to transform our character, to make us like Christ, and to prepare us for heavenly Zion and Jerusalem. Jesus is coming soon. May the Holy Spirit prepare all of us for His imminent return. *"When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in His glory"* (Psa 102:16). □

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Messages from Messes

PART 2 — PRAYING WITH PETER

In this series we are discovering from Scripture that God does not only teach by means of nice things, but also through messes and mistakes, problems and pain (Heb 5:8). **We will find that most of those messes were made and endured by men in the Bible who were just like us.** Sometimes this truth is hard to see as we are often nearsighted to just our own time period or we are blind to our own blindness and sin. An illustration of this is found in the life of King David. He became angry on hearing the story of a cruel and selfish rich man who stole a poor man's only lamb. Then the enraged ex-shepherd was informed by Nathan the prophet,

“thou art the man.” Throughout the Bible, God uses not just success but also human failure to teach us how we should and should not live. When we see how some of those Biblical characters' lives ended in a mess of sin, error and death, it warns us not to end up the same way (1Cor 10:11). Yet there were others in Scripture, for whom everything seemed to go wrong, that finished up all right. Their histories encourage us to endure by faith until we too “have seen the end of the Lord” (Jam 5:11).

In these studies, we are concentrating on events recorded in the New Testament that took place during the time of the primitive church. Today the word primitive has come to mean backward, unsophisticated or ignorant, but originally the word meant original, or the way things were in the beginning. Thus it is good for us in these modern times to also be primitive. In this installment, we will investigate events in the life of the impetuous Apostle Peter. Though he constantly jumped ahead of others, suffered many setbacks, and made all kinds of mistakes, in this article we will focus mainly on problems involving his prayers and the way he responded to the Lord. Peter had numerous struggles and failings in his life, as will be the case with every saint, but in the end the ***God of all grace made him strong, settled, established and perfect*** (1Pet 5:10). The Lord will do no less with us!

The True Peter

First we must differentiate between the actual Peter of the Bible and the mythical figure made up by the Church of Rome. The real man was just that—a real man with all too human foibles and failings as the Scriptures reveal again and again. The Roman Catholic Peter is said to have been infallible, but the Biblical Peter was proof positive of the saying, “to err is human” (Mat 16:23; 26:35; Gal 2:11). The first century fisherman that was able to tell a beggar “silver and gold have I none” is presumed to be mirrored now by a figure living in a gilded palace that is filled with priceless treasures while being attired in garments of silk, silver, and gold. The record is not clear if Peter ever made it to Rome, but in that same city, millions of deceived pilgrims come to a tomb named after him to pray over what they imagine to be his bones. A man who heard Jesus say “call no man your father upon the earth” (Mat 23:9) is now declared to be the first Pope (Papa or Daddy in Latin). From all this error let us be warned not to exalt or idolize mere men as Paul exhorted when he wrote, “let no man glory in men... whether Paul, Apollos, or Cephas” (1Cor 3:21-22; Gal 2:6).

What the word of God is clear about Peter though, is that *a fickle and failing man, Simon son of Jonas, was*

changed into the spiritual solid rock, Cephas, through a revelation of who Jesus the Son of the living God was. We, the believers of today, are being changed the same way into God’s overcoming and perfected people by that knowledge of the risen Lord and Savior!

On first meeting the Anointed One, and being confronted with His holy, miracle working power, Peter’s plea to Jesus was “depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Lk 5:8). Some souls feel fearful when faced with the reality of God’s presence or they become condemned when they begin to experience the power and glory of His Kingdom. They presume that they are too bad to go on with God or suppose that they are worse sinners than everyone else. Yet a short time later, as happened with Peter when he swore he would never leave the Lord, that same soul can believe himself better than all others (Mk 14:29).

Desperately Needy

However, none of us are too bad or too good to be saved. All men except Jesus have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous, no, not one. All men are born dead in sin, and continue as captives of sin and iniquity until they are born again (Eph 2:1). All of us are desperately needy. But do not despair! *When Jesus reveals*

our brokenness, it is so that He can fix us. If the Lord's purity exposes our uncleanness we must not think we are too filthy for Him to cleanse. A vision of God's awesome goodness is not given to make us run away, but rather to lead us to come to Him in repentance. Conviction of sin comes not to cause us to try to drive the Lord out of our lives, instead it is given so that we will draw nearer and call upon Jesus, the only one Who can save us.

Unanswered Prayer

We can learn from the way Jesus responded to Peter's first request to Him that there may come times when we will have occasion to **thank God for unanswered prayer.** Throughout the Bible there are stories of saints who despaired and even prayed against their own lives. **Moses** asked for God to blot him out of the book of life. **Job** not only asked God to erase him, but even wanted his date of birth to be removed from the calendar. There came a time that **Elijah** wished for death, as did **David** and **Jonah.** **Paul** wished himself accursed for the sake of his kinsmen, prayed thrice for a healing that God would not give, and even despaired of life (Exo 32:32; Num 11:15; Job 3; 1Kgs 19:4; 2Sam 18:33; Jon 4:3; Rom 9:3; 2Cor 1:8; 12:8). We should all praise the All Wise God for not answering those prayers.

Glimpse Of Glory

Instead He gave those suffering souls and despairing hearts a ***glimpse of His goodness, greatness, and glory which caused them to rise up and go onward to victory*** (Exo 33:22, Num 11:25; Job 42:5; 1Kgs 19:13; 2Cor 3:18; 12:4). Moses, when he felt he could go no further, caught while in the cleft of the rock, just a fading ***glimpse of the God of mercy and grace,*** which caused Him to arise and fulfill his ministry. The Prophet Elijah, who wanted to lie down and die, was strengthened to ***climb the mount of God and hear the Lord's voice.*** There, with his face covered, he was encouraged and commanded to continue his ministry, which is still not yet completed. The afflicted Job, who cast himself down in dust and ashes, repented in dust and ashes after God revealed to him merely the lesser aspects of His creative power and wisdom. Instead of being accursed and afflicted, he ***ended up doubly blessed.*** Paul heard ***inexpressible heavenly things*** that are illegal even to repeat on earth and went on to finish his course with joy and faith.

Never Give Up

We who are living in this age of grace should never give up believing and praying for ourselves and others. Yet even if we do lose heart or hope for a short while, ***God is faithful and***

will not give up on us. We too need a renewed vision of the God of all grace. There may come times when we should not believe our own broken, discouraged, or accusing hearts. “For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things” (1Jn 3:20; 1Cor 4:5; 2Cor 1:9). No matter how bad you are, or how bad things become, never ask God to give up on you or ask for Jesus to leave you alone. Imagine how horrible it would be if He answered those prayers.

Slumbering & Sleeping

Another awkward aspect about Peter’s prayers, as recorded in the Bible, is the fact that **he was often found asleep during them** (Lk 9:32). At crucial and critical times, he seems to have had the ability to sleep, even while others were praying for him. After a long and tiring day of ministry Jesus spent the night in Peter’s house. He got up very early the next day and went out to pray while His host stayed inside sleeping (Mk 1:35). On the stormy Sea of Galilee, when it would have been better for him to have been sleeping peacefully alongside Jesus, Peter was crying out in terror to the Lord. In the Garden of Gethsemane, where Peter should have been watching and praying with his Lord, he was asleep with the other disciples because their eyes and hearts were heavy with sorrow. Three times Jesus warned them that the

flesh was weak and asked them to watch and pray with Him. One would think sensible advice for someone with weakness would be to tell him to relax and rest. Yet when the evil hour of testing came, the Lord who had stayed awake and “prayed through” could stand, while the others who had rested, ran.

In response to Jesus’ question, “**could ye not watch with me one hour?**” most of us would have to answer like Peter, no Lord I can’t. Nevertheless, the efficacy of prayer does not depend upon our efforts or how much time we spend doing it. ***It depends on the One we are praying to.*** In His wisdom and strength ***the Holy “Spirit helps us in our weakness.*** We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us” and helps us to pray for others (Rom 8:26 NIV).

In the early days of the church, persecution arose in Jerusalem. The Apostle James was beheaded and Peter was arrested. Though he was due to be executed in the morning, **Peter was sleeping deeply between his guards** and this while the church was up all night crying out to God for his deliverance. Probably Peter was able to sleep so soundly because he had no fear of death and was in perfect peace knowing he would soon be with his Lord, or maybe he had claimed the promise, God “giveth his beloved sleep” as many drowsy intercessors do today (Psa 127:2). Escape did come for him

from heaven, but first the angel that was sent had to knock Peter about a bit in order to get him up. Some are found in deep sleep due to exhaustion. Others like Jonah do it to avoid facing God. A few like Elijah try to use sleep as an escape from grief or discouragement. Some of us are just plain lazy. We all need sleep but we should not love it. ***Even when physically asleep, our spirit and soul can still be conscious towards God*** (Pro 20:13; SS 5:2). Whether we are active and alert upon this earth or sleeping beneath it, the Lord is going to awaken us to eternity at the rapture. This is our real escape and release. As with Peter, the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ are praying for us and from Them comes our true and everlasting rest and strength (Lk 22:32; Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).

He Makes No Mistakes

Another mistake Peter made, and many of us still make today, was **telling the Lord that He was mistaken**. It was something that Peter did more than once. We see in the New Testament that Jesus has made the apostles examples for us, but they were not always examples of the best things to do. In Peter's case, after receiving a revelation of Who the Son of God was, he denied what God required of His Son, which was for Him to suffer and die for our sins. As Jesus began to speak of the cross, **Peter began to contradict and correct**

Him. When the Lord saw the others listening to Peter, whom He had just blessed and renamed Cephas, He told him “get behind me Satan... thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Mat 16:23). Then Jesus taught that true disciples must follow Him in denying themselves and in taking up the cross, not putting it down. When we lean upon our own understanding and opinion we will fail, and cause others to fail (Pro 3:5). ***Let us not oppose what God reveals and requires, even when it goes against our own intellect and human nature***. Never try to teach the Lord or tell Him He is wrong. The best thing we can reply in response to God's word and will is “Amen.”

At the Last Supper **Peter stopped the lowly Jesus and declared that He would never wash his feet**. With the next breath he told Him to wash his hands and head as well as his feet. Then the Lord stated that all would deny Him. Peter denied that he would do as Jesus said, even if all others did. A few hours later **Peter had fled on those washed feet and denied the Lord three times**.

After the resurrection **Peter took his friends fishing** (Jn 21). When they had tarried all night for no fish, Jesus appeared on shore with breakfast. After they ate, the Lord asked Peter three times, corresponding to those three denials, if he loved Him.

Then Jesus again called Peter (in the same manner as when they had first met) to leave his fishing and friends to follow Him. Jesus did not promise Peter a future full of pleasure and prosperity but prophesied for him contradiction and a cross that would bring glory to God. As they walked on and talked, Peter saw John following and asked “Lord, and what shall this man do?” Jesus told him to mind his own business which from now on was to be taking care of the Lord’s business. ***We should not compare our course or cross with those of others but with eyes of love upon Jesus we must follow Him Who first loved us.***

Even after the Day of Pentecost, **Peter still had issues of following his own ideas, understanding and prejudices** (Gal 2:11). God had given him a vision of all kinds of unclean and creepy creatures being lowered down from heaven for him to eat on something like a tablecloth. Though the Lord told him thrice to eat, Peter’s response was, “Not so, Lord.” Then when Peter saw the Holy Spirit being poured out upon the Gentiles for the first time, he declared, “God has shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean” (Acts 10:14, 28; 11:8). Much later in Antioch, Peter gave in again to past practices and peer pressure by segregating himself from the Gentile believers who he had previously been eating with. Praise God that Paul publicly corrected

him for this fear of man and their traditions. Let us not say no to what God has revealed to us or go back to what the Lord has called us from. Where He leads, we must follow. Whom He loves, we must love also. What He did, we must do. ***When He commands something that goes against our culture, customs and common sense, let us say no to ourselves and not to God.*** Just like Jesus’ first and last commands to Peter (Mat 4:19; Jn 21:22), we too are called to win souls and follow in His steps from the cross to the crown! □

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“And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and He made as though He would have gone further. But they constrained Him, saying, ‘Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.’ And He went in to tarry with them” (Lk 24:28-29).

Walking & Talking

We find these two dejected disciples on the road to Emmaus talking about the recent events in Jerusalem. The one they had hoped was the Messiah had been crucified and buried. Some in their company said they had seen a vision of angels saying that Jesus was alive. Quietly, the one of whom they were speaking, unrecognized by them, comes alongside them and begins to draw out the doubts and troubles that had taken up residence in their hearts. We can be sure they began to experience relief from their burdens and fears as they unload their hearts to him (you can do it, too). As they arrived at their destination they invited this stranger to come

in and abide with them. He obliges and goes in and stays with them for a while. As He blesses bread and breaks it and gives it to them, their eyes are opened and they know Him. He then vanishes out of their sight. Now they realize why their hearts were burning within them while the “stranger” had talked with them along the way and had opened up the scriptures to them.

This “stranger” did not seem to know much about current events. He was the “Great I AM.” He was the one *“that liveth and was dead, and is alive forevermore.”* He was the resurrection and the life. He was the one over whom death and the grave had no power. He was the one who had recently shed His blood as a sacrifice for our sins on that cruel cross. He was the one who had been mocked and ridiculed by all that passed him by. He was the one who had been made sin for us. He was the one who had been made a curse for us. He was the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

Standing & Knocking

It is obvious that the risen Lord was waiting for the invitation to go into the house with these two and have fellowship. Even today, He stands at the door and knocks. He says, *“If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me”* (Rev 3:20). These words

were spoken to the church of the Laodiceans. That church needed to receive the counsel of God with humility and make some things right with God. **We should be willing to be corrected by the Lord.** If we walk contrary to God, He will walk contrary to us. He may even turn against us. He loves us, therefore He chastens us. Let us humble ourselves before Him. He will come in and sup with us.

Where does the Lord like to dwell? He is the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity. His name is Holy. He dwells in a high and holy place. But He does not dwell alone there. **He dwells with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit.** How do we meet that criteria? Jesus is meek and lowly of heart. He invites us to come unto Him so He can give us rest. He wants us to come to Him with broken hearts so He can revive us.

His Habitation, His Dwelling

When the Lord baptized us with His Holy Spirit, **He made us the temple of the Holy Ghost and a part of His habitation,** the church. He wants to abide in us now. That is why the Apostle Paul prayed that we would be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. **Faith opens the door for the Lord to come and dwell in our lives.** We

also need to be strengthened. When we are strengthened, we are able to overcome the enemies of our soul. When we are strengthened, the enemy is not able to enter into our life to disrupt our fellowship with Christ. When we are strengthened, we are able to preserve the spiritual blessings we have received in Christ.

Walking with God in obedience to His word is an important aspect of being God's dwelling place. **As we hearken to His voice we preserve our fellowship with Him.** Jesus said, *"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him"* (Jn 14:21). When one of His disciples asked Him how it is that He would manifest Himself to them and not to the world, His response was, *"If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him"* (Jn 14:23).

We all want Jesus to abide with us and not be just a visitor. Sometimes we forget where all our blessings have come from. Sometimes we take His protection and His help for granted. We forget where we came from (the miry clay of sin). We forget all He has done for us. Then in time of trouble we cry out to Him for help. Is that the way it should be? We may find ourselves as Israel was in the days of Jeremiah when

he cried out, “O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy name; leave us not” (Jer 14:8-9). Do we just call upon Him during the dark nights of our lives or do we stand by night with Him in the house of the Lord? The disciples were unable to stand with Jesus in His most difficult hour. They all forsook Him and fled. But now we know that He will never leave us nor forsake us. When you call upon Him in your time of need and you find His help and strength, remember to make your life a dwelling place for the God of your salvation.

Enthroned In Praise

God delivered Israel from the iron furnace of Egypt through the blood of the passover lamb. He delivered them from Pharaoh’s chariots and armies by His mighty hand. On the other shore of the Red Sea, Moses and the children of Israel began to sing unto the Lord, “*I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt him*” (EXO 15:1-2). Moses and the

children of Israel said they would prepare Him an habitation. **As we praise God, He dwells among us.** Let us build Him a habitation of praise, a beautiful dwelling for our God. The psalmist declares, “*But Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel*” (Psa 22:3). He is enthroned in the praises of His redeemed.

How is your life of praise? Let His praise break forth from your heart and from your mouth. Isaiah saw the holy and beautiful house where their fathers praised God, burned up with fire. All their pleasant things were laid waste. Don’t allow the fire of trials to consume your life of praise. Praise is comely for the upright. Say with the psalmist, “*I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth*” (Psa 34:1). As the psalmist said, “*How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee*” (Psa 84:1,2,4).

Entering Into A Covenant

The temple of God that David wanted to build was to be a place for the ark of the covenant to rest. **It is important to enter into a covenant with God if you want Him to abide in you.** God has made a new covenant with us

through the blood of Christ. He is our God and we are His people. He says, *“I will set My tabernacle among you: and My soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be My people”* (Lev 26:11-12). As His people, we are called to come out from among those who are not His people. Don’t touch the unclean thing. He writes His law in our hearts and puts it into our minds that we might know the Lord.

A Dwelling Place For God

Look at the example of Lydia of Thyatira. She heard the word of God that was preached by Paul and Silas. The Lord opened her heart to receive that word. She gave attendance to the things which were spoken by Paul. She and her household were baptized. She was judged to be faithful to the Lord. She constrained the apostles to come into her house and abide there. **She made her life and her family a dwelling place for God.** *“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, ‘If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there.’ And she constrained us”* (Acts 16:14-15). Do we have an earnest desire

to seek God for His presence to be among us? Is the Lord constrained by your heart’s cry to Him? A lukewarm cry to God will not constrain Him to dwell in our midst.

We can ask, with whom will the Lord dwell? The psalmist asked a similar question when he said, *“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place?”* The answer: *“He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation”* (Psa 24:3-5).

Let our hearts be made pure. Let our hands be made clean. Let the Lord come and make His home in our hearts. Let the Lord make His home in our midst. Let the Lord make His home in our families and in the fellowship of the saints! ◻

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Solomon Ginsburg was born in Poland on August 6, 1867 to a Jewish family. His father was a Jewish Rabbi. Growing up in a strict spiritual household caused Solomon to rebel against many of the practices decreed by his father who wanted Solomon to follow in his footsteps and become a Rabbi as well. At the age of 15, a marriage was arranged for Solomon to a rich young Jewish girl. But Solomon was so displeased with the whole arrangement (especially because the girl was only 12 years old) that he decided to run away from home. He wandered through Poland and Germany for some time and finally made his way to England where he found a job as an assistant bookkeeper in a store owned by his uncle.

One day a Jewish missionary invited Solomon to a church meeting where he was going to speak on Isaiah 53. Solomon remembered that as a child he had asked his father about the person the scriptures referred to in Isaiah 53 and got no response from him. His curiosity fueled his desire to go, just to see if this missionary had an answer to his question. Solomon listened intently as the missionary explained how Jesus fulfilled the

prophecies in the Old Testament and that Isaiah 53 was a description of the Messiah as the suffering servant on Calvary. As a result, he obtained a New Testament, began to read it and was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. He wrote, *"Oh how I wept when I came to the crucifixion scene and read those awful words, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' It seemed that I had taken an active part in the murder of the Innocent One. I realized that I must cast in my lot with Jesus and plead for forgiveness for the part I had in that great crime of Calvary."*

Solomon knew that if he accepted Christ he would lose his job, be cast out of his uncle's house, and be rejected by all who were close to him. He wrestled with this decision for three months until the word of God came clearly to him in a sermon: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." And with that he surrendered to Christ: *"I felt that I did trust Christ, Christ alone, for salvation and that my sins, even mine, were washed away. I knew that I was forgiven and accepted. I felt my load was lifted. I knew that my sins were washed away by the precious blood of Jesus."* He later made a public declaration at the church he was attending and even invited his uncle and other friends to attend. When he returned to his uncle's house he was not welcome and was driven away with much persecution. *"Although I had only a few shillings, in my heart I was happy for being permitted to suffer for my Savior."* Yet his conversion and persecution

impacted the community to the extent that over three thousand people attended his water baptism service.

One Sunday, Solomon and some other Christians went to East London to witness to some Jewish people. He was not received with open arms! They began to beat and kick him until he was unconscious. When he awoke, he found himself in a garbage box with broken bones, clothes soaked with blood and his body covered with bruises. But writing about this experience he said, *“Oh, but those were glorious times!”*

Another uncle went to England in order to speak with Solomon. He told him that he had no children and that he wanted Solomon to inherit all of his wealth. This news came as a great surprise but with a great condition. He had to renounce Jesus and Christianity. The uncle gave him one week to ponder the issue but Solomon remained steadfast in his commitment to Christ. After a week he went to meet his uncle who was surrounded by a group of elderly Jewish men. As Solomon explained his decision and why he was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, one of the Jewish men began to pronounce a curse on Solomon. However, as this happened, Solomon began to cry out to Jesus and claim the scripture, “He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” His heart was filled with unspeakable joy and he left that place with abundant happiness.

On another occasion, Ginsburg and another Christian were out witnessing when a young man found them and asked if they could go to a nearby factory where there was a group of Jews interested in knowing more about Christianity. They went without any hesitation. However, what they found was not what they expected. A large number of men were waiting for them with hammers, stones and knives. Ginsburg’s friend managed to escape but Ginsburg was severely beaten and then thrown head first down the staircase. He was suffering for his faith but he knew that God had spared his life for a specific purpose.

As Ginsburg prayed about the will of God for his life, it became clear to him that God was calling him to go to Brazil with the good news of Jesus Christ. With that purpose made clear, Ginsburg dedicated his life to this mission and on June 10, 1890, he reached Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. As Brazil was filled with Roman Catholics, he primarily focused his mission on winning them over to the truth of the word of God.

One Sunday afternoon during a service, a group of drunken people caused a great disturbance, beat Ginsburg and another missionary and took them to prison. When they were finally released, they found the church full of Christians praying and even unbelievers who felt sorry for what had happened. Ginsburg said, *“The Lord gave us that night many souls. It certainly was a great reward for the little we suffered.”* Even though Ginsburg faced

many trials, he found inspiration in the lives of his converts to keep pressing forward in the work of the Lord.

One bright moment for Ginsburg soon turned to darkness when his fiancée from England arrived in Brazil. They enjoyed five beautiful months together and then because of their poor living conditions she got yellow fever and passed away. But before she breathed her last, she told her husband, *“Do not weep for me. I am happy, for I am going home.”*

Many of Ginsburg’s converts went on to preach the gospel and be used mightily of the Lord. One such example was when he travelled to Amargosa to conduct meetings. One particular night the meeting began at seven in the evening and lasted till three in the morning. A young man in the congregation was impacted by the service and the message. He went home and spoke with his brother about the things he heard. His brother was also hungering for the truth being convicted of his sin and desiring a new life. These two brothers went on to lead hundreds to Christ and they established numerous preaching places in the interior of Brazil.

In 1893 Ginsburg moved to Campos and began working with the people in that area which at the time only had 30 believers. God began to bless the work there through the labor of Ginsburg and many others until they had about 130 congregations and over 250 preaching places.

Ginsburg then turned his attention to the city of San Fidelis which was known to be a sinful city. His experience there seems like a chapter out of the book of Acts. In one place as he began to minister, a crowd of about a thousand people gathered. Some began to yell and scream indecent things, others threw stones and garbage at him, while others threatened his life. Finally the chief of police arrested Ginsburg and he was kept overnight in a filthy prison infested with rats and other bugs. The police chief offered to release Ginsburg the next day if he would leave and never preach in that place again. To this he replied, *“If you release me, I will certainly continue my preaching.”* He was then transferred to Nictheroy and thereafter released. But after his release from prison he returned right away to San Fidelis to face more persecution. The Lord blessed Ginsburg’s labors and a prosperous church was established in San Fidelis.

In the city of Nazareth, Ginsburg began to hold open air meetings. However, someone hired an assassin to kill him. When this came to light, Ginsburg was advised not to continue with the meetings but this did not frighten him at all. He replied, *“I prefer dying to running away. I am ready to shed my blood for that Dear One who shed His blood for me!”* He preached a strong message that night with the expectation that someone was going to try to murder him but the Lord protected His servant. Two months later the assassin that had been hired to kill Ginsburg was converted!

Throughout his ministry, Ginsburg faced much persecution and that was the experience of his converts as well. In a place called Pernambuco hundreds of people were saved and many became evangelists of the good news. Many moved to other cities and towns in order to spread the gospel and persecution followed them. Believers were beaten, churches burned, and even homes were set on fire. But just as we read in the book of Acts regarding the early church, as persecution increased so did the church.

One of the most notable conversions in Ginsburg's ministry was a man named Herculano. He heard Ginsburg preach in a service and was very fascinated with the "cleansing blood of Jesus." After the service, he went to speak to Ginsburg who offered to visit Herculano in his home and explain further about the blood of Jesus. When others found out about this, they advised Ginsburg against it. They said that Herculano was a terrible man and was not interested in Christianity but in killing Ginsburg. Even policemen didn't go alone into the area where Herculano lived and strangers that had gone there had never returned alive. Yet Ginsburg was determined to visit Herculano and share the power of the blood of Jesus. While in his house, something came over Herculano and he wanted to strangle and kill Ginsburg. At that moment Ginsburg fell to his knees and made intercession for Herculano's soul. Then Herculano fell to the floor and cried out to God for salvation. It

was truly a remarkable conversion of a man that had made his living by killing people.

This is just a small sample of the many trials, hardships and persecutions that Solomon Ginsburg went through in order to share the gospel. Through his life and ministry, thousands were saved, congregations were formed and missionaries were sent to other harvest fields. May we all seek to live such a godly and fruitful life that will bring praise to the name of the Lord. *"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"* (2Tim 3:12). □

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