

THE VICTORY LIFE

in

PSALM 119

by

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE TRANSFORMING VISION

CHETH

“Thou art my portion, O LORD:

I have said that I would keep thy words.

I intreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word.

I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law.

At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.

I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.

The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes”

(Psalms 119:57-64).

“Thou art my portion, O Lord” (Psalm 119:57).

THERE IS SOMETHING MORE WONDERFUL than a pot of gold at the end of God's rainbow of promise. And the one who dares to take Him at His Word will find it. He will possess it. He will enjoy it. It will not be a mere fantasy. Christ died that we might have life. But that is not all. He died that we might have it more abundantly. Faith and obedience are both required to reach into this more abundant realm of spiritual possession and privilege. If our faith were but more simple, we should take Him at His Word.

Is it not time that we got a new vision of God? Someone has said, “The secret of failure is that we see men rather than God. The great awakening sprang into being when Jonathan Edwards saw God. The world became the parish of one man when John Wesley saw God. Multitudes were saved when Whitefield saw God. Thousands of orphans were fed when George Müller saw God.” And God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

The psalmist now sees God. The thick, dark clouds of doubt and perplexity are scattered. The light breaks through. The petition for blessing gives way to praise for the Blesser.

With Peter, he now launches out into the deep. He gains the proper perspective. The Hand which rescued the sinking apostle laid hold upon him. The One who said to the needy Samaritan, “**I that speak unto thee am he,**” has now spoken to his longing heart. With the Emmaus sojourners, it was the breaking of bread; with Thomas, it was the wounds in His hands; with the grief-stricken sister of Lazarus, it was one word — “**Mary.**” And so the Lord reveals Himself.

The psalmist had categorically listed his blessings in the preceding stanza.

Scarcely had the tabulation been completed, if it was completed, when he detected his misplaced emphasis. Was it the blessing, after all, or was it the Blesser that his longing soul primarily desired? For, there on the horizon of his asserting faith is the One who, above all others, is worthy of his deepest devotion and fullest praise. It is a momentous discovery. It is the turning point in his testimony, because it marks the turning point in his experience. His tenseness eases; his frustration disappears; and with beaming eyes turned heavenward, he cries with joyful earnestness: “THOU art all I want, O Lord!”

This is without doubt the grandest moment of his life. The whole situation changes at once. All is bright. His soul is filled with joy. But why had he not discovered earlier this simple but profound fact? Why had it not registered that real victory, wonderful victory, comes only when the Blesser is desired above the blessing, when the Lord becomes all in all to a believing heart?

Here is the pinnacle of the narrative, for now this, individual can say in truth, “**I have found Him whom my soul loveth.**” And his personal testimony at this point is most helpful. The text, we think, will permit an imaginative interview.

“Tell us, dear fellow,” we ask first of all, “how did you enter into this happy and assuring experience?”

“**I thought on my ways**” (v. 59a), he answers unhesitatingly.

Everyone should ponder the steps of his feet. We must learn that God’s ways are not our ways. Perhaps we do not think carefully, else we would surely make this important discovery. Perhaps we do not think at all in this respect. Victorious living, life on the highest plane, full-surrender, walking with the Lord — all are little more than empty platitudes to the majority of professing Christians.

In this day of magic, mechanical brains and with so many automatic devices, people are thinking less. It is unmistakably evident that people are thinking less about the deeper things of the Spirit.

We should think of what the Lord Jesus has provided for us in His death.

- Of the victory which He makes possible for us through His resurrection.
- Of the purifying force of His promised, glorious return.
- We should think of the irreparable loss we will sustain if we exchange the abundant life for the emptiness of this world.
- We should think of how we do despite unto the Spirit of God by our carelessness and indifference.

- We should think of the glory we rob the Lord by our neglect and willfulness.
- We should think, and that very soberly, of the contribution we are making to possible national catastrophe by playing into the hands of Satan instead of walking in the steps of the Saviour.

For the nation which forgets God goes backward.

“When you thought on your ways,” we continue, “what was the outcome?”

“I turned my feet unto [the Lord’s] testimonies” (v. 59), is his reply.

What a wide range of practical suggestion may be found in this brief answer. To begin with, his course in life is now definitely changed. The former one is deserted; a new one is begun. Had he continued as he was going, he would have utterly missed this new found joy. Despite his good intentions, his expressed desire, his fervent prayers, his stated conflicts, and his attachment to the Scriptures, his emphasis was wrong.

Now he has a vision of the Lord Himself. This is true realization; this is victory!

“After you perceived the simple secret of this blessed matter,” we add, “how long did it take for you to make up your mind to let go and let God have His way in your life?”

“I made haste, and delayed not” (v. 60), is his clear and emphatic answer.

Most of us need to take notice of this young man’s resoluteness, of his readiness to act.

Procrastination is not only the thief of time but of eternity as well. Many of us are being robbed daily. We put off until tomorrow what God calls on us to do today. We delay victory, and may miss it entirely. We may live defeated lives now, and then be ashamed at the coming of Christ. We expend our energies ruthlessly, and will find these works at the judgment seat of Christ being burned as wood, hay and stubble. Neglect is costly!

“This sounds like a rather exacting type of life which you have chosen,” we suggest. “Do you not think you will have reason to regret such a decision?”

“At midnight I will rise to give thanks” (v. 62), he pleasantly assures.

For those who retire at a proper hour, midnight is said to be the most difficult moment to arouse oneself. Thus, by mentioning this particular time, he probably implies that it will not be too difficult now under any circumstance to express gratitude to the Lord for His bountiful mercies and for His loving kindnesses. He is exuberantly grateful. And this is precisely what the Lord desires of us at all times.

“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

It is base ingratitude which keeps the soul lean and the walk wobbly. Gratitude should bring us to our feet, and praise should ever fill our mouths.

“What kind of associations do you expect to have when you isolate yourself in this fashion?” we inquire pointedly.

“I am a companion of all them that fear [the Lord], and of them that keep [His] precepts” (v. 63), he replies confidently, with no trace of egotism or spiritual pride.

How wonderful indeed to live on a plane with those who continually praise the Lord!

How inspiring to keep company with those who seek always to know and to do the sweet will of God!

How invigorating to the soul to breathe in such an atmosphere!

What encouragement to prevailing prayer, Bible study and daily witnessing!

Is this not something of the abundant life?

“Perhaps you have dwelt upon these matters unduly,” we venture to point out. “Maybe this is purely the product of your imagination. Are you sure there is a fundamental change in your outlook?”

“Whereas once I urged the Lord to deal graciously with me (v. 17), **now I know He has dealt well with me”** (v. 65), he answers calmly. **“And whereas I once pleaded with the Lord to incline my heart unto His testimonies** (v. 36), **now I have inclined my own heart”** (v. 112).

And it all happened when a young man fixed his eyes of faith on the Lord.

Joshua, the commander-in-chief of the armies of Israel, is mobilizing his forces for a do-or-die thrust against the enemy. Suddenly, he sees the Captain of the Lord’s hosts. He is prostrated with the glimpse. He then rises to conquer.

Job is lauded for his patience. But this is not the salient feature of this righteous servant. What about his vision? His patience was not enough. His patience could not lift him out of his despondency. His patience, like the grinding of un-oiled gears, becomes rather noisy in groanings and complaints. Then, something happens. The tenor of his voice changes. Like a stumbling athlete recovering his balance, he exhibits a new poise:

“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee” (Job 42:5), is the testimony which the sojourner of antiquity poured into the ear of God.

The three disciples reached the top of the mountain. Unexpectedly, voices of the past are heard. There is a bursting brilliance. Their eyes are blinded. They fall to the earth. They hear God speak from the most excellent glory. Then, they rise to **“see no man save Jesus only.”**

Where is the Lord today? Why do we not see Him? Does He think more of Joshua than of us? Can we blast the walls of Jericho without Him? Will our Ai fall without a vision of Him? Could we with Job lose our goods, our health and our family without seeing Him?

We may climb many mountains in the service of the Lord; we may hear many voices out of the past — the testimonies and experiences of valiant overcomers — but if we go on failing to see “**no man save Jesus only,**” we will faint in the way.

“Thou art all I want, O Lord!”

How long has God’s ear been waiting for such a word of devotion from you? From me? Three times did Jesus seek to extract a love-note from the heart of Peter. Why can we not let it be a voluntary, heart-motivated expression of sincere love — “Thou art all I want, O Lord”?

In front of United States federal buildings, there have been colorful pictures of Uncle Sam with a pointed index finger. On these lifelike placards is inscribed the statement, “I want you!” Enticing offers of travel and training are held before the eyes of volunteers.

The Lord wants you! He not only wants but deserves all you are and have. He offers the highest type of life conceivable this side of Heaven, then glory beyond proportionate to our choice now, for “**there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.**”

When He is all you want, He becomes all you need.

“The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy” (v. 64), the psalmist exults in the fullness of his soul.

We have no more questions to ask. This young man’s expulsive praise and his enlarged appreciation of the Lord’s goodness convince us thoroughly that what he has told us is nothing short of a transforming vision.

But do we have it? Have we any conception of its meaning?

A devout woman prayed recently, “O Lord, all I know about revival is what I have read in books.”

How pitifully small must be the number of those who are willing to draw the abundant flow from the wells of salvation! Of course, there are many kinds of religious antics — sporadic moves, erratic actions, and vain attempts for soul satisfaction. But what we need so sorely is a transforming vision.

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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