

Do you remember when Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was?

### Matthew 22:37–39 NKJV

Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Here Jesus emphasized in a big way the importance of relationships

This is what life is about—loving God, loving yourself, and loving others

- It is never wrong to love
- It is never out of order to love
- You do not compromise when you love
- You never lower your standards when you love

God’s Love Never Fails!

### 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup> Love never fails.

## Loving God

We all have had times in life when it seems that God acts out of character

We may have faced a tragedy or crisis and wondered where God was

- Sometimes it seems God is a prodigal God
- When He doesn't do things or act the way we think He should

When we think about God we think of Him always being encouraging and miraculous

- What do we do when God acts totally out of character?
- When the miracle doesn't happen
- When tragedy comes knocking at the door
- Or when He is silent

The Christian walk is a marathon not a hundred-yard dash

If you are in it for the long haul you are going to have seasons of discouragement or even despair

- What do we do?
- Do we give up?
- Do we abandon our faith?
- Do we choose to believe that God doesn't have a plan for good for us?
- Of course not!

## Acts 14:21–22 (NKJV)

<sup>21</sup> And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, <sup>22</sup> strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”

The number one goal of the enemy is to get you mad at God

- Don't!
- Trust God!
- Love God!
  - Jesus Did!
  - Joseph did!
  - Job Did!

Sometimes in life it even seems like things can go from bad to unbearable

- In these times let the Devil overplay his hand
- Let his attacks push you right into the loving arms of God
- Pray like never before
- Keep going to church
- Get counseling

Just because you may not understand the path you're traveling doesn't mean God isn't leading you

- He may not give you answers, but He will always give you a promise

He will comfort you in all your troubles – **Psalm 23:4**

He will meet your needs – **Philippians 4:19**

He will turn darkness into light and make straight all of your crooked paths – **Isaiah 42:16**

Joy comes in the morning – **Psalm 30:5**

He will not forsake you – **Psalm 9:10**

He will repay you for the years that the enemy has stolen – **Joel 2:25**

No weapon formed against you will prosper – **Isaiah 54:17**

We need to learn to place more comfort and much more faith in God then...

- The Government, stock market, social media, doctors or so-called experts in any given field

## **2 Corinthians 4:8–9, 16 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—

<sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day.

## Life is Full of Seasons

### Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NKJV)

To everything *there is* a season, a time for every purpose under heaven:

- In verses 2-8 it describes 28 seasons in life
- Not one of those says, “*A time to quit.*”
- You may have gotten the worst report or diagnosis ever
- I don’t know what you’re going through today
- You have come to far to collapse, fall, breakdown or give up

### 2 Corinthians 4:1 (NLT)

Therefore, since God in his mercy has given us this new way, we never give up.

- You are doing better than you think
- You matter more than you think
- Something on the inside is saying, “*Even if I fall, I fall forward, and I’m going after God.*”
- Don’t give up on God because He never gave up on you
- Don’t quit!
- Be encouraged
- If you continue to trust God, He won’t let you fall
- He will walk you out of the desert standing tall!

### Habakkuk 3:17–18 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls— <sup>18</sup> Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

God doesn't promise to take away all of our troubles, but He does promise us peace in the midst of them and keep you from falling

### Jude 24 (NKJV)

<sup>24</sup> Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy

- God knows what you're facing
- He knows what you're fearing
- He knows what you're feeling

### Song of Solomon 8:5 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> Who *is* this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?

- Lean upon the Lord and let Him bring you out of the wilderness

The enemy uses strongholds to keep us from the place God has called us

- Strongholds of unforgiveness, anger and bitterness are real

## 2 Samuel 5:6–10 (NKJV) *The Conquest of Jerusalem*

<sup>6</sup> And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, “You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you,” thinking, “David cannot come in here.”

<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that *is*, the City of David). <sup>8</sup> Now David said on that day, “Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, *who are* hated by David’s soul), *he shall be chief and captain.*” Therefore they say, “The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.” <sup>9</sup> Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward. <sup>10</sup> So David went on and became great, and the LORD God of hosts *was* with him.

- This was the birth of the city of Jerusalem
- Taken by the people of God and anointed for a specific purpose
- The nation was split
- Those who followed David (the tribe of Judah)
- Those who followed Ishbosheth (the remaining tribes)
- A family at war
- Brother against brother

David was already crowned King of Hebron, but God had as greater purpose for Him

- He was anointed to rule over the entire nation of Israel
- David could have settled to rule in Hebron
- Yet, he sensed something in his heart
- The time had come to unite the tribes of Israel
- Something called him to higher ground
- A dream that remained unfulfilled

It's as if David could hear God saying, *"Where you are is not your final destination."*

Years earlier when he defeated Goliath, he took the giants head, dripping with blood, to the city of the Jebusites

- Almost as if to mark his territory
- A way of saying, *"Someday I'm coming back to take this city for God."*
- It was God ordained, destined
- Even though the city looked un-penetrable, impermeable, impossible

God has destined you for victory over your marriage, your family, your relationships

- He wants to break down the walls that cause division
- Reconcile differences
- He is calling you to a greater place than where you are



The Jebusites had set up a stronghold

Throughout their history, the children of Israel had heard legends about the Jebusites

- They were mighty
- They were fierce
- They were powerful

They were so confident in their stronghold that they teased the Israelites

- They used psychological warfare
  - You don't belong up here
  - You're not powerful enough
  - You're not good enough
  - Be content with what you have
  - Settle for Hebron
  - Give up on the high place you've been dreaming of

The blind and the lame:

A personal dig at two of Israel's heroes of the faith – Isaac (blind when he died), Jacob (probably limped the rest of his life)

- The enemy will flaunt our weaknesses and our past in our faces
  - You don't have what you think you have
  - Your father was a drunk and you'll be one too
- This stronghold has been in your family for generations there's no way you can beat it

We have as fight on our hands

## 2 Corinthians 10:3–4 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup>For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

- We have been given spiritual armor – **Ephesians 6**
  - Breastplate of righteousness
  - Helmet of salvation
  - Shield of faith
- Most of them are defensive weapons

The only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God

- The only offensive tactic you need is the word of God
- Fight for the victory that God has in store for you
- The enemy is after you, your spoils, your spouse, your children

Don't let the enemy defeat you and your family and infect you with bitterness, unforgiveness, anger and offense

The enemy fights dirty and to defeat him you will have to fight the dirtiest battle you have ever had to face

- Your Dirtiest Battle = Your Greatest Victory

As David and his men faced the great, walled city they noticed only one weakness

- A water tunnel
- Also described as a water shaft or gutter

David challenged his men, *“The first one up the gutter will become chief.”*

- Have you ever cleaned out your gutters?
- Endless pile of gunk and debris
- Slime, sludge, twigs, leaves, birds’ nests

David and his men had to climb the gutter – victory comes in the strangest places

- They must have looked bad, smelled bad
- Yet, they captured the city
- Wet, smelly, dirty they conquered what rightfully belonged to them

I don’t know how dirty your battle has gotten. But I do know that it is the very place where God will be glorified most in your life

- Its where the anointing will come through
- The dirtiest battles will produce your greatest victories
- Don’t settle for Hebron, go up and take your Jerusalem

The enemy is trying to get you to settle for “Plan B”

He will try to extinguish the passionate on the inside of you for the greater things of God

## Ephesians 3:20 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

- Some translations – Above and Beyond

If David would have settled for Hebron, God's plan for redemption would not have been carried out

- Remember Goliath's head?
- David planted it outside the walls of the city of the Jebusites
- A thousand years later Jesus was captured and brought into the same city
- He was tortured and nailed to a cross at "*Golgotha*" – "*Place of the skull*"

Many scholars believe it is the exact place David placed Goliath's head

## Genesis 3:15 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

- Satan bruised Jesus' heels with the Roman soldiers' nails
- Jesus crushed the skull of Satan with the thud of that cross being driven into the earth

David taking the city of Jerusalem shows the plan of God

- The enemy tried to thwart it through a family squabble
- The tribes of Israel were divided

The stronghold of the family had to be conquered so the power of the cross could be lifted

Your job is to keep yourself in love with God

- Keep a good attitude
- Keep your spirit lifted
- Hold on to the promises of God

God will never give up on you even if you've given up on yourself

- God found Moses in his desert
- He found Jeremiah in his pit
- He found Joseph in his prison
- He found Job in his tragedies
- He can find you!

After this...

**Job 42:16 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> After this Job lived one hundred and forty years and saw his children and grandchildren *for* four generations.