

I would like to talk to you this morning about a few words which characterize to a large degree the Christian life. I was reading a book the other day which mentioned the 'majesty' of the Christian life. This phrase just sort of rang a bell with me, for so many times we consider our faith a real drudge, that it cannot be any fun, or have any life to it. We have such a hard time perceiving the glory, the excitement that it can have in such a life if we just look for it.

Let me put it this way: There is no finer, more beautiful way to live than to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, and I believe that will all of my heart. God made us for a purpose, and to help fulfill that purpose he gave us the Bible, which his word, as an operating manual for the upkeep of our soul and body. Of course, it seems like just a bunch of do's and don'ts, but they are designed specifically for the optimum performance of our particular machine, just as are the rules for the proper operation of a car.

But, you know, there is really no way that I can describe what I feel to you and make you understand. {try to draw it} It's sort of like if I showed you a picture postcard of the Grand Canyon, or of a particular overlook at Short Mountain. Sure, it looks pretty, but it doesn't come close to actually being there and seeing it for yourself. It cannot describe the depth there, the feeling that you get there, the breeze, the birds, and other dimensions that are simply beyond description. It is something that You, personally, must experience before you can fully understand what I am saying. And so it is with the Christian life. It must be experienced to be appreciated.

Have you ever had a long weary hike over rough ground, where you went up and down, and up and down, and never seemed to get anywhere? The scenery was dull and our minds became as weary as our bodies. To me, this is what being spiritually lost is like.

On the other hand, the Christian life is like climbing a mountain, something like Moses did when God allowed him to look out over the promised land. The road may be just as rough, but continually you come to points that overlook miles of beautiful countryside. The trip is so beautiful that your mind is constantly refreshed. {Living water: the sound of running water refreshes you on the trail. HL, PDE, Jerry, Tom Harbin} And as an added benefit, the higher you climb, the farther you can see. Even if it is cloudy, you can get high enough to stand above the clouds, where the sun will be shining. Now, God doesn't promise us that you as a Christian will never have any more problems, but he has promised you the strength to overcome them all, and if you trust in Him he will refresh you all along the way of your journey. He has promised you the abundant life. This is the Majesty of the Christian life.

In 2 Cor 2:14, we find another description. "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ." Let me explain what a triumphal procession was at the time that this was written. In the Roman empire, it was an official 'hero's welcome' bestowed upon a qualified general by the senate. To qualify, one had to command in a campaign where at least 5000 of the enemy had been slain. Trumpeters lead the march; after them came towers or floats representing the captured cities, wagons then roll by carrying the loot. Then 70 white oxen for sacrifice, the captured chiefs of the enemy, then the musicians, then, in an ornamental chariot, the general himself. Of course, the people of Rome thronged the streets to shout and to cheer him. The closest thing we have to it today, I guess, is a tickertape parade in a big city when their baseball team wins the pennant. This is what Paul says we can have in Christ when we conquer sin, and the world's problems. The people of the world may not line up on the streets to cheer us on, but God has something prepared for us in regard to the majesty and the triumph of the Christian life.

In 1 Cor 15:55-57 we read, "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." What a fascinating word victory is! We all want it and even get it in various ways, but the only way we can have it completely, over life and over death, is through Christ Jesus. Victory which is complete is only known at the very end. Don't you want to have it? {Victory cross (crucifixion scene) medal for us. Illustration}

A great scripture to me is found in 2 Cor 4:8-15. "We are sore pressed, but not hemmed in. We are at our wits end, but not at our hope's end. We are persecuted by men but never abandoned by God. We are knocked down but not knocked out." I don't know how many of you

saw 'Rocky', but I thought about that when I read that scripture. There was Rocky, who was not even supposed to have a chance, in the ring with the Champion. He lasted, and he endured the punishment, but he wouldn't go down. Then in the 14th round, the champion hit Rocky so hard and full that Rocky spun to the ground. Knowing that victory was his, the champion raised his hands in triumph. But his hands fell and his face turned to utter disbelief when he saw Rocky begin to get up. And Rocky staggered through the rest of that round and the final round to endure to the end. Now, the decision was given to the champion, but everyone knew who was the real victor. 'Knocked down, but not knocked out.' I know that I can be just like that in Christ.

Closely allied with this idea is the idea of strength. Paul tells us in Phil 4:13 that we can do all things, or overcome all obstacles, through the strength that Christ gives us. Have you ever dreamed of being stronger than anyone else, or being Superman, or the Hulk? With Christ you can be unconquerable in mind and in spirit. Someone once said of the English during a war that could be killed, but they could not be conquered. Think about Rocky again. The man who trusts in God can go past the breaking point without breaking. With God's help we can be stronger than anyone.

{The way, Devo}

We get spiritually strong much like we get physically strong. We need nourishment, exercise, and the proper setting of goals. Our nourishment is the word of God. Our exercise is the practice of living like Christ. Our goals are heaven, which is living in eternity with God, and to live better and better until we die.

One more word, and I'll be through, and that word is challenge. You would not be too bright to think that there are no problems in the world. But I don't know of anyone more qualified or more capable of solving them than someone who believes in Christ and believes in Scouting. Christians have the duty and the privilege to make this world better for everyone. Don't let the fact that you are young stop you. If you can't grab a big bear, then grab a little one. Be challenged instead of intimidated. There are special challenges in the Christian life because you have to swim against the current of what everyone else is doing. But with the strength of God in you, victory over these challenges can be achieved, and these triumphs will give your life in Christ its majesty. Remember these special words: Majesty, triumph, victory, strength, and challenge.

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