

Proclaiming the Gospel

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (*1 Cor. 1.18*).

Edifying the Body of Christ (*Eph. 4.10-16*)

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The Wise Still Seek Him

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Lord, Enlarge Our Borders

There is a scripture that has spoken profoundly to my heart through most of my life, Philippians 3.10.

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Many times as I have read this scripture, I have felt a longing in my heart to know Jesus Christ – to *really* know Him.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians (3.16-19):

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

May be able to comprehend with all saints what *[is]* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

There is a breadth, length, depth, and height, a dimension of the indwelling Christ that I have not yet experienced. I know His fullness is available to me, but it seems more than I am able to contain: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3.14).

The Psalmist must have felt the need for a special enablement from the Lord when he wrote, "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart" (Ps 119.32).

Many times without our realizing it, God is enlarging our hearts. Through circumstances, difficult situations, and sometimes persecution, He enlarges the capacity of our inner man to receive and house an ever-increasing dimension of Christ. The Psalmist said he would **run** God's way "...when thou [the Lord] shalt enlarge my heart."

God told the Israelites, "...thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged..." (Isa 60.5). The increased capacity of one's heart is a work of Jesus as we are willing to submit ourselves to His growth within us and as we are obedient to His

He was discouraged, thought God had deserted them, and he was incapable of doing anything other than hide and try to exist. God gave him encouraging words, "And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" (Jud 6.14).

Verse 16, "...Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." Gideon still did not have the faith to trust the word of the Lord that came to him, even after God answered two fleeces. God was loving, merciful, and faithful. GOD set up a situation that would enlarge Gideon's heart to receive and house faith and trust needed for the battle. He gave Gideon insight into the weakness of the enemy.

In His love, God sets up situations to strengthen us. Let us go forward in our walk with the Lord with confidence knowing that GOD is able; with Him nothing is impossible. He is our strength in the darkest hour! **WE CAN TRUST JESUS!**

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Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ

Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31)

Word. We must spend time with Him in prayer and in His Word. When we are filled with Him, we are better prepared for increase.

The Lord instructs the barren woman (church) who has not given birth, one who is desolate, yet desperate for fruit, to break forth into singing and to start preparing for increase. “Enlarge the place of thy tent... stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes” (Isa 54.1-3). God is ready to fill her tent with fruit (offspring) to the bursting point.

Brothers and sisters, God wants to expand our hearts to the bursting point with Himself until our dwelling place in Him and His dwelling place in us is stretched, so expanded that the cords have to be lengthened to house the increase of His presence as He works in and through us to produce seed in abundance.

As God enlarges our hearts, we experience a feeling of expectation, an increased desire for the Lord and His Word. We find our understanding of His Word expanding, our knowledge of Him expanding, and His anointing in us increasing. He is enlarging the capacity of our inner man to receive more of Christ. We are living in hard times, but those of us who long to abide in Christ and to realize His fullness in us will find God using battles and persecution to expand us.

God promised the Israelites that He would enlarge their territory (Ex 34.24), but that territory was not enlarged without battle. The Psalmist wrote “...thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer” (Ps 4.1). When we are in distress, fighting a battle, it is tempting to cry and beg God to spare us. If He grants our request to be spared, we succeed in thwarting the purpose of God in our lives through that experience. On the other hand, if we trust that nothing happens to us except what God allows, we can face the difficulty with total confidence in God, trusting Him to enlarge our territory. Our borders are expanded, the enemy is defeated, removed from our surroundings, and we have increased in the strength and power of the Holy Spirit Who dwells within us. Our borders have been enlarged in the Lord.

How does God enlarge us? Our hearts are enlarged through time spent with Jesus, sitting at His feet, allowing Him to fill us with His divine love and nature. As our hearts are enlarged with more of His fullness, He takes us into battle with Him.

As we seek God and our hearts are enlarged to receive more of Him, we will suffer persecution. The apostle Paul pressed toward the mark for that high calling to which God called him. He suffered great persecution, but he said, “None of these things move me.” Brothers and sisters, those of you who desire the fullness of Christ in your hearts and lives, you are asking for it. **Expect it!** Then go to battle, fighting the enemy knowing that Jesus fights with and for you.

As we face battles let us consider two important questions: 1) What are we taking with us into the battle? 2) What are we bringing with us from the battle?

Do we go into the battle on the defensive, with an attitude of defeat? It is easy to become immediately discouraged or to succumb to self-pity or fear. The battle

looks scary! Or do we recognize our position in Christ? Do we put the battle in God’s hands? We can go into battle with faith and confidence in Jesus knowing our relationship with Him, knowing that our weapons “...are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds” (II Cor 10.4). We can go into battles with the strength gained through experiences – the territory enlarged by the victory of past battles.

When the Israelites crossed the Jordan river, they saw the result of faith and the power of God in the parting of the waters. They took what God told them to take, twelve stones from the midst of the river, and set them up as a memorial in their camping place. They would look at these stones and be reminded of victory through God’s power. It would give them added strength for the next battle.

The next battle, Jericho, was a victory; the enemy was totally defeated. They had clear instruction as to what they should/should not take from the battle. But they came out of the battle with sin; Achan, in Judges Six and Seven, brought out with him the accursed thing. It brought defeat in the next battle – at Ai. They had no strength to face the enemy until they repented and removed the accursed thing from among them.

When circumstances are difficult and nothing seems to “work out” for us, and Satan attacks us by constantly bombarding us with criticism, accusations, and lies, do we take from it the “accursed thing”? Do we feel defeated? Do we harbor anger, hatred, un-forgiveness? Do we accuse God of not caring and lose our joy and our hunger for the Lord? Or do we, with the early disciples, rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer for Christ? Do we **boldly** stand before the “*Sadducees and Pharisees*” and declare the glorious Word of the Lord, the marvelous gift of salvation? Have we grown in the Lord with our territory enlarged – gleaning from the battle the strength to trust God again and again, taking territory from the clutches of Satan?

Sometimes we believe ourselves to be so weak and so incapable of handling the combat needed against the enemy. Our joy and faith seem so depleted, and we face a formidable enemy – one greater than we in numbers and strength, yet, the Lord has called us to go out and meet Satan and defeat him for the sake of the Body of Christ. Have you been there? I have. But, wait! Read about Gideon (Jud 6).

God chose Gideon to fight and defeat the Midianites for the sake of Israel. Gideon did not shout, “Hallelujah! I’m chosen! I’m important and capable!” No, read his response (Jud 6.13,15).

And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where *[be]* all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family *[is]* poor in Manasseh, and I *[am]* the least in my father’s house.