

The Threshing floor

GOD CAN MAKE YOU UNBEATABLE

The Bible tells us: "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence." (1 Cor.1:27-29).

God did not come to choose winners. He makes winners out of ordinary material. If He has chosen you, then He has predestined you to win!

There are three keys to successful Christian living, three steps into faith that can make you unbeatable. Please allow me to share them with you now. The first and most important is:

TAKE GOD'S SIDE !

We were all born on the wrong side of God. We were on the wrong side of the controversy. We were alienated from God by ignorance and enemies of God in our minds. The purpose of the cross was to reconcile man to God and to work out this reconciliation in our hearts and attitudes. Don't try to get God to take your side, but take HIS side!

If you are on God's side, you will abruptly find yourself in a warfare. God's ancient enemy, the devil, will be YOUR enemy. Peter admonishes us: "Be sober, be vigilant, because YOUR ADVERSARY, the devil, like a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith." (1 Peter 5:8-9).

When you take God's side you will find that many of your worldly friends will abandon you. Those who love darkness hate light. John warns us: "Love not the world (this present evil social order), neither the things that are in the world (the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life). If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15, parenthesis added).

James speaks even more bluntly when he says, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (James 4:4).

If you take God's side you will be against sin. Sin caused the alienation between God and man. Sin brought Christ to the cross. Sin brings death and sorrow and suffering. God hates sin!

If you take God's side you will loathe the sin that separates you from the love of God and that drives the heavenly dove from your breast.

When you take God's side you will discover this transforming truth: YOU AND GOD ARE A

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MAJORITY !

You may be completely alone, you may have no friends, you may have little money, but when you take God's side "El Shaddai" will be with you. He is the ALL SUFFICIENT ONE, and you will discover that God and you spell ENOUGH !

Now you cannot walk with God until your mind is renewed.

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

There must come an exchange of your thoughts for God's thoughts, of your ways for the ways of the Spirit.

You must not form any UNHOLY ALLIANCES. "Blessed is the man who walketh NOT in the counsel of the ungodly." (Psalm 1:1).

Each time you face that internal conflict and a controversy rages in your heart, TAKE GOD'S SIDE !

Take His side concerning the final judgement and even though you may not understand, your love for Him will build confidence.

You will be able to affirm as did Moses, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen.18:25).

When you have taken God's side you will know His abiding presence. The sweet fragrance of Jesus will fill your life. And as Robert Schuller said, "Nothing can stop the man who feels the presence of God with him!"

When you decide to take God's side you will want to know what His will and purpose is. What is He primarily interested in doing? The ancient commission read by Jesus in that synagogue in Nazareth is still applicable today. He stood up, unrolled the scroll and read, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised..." (Luke 4:18).

When you have taken God's side you will become involved with His work and inspired by His purpose. You will progressively be reminded to, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus..." (Phil.2:5).

You will have ONE CONSUMING PASSION in life: to please God and to tell the good news of redemption and reconciliation to others.

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Lesser pursuits will pale before the enormity of that commission: to preach deliverance to the captives, to heal the broken-hearted and to let the oppressed go free. David took God's side when he had to face Goliath. All the soldiers of Israel fled in fear before this man for they were thinking of their own safety; Saul was thinking of his own name, but David had God's interests at heart!

He indignantly demanded, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the LIVING GOD!" (1 Sam.17:26). David's God was alive and God's glory and honour were at stake. He threw personal safety to the winds and with faith burning in his heart he began to confess victory with his mouth. It is a good thing to confess our faith!

Learn to confess truths such as these:

"Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." (1 Jn.4:4).

"I believe God will guide me. I trust myself to His loving care."

"I believe God will always make a way where there is no way."

"I believe I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." (Phil.4:13).

Because David had taken God's side in this issue, he was assured of God's intervention. He realized that he served the Living God and that He was a God of miracles. Just in case he should have a moment of fear as he ran to face this giant, just in case his legs began to shake, David made his position clear. He confessed his victory with his mouth. He shouted out his defiance!

"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hands; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air..." (1 Sam.17:45-46).

Goliath met a young lad with giant faith in the omnipotent God, and Goliath was no match in a spiritual battle. David did not face Goliath with sword and with spear. He did not attempt to drag Saul's armor with him, but bravely ran forward in the Name of the Lord.

Today we are faced with a spiritual battle, and "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds..." (2 Cor.10:4).

"Giant Despair" ⁽¹⁾ will tumble before the clear confession of our faith. Not only did David foresee the overthrow of the giant, but he prophesied the defeat of the entire army of the Philistines.

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"Giant Despair" has a host of enemies with him, but they can all be vanquished when we take God's side, and fight with His weapons and are clothed with the armor of the Living Word of God!

The second key to successful living is this:

EXPECT A MIRACLE !

David expected God's intervention in his extremity. He did not take Saul's armor and ask God to bless it! He placed himself in a position of total dependence on the miraculous intervention of the Lord. He said, "The battle is the Lord's" and he knew God would not allow him to be ashamed in the hour of truth.

He confidently affirmed, "And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's..." (1 Sam.17:47). Following this statement we read, "and it came to pass."

Job lamented, "For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me." (Job 3:25). And what David believed and confessed came to pass as well.

Either what we fear comes to pass, or our faith opens the way for God's intervention.

When I say "expect a miracle", I do not mean that we should merely look up into the sky for falling manna. I believe we should PREPARE for a miracle; make provision for a miracle! God does not drop loaves of bread from the sky, but gives grain to the sower, and sends His blessings upon the ground that is plowed and sown. So today, before you see any indication of God's intervention, PREPARE FOR A MIRACLE !

When Jesus came to the tomb of Lazarus, He asked those that stood by to first remove the stone. He did not pray first and see what would happen. He made provision for the miracle that He knew would take place. Remove the stone, Lazarus is about to be raised. Make way for God! "Prepare ye the Way of the Lord!"

When Christ fed the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes, He first instructed the disciples to have the multitude sit down in groups of fifty so that they could more readily be served. Jesus took the loaves and fishes that were made available to Him and blessed them. The miracle of multiplication took place and thousands were fed.

Begin with what you have. Don't wait for exceptional opportunities. Don't stumble over an opportunity at your feet while reaching for the moon. Use what is in your hand, available at this very moment. Remember, one little candle can light the world. And as Robert H. Schuller succinctly said,

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"Only God can count the apples in an apple seed."

The prophet Elisha instructed the widow of the prophet to go and borrow many vessels, all that she could find. The magnitude of the miracle depended upon her provision. The oil did not stop flowing until all the vessels were filled to the brim. (2 Kings 4).

Our limitation depends upon what our vision can perceive and what our faith can appropriate. Make plans big enough for God to fit into. When Jesus was about to perform the first recorded miracle of His ministry, He first instructed the servants to fill the waterpots with water.

Not only are we to EXPECT a miracle and to PREPARE for a miracle, we are to CREATE THE ATMOSPHERE, by praising God and giving Him thanks even before we see the actual answer to our prayer.

Sometimes the miracle that takes place is within our own hearts. While we expect God to work on situations and circumstances around us, He may have planned to work a miracle of His grace in our lives.

When you are on God's side, expecting a miracle, you find yourself THINKING GOD'S THOUGHTS!

God is never depressed, He is never anxious.

Jesus said, "Be not anxious", i.e. worried, uptight, distressed.

Observe the lilies; see how they grow. See the flowers of the field. Contemplate God's generous provision in nature and then remember, you are infinitely of greater value to God than the whole world in which you live! God loves you! When you begin thinking like God, you know He has everything under control. You are confident!

God says, "Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the LORD thy God is with thee wherever thou goest." (Josh.1:9).

"Fear thou not ... I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (Isa.41:10).

How important to think the thoughts of God, for when we think His thoughts, we will have His feelings; and His feelings are what brings heaven down to earth.

The third and last step I would like to share with you is this:

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NEVER GIVE UP!

Nobody can beat you but YOU!

There are no hopeless situations, only hopeless people! There are people who have overcome every conceivable situation, even the one in which you now find yourself. It may seem utterly hopeless; it has appeared that way to others as well.

Remember you have taken sides with the GOD OF HOPE !

When England was besieged and battle-torn during the Second World War, people were talking of surrender. Winston Churchill rallied that nation with these fighting words: "Never give in. Never give in! Never! Never! Never! In nothing great or small, large or petty; Never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense."

Hitler had stormed all western Europe. France had fallen. America had not committed herself. The world waited for Hitler's next insane move. The radios of the world gave Churchill's historic speech to the Commons:

"You ask what is our aim? I can answer in one word. Victory, Victory at all costs.

Victory in spite of terror,

Victory however long and hard the road may be...

For without victory there is no survival.

I have nothing to offer you but blood, toil, sweat and tears."

Two weeks later Mr. Churchill was to utter the inspiring words that would weld his nation together into an invincible fighting force. He said:

"We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds,

We shall fight in the fields ... and in the streets.

"We shall fight in the halls. We shall NEVER SURRENDER!"

As great a man as Winston Churchill was, and as inspiring as were those words he uttered, you and I today rally round the Captain of the Hosts of Israel, and we recall His dynamic words that stand as true today as when they were first uttered.

"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (Jn.16:33).

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"I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt.16:18).

"All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations" (Matt.28:18-19).

"Behold, I give unto you power ... over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt YOU." (Luke 10:19).

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors ..." (Rom. 8:35).

We are to go into the world as conquerors and not shamefully as the conquered. God can make us unbeatable!

If you leave a door of escape you will probably take it when the going is rough. God must put His unconquerable Spirit in you. Amy Carmichael writes of the Crusaders: "Behind the soldiers was the sea. Before them an unknown land, where weariness, hardships and battles awaited them. Their leader knew that if things were very difficult, they would be tempted to re-embark in their boats drawn up on the shore. He did not want them to have any way of retreat, so he told them to burn their boats." ⁽²⁾

We are to go forth as liberators to free the captives of Satan, to open prison doors, to represent our Lord among forgotten men. We go forth in HIS NAME, under the banner of HIS CROSS to fight for the glory of His Name!

The world is full of losers, but God can make you unbeatable!

Remember,

NOTHING CAN BEAT THE MAN WHO IS ON GOD'S SIDE !

For you and God are a majority!

⁽¹⁾ from Pilgrim's Progress, by John Bunyan

⁽²⁾ Thou Givest ... they Gather, by Amy Carmichael

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