

HIGH WAY TO VICTORY

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CHAPTER ONE

THE STANDING VICTORY

1.New Creature:

Psalm 120 is the first Song of Ascension. It describes the crisis when we realized that we were on the downward road of destruction and cried out to God for help. " In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and He heard me " Psalm 120:1. This is the first step, and from then we are on the high way to heaven having began our walk with the Lord! For many years we have thought that we could do without Him. We had been cock-sure we could manage our own lives by our own cleverness, knowledge and wisdom. We had never thought of calling upon God for help, and in many cases, we ended up as miserable failures. Then and then only did we realize that unless God took hold of us we would be completely ruined, and that there would be no hope for us either in this world or the next. It this way some took the first step because of some crises or the other, such as serious illness, grinding poverty or because of some crushing disappointment either in private or public life when all human comfort failed them; yet others, because of some enslaving and dominating sin from which no one could deliver them. Indeed God does use such varying circumstances in our lives to show us our helplessness and inability and to teach us to call upon Him for help and deliverance. When we call upon Him for salvation He answers us and becomes real and personal to us.

Let us see how God became real to David. Though David was full of zeal for God yet he did not have a personal experience with Him. So first he had to learn to come to an end of himself and his own devices. When his wife, his friend, his relations and even the priests failed to protect him from the jealous and murderous attacks of Saul he found shelter in a cave and called upon God; and there God became very real to him. Then he began to compose many Psalms, which are inspiring to people of all classes, and in all conditions of life, all over the world.

Psalm 120:2; "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips. " We suffer much because of lying lips and a deceitful tongue. This may apply to us or to others. When we tell a lie we lose our peace, and we cause others also to suffer because of the damage we do them. When others tell lies about us also, we suffer. So lies of any sort leave us miserable and we realize that only the living and loving God can preserve us and save us from lying lips and tongue.

Psalm 120:3, "What shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? " We find ourselves helpless to overcome our own tongues. We get angry at the least provocation, and our tongues get out of control and no human power is able to control them. We say hurtful things. Sometimes we say them even to our loving friends. Then we not only lose our peace because of our words but cause much trouble to those around us as well. It is true that we do not want to say hurtful words but still we fail many times. Only the power of God can help us to control our tongues.

James 3:1-15. The helm of a ship is small in size in comparison with the rest of the ship. Yet he captain can direct and change the whole course of the ship by his control over the helm. We need to bring our own tongues under the control of the power of God and then we shall be able to bring comfort to needy people. We shall be able to say in real humility that we are sorry when we have done wrong. But when we do not call upon God to control our tongues then lies and words of anger, jealousy, hatred and so on, rush out of our mouths and bring much loss and damage into many lives. After this becomes very difficult to confess and to say we are sorry for what we have said. Often we have to spend much time to bring peace between two contending parties. Even after both are fully convinced they were in the wrong, they refuse to say they are sorry or to ask pardon of each other. They will readily admit their share in the misunderstanding but as for saying, "I am sorry," it seems impossibility to them! That is why the Psalmist admits in Psalm 120:1, that he called upon God in his distress. He recalls how his own tongue and that of others had spoken words of pride, hatred and anger. He had tried to control the words but had failed. Then he called upon God. We have seen this experience repeated in our own wretched condition in this and many others aspects of our lives and have cried unto Him and He delivered us. This is the first step of our great salvation.

2.God's Help:

The Psalmist writes, "My help cometh from the Lord" (psalm 120:2). In Psalm 120 we see how David could not get help from any human source. Instead of finding help he had found trouble and strife. "Woe is me..... My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war " (Psalm 120:5-7). Then we found how in his desperation he called upon God, and God comforted him (Psalm 120:1).

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills" (Psalm 121:1). In other words David stopped looking unto men for help and focused his gaze on the mighty and loving God who has all power in heaven and on earth. Then he found by experience that "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep (Psalm 121:4)". We have to learn to call again and again upon God Himself for help in every situation of our lives. In the world we shall have many tribulations, trials and temptations. Therefore we must learn, by prayer and waiting upon God, to seek His help for every step we take. When He helps us we shall be kept from stumbling.

I know some clever doctors who pray before they perform any operation. Some years ago I met a famous eye specialist in north India. He performed many operations a day and yet he never depended upon his own skill or past experience. Before each operation he would pray, "O God, help me, guide my hands and give me skill." Then he would perform the operation in the full confidence that the Lord would certainly help him. God honored His faith. As a result he became not only a successful surgeon but also an earnest soul winner. Patients watched the specialist praying for operations as well as other needs and saw that God answered his prayers. The doctor's testimony helped many patients to find the living God and accept Him as their Savior.

We should never think that it is a waste of time to pray before going anywhere or before doing any work, no matter how easy it may be. We gain much by praying. Whether we sweep or wash the dishes, or do some intricate technical work it is good to look unto our Lord and offer a few words of prayer. Many times people think prayer is unnecessary because they are experienced cooks. If they have this attitude then it may be that even if they use the necessary ingredients the food will not be tasty. But if you pray before cooking no matter how ignorant you are, the Lord will undertake for you and the food will be tasty. I have found this by experience. A few months after I was

born again, it so happened that the only job I could get was to cook for about a hundred people. Nothing was spoilt and nothing wasted. I testify this to the glory of God. I had no experience whatsoever in cooking. But I looked unto the Lord and asked Him to tell me how much oil or butter or other ingredients I should put in. the result was that my first attempt at the cooking was such a success that I was even complimented on my skill.

By calling upon God we bring all His loving resources to our aid in all that we do. Just after a short prayer before beginning the task you are entrusted with. It makes no difference whether the job is simple and insignificant, or of great importance. You will find that everything that is committed to the Lord in prayer is done well. Therefore learn to claim God's help for every need. Prove God daily in every situation. You can call any time either by day or by night. No matter how often you go to Him, He will never rebuke saying, " Why have you come at this odd hour" or "why so you come and disturb me so many times?" Many men will say, "Come tomorrow or the day after." But God will never put you off and you will be saved from many unhappy failures when you learn to call upon Him for help.

God is interested even in small things. We see this from the incident when Peter was rescued from prison (Acts 12:3-10). The church was praying for him and God sent an angel who woke up Peter and told him to put on his shoes. God knew that in his excitement Peter would leave them behind. Sometimes when I meet a person I find I cannot remember His name or recollect where I had met him. The moment I call upon God for help, He brings the concerned person's name to my memory, and both of us are saved from embarrassment and enjoy our fellowship with each other to the glory of God.

3. Believers' Fellowship:

The third step in the highway to victory is found in Psalm 122, which is the third Psalm in the series of "The Songs of Ascension". Before we entered this highway we were self-sufficient, happy to live all by ourselves and for ourselves. But now this attitude is changed and we have received a desire to be with God's people to enjoy with them. As members of God's family we get a longing to share each other's joy and sorrows. We desire to get together and worship the Lord who has bound us together in His love. By such a fellowship we are strengthened more and more spiritually. With this experience

David says in Psalm 122; 1, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." We too, as we take one step ahead in this spiritual life, get an increasing longing in our hearts to spend as much time as possible in the House of God in prayer and worship along with our fellow believers. Those who despise the fellowship of God's people and love worldly activities are bound to remain poor spiritually. They miss the strength and encouragement, which is the portion of those who regularly meet together for Bible study, prayer, fellowship and service in the House of God.

That was the secret of the growth and strength of the early Church. We read in Acts 2:42 that the believers continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and in fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayer. By honoring God's word thus they were able to safeguard themselves against the attacks of the enemy. In these end days we know that the enemy is more active. In 2 Tim 3:1-13 there is a list of different kinds of sins that will be prevalent in the end days. If we want to overcome these we must stand together in close fellowship with God and His people. We cannot conquer any situation by ourselves. You may spend hours together with your Bible at home. That will not strengthen you as much as a time of fellowship spent with the believers. In olden days monks and nuns retired to lonely places in jungles and spent their time in meditation and prayers hoping that thereby, in the end, they would be strong enough to overcome the enemy easily. But they became worse and weaker after being all by themselves. Many believers are defeated for the same reason and are weak spiritually. They allow worldly activities and worldly friendships to prevent them coming to the House of God for fellowship. We need to learn well that the more we have regular fellowship with the believers in the House of God and the more we take part in any service in the House of God the stronger will be our spiritual life.

Now please see how the Psalmist came to the House of God gladly; with a willing heart, and not by compulsion. Many believers have no desire to attend meetings. They have to be compelled to go to the House of God. Some are dragged by their mothers, some by friends, and some others by their children. They lose much of the blessings because they do not come with an expectant heart. On the contrary if they come joyfully to the House of God, they will receive the best blessings. Also, we must go right inside the House of God. Some people attend the meetings just for the sake of attending or because they were compelled to attend. They are quite satisfied to occupy the last seat because it is convenient for them to leave

whenever they want. But when you go right inside and take your full share in every part of the service you will find much joy and strength, and then you will grow spiritually.

By thus coming into the House of God we are brought into the experience of the authority of God's throne (Psalm 122:5). As we pray together we can claim God's authority to bind Satan and its power. We cannot exercise this authority by alone. It is given to the Church as a whole.

Again, by coming to God's House our peace increases and we prosper in our ways (Psalm 122:7). By taking our share joyfully, faithfully and regularly in God's House our peace and prosperity will multiply.

May the Lord grant us the burden and longing to be in His House along with His people to see His beauty forever and ever.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SERVING VICTORY

1.The persecutions:

As soon as we begin to grow in the grace and knowledge pf the Lord Jesus Christ and confess Him as our Lord and Savior boldly before all men, we are bound to be despised and hated by those who do not want to follow the Word of God in all their ways. We are reminded in 2 Tim.3: 12,"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. " The Lord Jesus Christ warned us in Math. 10:24,25, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as hid lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much mire shall they call them of his household?" In John 15:18-21, we are being taught by the Lord that before the world hated us, it hated Him and if we were of the world, the world would love us but because we have been chosen from the world, the world hates us.

We read in Psalm 123:3,4, how for the Lord's sake we will be hated and despised even by our friends and people whom we respect greatly. By keeping our eyes upon the Lord as written in Psalm 123:2, "As the eyes of the servant look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, " we can come out fully victorious in all these situations. For His name's sake we must regard our sufferings and share as a privilege, as we see in, Acts. 5:41, "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." Our joy becomes greater when we learn to suffer shame for His name's sake.

In Psalm 124:1-3, we read how the Psalmist was attacked by all kinds of enemies. The same thing happens to us also for a short time we are protected from all the enemy attacks but after a while the Lord does permit all kinds of painful trails and feel as if everything is going wrong. For a period God takes us through a very dark valley. When we find ourselves going through such valleys we feel very lonely and forsaken.

It is interesting to know how the eagles learn to fly very high at a very early age. Please refer to Deut. 32:11. The eagles are born with closed eyes in the nest. After they have grown up a little, the mother

eagle comes and stirs up the nests. As a result the young eagles with closes fall from a great height. Before the eagles fall on the ground the mother comes and spreads her wings abroad so that the eagles fall on her wings. This process is repeated several times until the young ones learn to fly for themselves. That is how at an early age they learn to fly very high. The process is very painful. The nests are broken and the young birds seem to fall helplessly from the great height.

The same process happens to us also. Our plans are broken by God. We do feel very lonely because nobody is friendly and helpful. Through such painful experiences we rise to great spiritual heights and God's mysteries are revealed to us. In our extreme sufferings and trials we learn to put our entire trust on Him. That is how we become the partakers of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and finally enjoy the power of His resurrection (Phil.3: 10). To be partakers of His sufferings means, to go through extreme sufferings. The sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ were of an extreme nature. In the end of His earthly life He was forsaken by all. Even His beloved disciples deserted Him and ran away. Everything seemed to be dark. Even the sun became dark. Those who had once been blessed by Him now reviled Him and mocked Him. In the same way we also have to be made partakers of His painful sufferings in order to be able to reach great spiritual heights. This was the experience of the Psalmist.

In verses 4 & 5 of Psalm 124 David says, "The waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul. " The troubles that came to him were like floods. Floods often come suddenly when people are not at all prepared to face them. For several years there may have not been any floods; then one year they come suddenly. Recently there were many floods in many parts of North India, and they brought much damage to lives, cattle and crops. The Government tried their best to help people much could not do much. In our lives also there are occasions when the enemy comes upon us like a flood, from most unexpected sources or at an unexpected time of life. The Devil can work against us through friends or relations. Those whom we love, respect and admire sometimes rise up against us. It is good to be warned before hand that such situations are possible. At such times we have a promise from the Lord in verse 2 that He will give us victory. "If it had not bee the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us." notice the words "The Lord was on our side." Even though we try our best to get help from other sources we find that they all fail. In the end the Lord alone comes to our aid, as Paul says, in 2 Tim 4:16, "No man stood with me, but all men forsook me. " But Paul continues in the next verse 17, "not withstanding the Lord stood

with me and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion. " thus he was able to preach the Gospel boldly in the midst of his enemies. When the enemy saw that there was no one with Paul and yet he preached boldly he was defeated. So God allows us to be forsaken and left alone without help from friends, relations or others. But he helps us in the situation so that His name may be magnified through us.

For the same purpose David had to go through much persecution from king Saul for eight years. At the end he was able to say in Psalm 18:17, "He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me; for they were too strong for me." Not a single friend came to his help. Saul was after his life and attempted to kill him thrice. His own people did not give him any protection. He could find no shelter in the House of God. Strangers were afraid of him. Eventually he hid himself in a cave called Adhullam. It is there that the Lord became very close and precious to him. He stayed in this cave for many days. He had to pray and depend upon God for everything: for food, protection and shelter. Those four hundred men who came to be his companions were also men who were in trouble and debt (1 Sam.22: 1,2). Not a single person was able to help him in all his difficulties and troubles. Further they were surrounded by the army of Saul on all sides. They could not go out of the cave to get food or help. They did not possess any money. Yet the Lord helped them.

Thus you find through all our troubles afflictions and trials we are drawn very close to Him. We can prove His faithfulness in all our afflictions when there is no one to help us. In Psalm.66: 10-12, we read that David was taken to a large wealthy place. So in order to bring us to a large wealthy spiritual place He will take us through refining fires and painful trials.

In the beginning of our spiritual life God will not allow us to go through such painful trials but when we grow spiritually then He permits us to be afflicted (1 Cor. 10:13). Some of us have to go through such experiences at an early age and some later on; but they must come one day. God knows exactly when we can bear them. In His own sovereign way He will take us through fiery trials. David says in Psalm.124: 7, "Our soul is escaped as a bird...." Sometimes those who catch birds lay a strong net to catch birds and they are easily caught. But when there is a strong wind or storm the net breaks, or if it catches a thorn it tears. Then two or three birds will escape. That is how the Lord helps us to escape. The enemy will try to ensure us but

the Lord will intervene and set us free. When we are in great temptation or about be torn by the enemy, or when all hopes fail or when we are in the midst of fiery trials the Lord comes just in time and helps us and bring us to a large wealthy place.

2. The Promises:

"Our help is in the name of the Lord"(Psalm.124:8). In our afflictions we can prove God's faithfulness if only we trust Him; but in our folly we depend upon our own strength, wisdom and talents and so we are defeated. However strong we may be we are bound to be defeated. But it is good to know beforehand that by His grace and strength we can overcome all our afflictions and trials.

In Psalm.125: 1,David says, "they that trust In the Lord shall be as mount Zion." The children of Israel on their way to Jerusalem to observe the feasts of Lord Jehovah had to climb the mountains, which surrounded Jerusalem. At that time they remembered all the promises, which God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their forefathers. These promises reminded them of the Lord's help from time to time to deliver them from their troubles. In spite of all their failures, disobedience and rebellion the God of grace and mercy heard their prayers, and delivered them. When they saw the mountain of Jerusalem which did not change, they were reminded of God's promise in MalachI.3: 6, that He was an unchanging God. They as human beings changed and rebelled against God; they wounded and grieved Him; but He never changed. He is a faithful God. When we humble ourselves and confess our sins before Him, He is ready to forgive us. (Deut. 7:9). As the people were journeying to Jerusalem they were conscious of their defeat, disobedience and rebellion. But when they saw the mountains of Jerusalem they has hopes, that if they reminded God of His covenant and promises He would forgive them (2 Chro.7: 14,15). In this way they remembered many promises of God. At the sight of the mountains around Jerusalem they received new faith because they were reminded that He is a loving and merciful God; if they trusted Him, He would turn again to them. They had to come back to Him with all their heart, and with simple faith and belief that whatever God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and to their forefathers would surely come to pass. That is why again when they turned to God as a nation they were abundantly blessed. They were scattered, persecuted and punished because of their sin and disobedience, but when they humbled themselves God came in, helped them, and blessed them.

Thus you find if you call upon God with real faith He who is a God of mercy and love will not turn you away empty. In 1 John 1:9, we read, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." You might have grieved Him much but if you come back with real repentance, confess your sins and believe from your heart that Lord Jesus Christ took upon Himself your punishment and condemnation for all your sins even for your thoughts, and shed His precious blood to cleanse you and keep you thoroughly clean from every defilement, then the very second you believe, you will be forgiven.

The people who were going to Jerusalem had new faith and hope. In the beginning of their journey they were afraid to go to the House of God because they knew they had been disobedient and had wandered away from Him, and they wondered how they could approach His holy presence now. But when they saw the mountains, they remembered that He was a faithful and covenant-keeping God, and so they humbled themselves.

3. The Progression:

If we also humble ourselves, confess all our sins and obey His words, trusting in His mercy and compassion He will forgive us and restore us. Just as new joy came into the hearts of god's people on their way to Jerusalem and increased more and more as we go on overcoming every temptation and trial.

When we receive Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior we must believe from our hearts that He Himself is our righteousness and has put away the old man o the Cross. Then God will not allow ungodly people to harm us (Psalm.125: 3). He Himself may punish us but He will not allow the ungodly men to touch us. We see in the case of Balaam in Numbers 23:1-9, how Balak the king had promised Balaam a great reward if he cursed the people of Israel. Even though they rebelled against the Lord, the Lord did not allow Balaam to curse them because, as a people the children of Israel had come under the blood. The day the Israelites left Egypt at God's command they had sprinkled the blood of the lamb which was slain, on their doorposts and lintels. By the shedding of the blood and by faith they became righteous. So the Lord would not allow Balaam to curse them even though they were disobedient.

Thus you find God will punish us for our folly and disobedience but He will not allow any ungodly people to harm us. They will try many ways to do so but God's people have the assurance that they will be well protected (Isaiah 54:17). God may chastise us as a loving fathering order to make us partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12:9,10), where as the ungodly show their hatred and enmity against us by trying to harm us. Let us claim the righteousness of God as our righteousness, and at the same time thank the Lord Jesus for His precious blood by which we are cleansed and say, "Lord! We are Thy people even though we have failed Thee and grieved Thee. We confess our sins. Please punish us yourself, but do not allow the ungodly to do so. " Our safety is in committing ourselves into God's hand. This is what David did (2 Sam. 24:14). He said, "let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for His mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of men." What a privilege we have as God's redeemed people when we become righteous in God's own righteousness. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. " (Psalm.125: 1).

In Psalm 126:5,6, we read of the step we should take when we return to the Lord after our backsliding, as did the people of Israel. When we have been away from God through our disobedience, which caused our defeat and failure, we lost our first love, our burden for prayer and our interest in God's Word. In this miserable state we caused other people also to go astray. God's people were carried as captives into Babylon because of their disobedience, but when after 70 years they repented the Lord brought them back to the Promised Land. When they returned their joy was great but it was mixed with sadness and tears. In Revelation chapters 2 and 3 we find our Lord calling believers, in five out of seven churches to repentance.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SUSTAINING VICTORY

1. Co-workers with God:

The charge against the church at Ephesus is the loss of their first love (Rev.2: 4). Believers at Ephesus were well taught not only by Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, and by Timothy his helper but also by John, one of the twelve disciples of Lord Jesus Christ. Yet after a while they lost their first love and our Lord strongly rebuked them. Sometimes we also have such an experience. Through some subtle temptation we become cold and indifferent, our prayer burden lessens and we have no concern for perishing souls. What is worse, we are content to remain in this state. But our gracious God because of His everlasting love draws us to Himself and we humble ourselves and return to Him. Then He restores us to the lost joy and peace, and tears are mixed with our joy; tears for having grieved our Lord, tears over our lost opportunities and tears for having led others astray. After such experiences we are in a better position to help other believers who fall. We can go to them with tears as in Psalm 126; 5,6.

It is only when we realize God's goodness and grace in forgiving our backsliding that we can be of real help of those who are in the same condition. We can pray for them with tears of loving sympathy rather than condemning them harshly and hating them for spoiling their testimony. We learn how to go to them in love and humility, and seek to bring them back to the Lord (Gal.6: 1,2). There is no doubt that in many subtle ways the devil tries to bring defeat into the lives of the believers. Many fall when they are strongly tempted. Then they are condemned and forsaken by other believers; some even hate them and they as well as UN believers despise them. But if only remember how the Lord waited patiently for us to repent of our backslidings, how He met our need when we lost our first love, how wonderfully He helped us to return to Him and what a tender welcome He gave us, we cannot but try to help them. We would pray with tears for them and with them. On the other hand if we judge and condemn them, their hearts become harder and harder. Let us remember what a great responsibility we have towards our backslidden brothers and sisters. We have our Lord's example pf how He dealt with His disciple Peter before and after his fail. The Lord Jesus knew how that Peter would deny Him three times before the cock crew twice. Therefore He lovingly warned him saying, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath

desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31,32,61,62). Peter was restored because of the prayer of Lord Jesus Christ.

We further see how the Lord told Peter that in spite of his denial of Him, He would still trust him and expect him to pray for his weaker brethren who might also fall. The Lord repeated this again in His last message to Peter (John 21:15-17). He told him three times, "Feed my lambs", "Feed my sheep", and again "Feed my sheep". Both those who are newly Born Again and are babes in Christ, and those who are weak in their faith and not growing spiritually are like lambs who need extra care, having to be carried and strengthened. The Lord has used different people to help us in our weakness that we might be spiritually restored. So if we find that our fellow-believers are weak and living defeated lives, we also must help to lift them up spiritually by our prayers, fellowship and shedding of tears. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

In Psalm 127:1,2 we have the secret as to how to build the House of God. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late." We have a double responsibility towards God's Dwelling Place. We have one responsibility as laborers together with God, in building it; and another responsibility as His building material, "lively stones", in being built by Him.

The first responsibility is an active one. Since we are co-workers with God we must take heed how we must build His House. We cannot build it with our human zeal or wisdom and we are warned against doing so. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late". We must build God's House only according to His plan, on the true foundation and under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must learn how to find and take our share in this work. It does not matter to God how many handicaps and disadvantages we have, or how few our talents are. What matters is that we should be willing to take our share and that it should be under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ even in small things. When we work in an office or factory we ask permission from the person-in-charge if we want to go out for few minutes. The same rule applies to all of us. Learn to consult with and ask permission from those with whom you work. Learn also to go to the Lord for every matter.

We cannot build God's House on man's plan or on a man made foundation. He is also our Architect and our Engineer as well as the Supervisor of the whole work. Therefore ask His advice at every stage of the work. Consult Him and find out if your plan is in accordance with His heavenly plan, whether you are building in the right foundation and so on. He will answer you and show you if you make a mistake. It will be a great joy to you and to Him if you take His advice and obey Him in every matter however small or important it may seem to you. If you do not get an immediate answer, wait patiently and He will reveal His plan to you in an answer to a private or corporate prayer. Only do not follow your own wisdom. When we come under His headship and lordship and build according to His plan on His foundation then we shall be a source of blessing to others. Otherwise our labor will be in vain.

Many believers so not understand how to take their share in building God's House. They think it is enough if they go to some place of worship on Sunday and listen to a sermon. We must learn by experience and by waiting upon the Lord what is our share in building the House of God. It may take many years for us to learn this lesson but it must be learnt.

When the Lord builds the House and we are His co-workers and partners, He will give us many spiritual children because of our love, testimony and sacrifice (Psalm 127:4). We shall be filled with joy and strength, and our joy will multiply when our spiritual children also learn to grow and walk with the Lord. The apostle Paul writes to the believers of Thessalonica, "Ye are my glory". He forgot how much affliction he had undergone when he was in their midst. When you take our share in building God's House by winning souls, "lively stones," and bring them up in the nurture of Lord Jesus Christ, verses 4 and 5 of Psalm 127, will be true of you also. Souls are not always saved through sermons. Sometimes they are saved through a few words of testimony or an act of kindness.

One of my college mates was living with me in Toronto. His name was Greenway. I used to pray, "Lord, I want Greenway to be saved!" one morning I asked Mr. Greenway, "are you born again?" He replied, "Yes I was born again two weeks ago." With joy in my heart I asked how this had come about. In simple words he replied, "I was saved on the day you gave me the shaving cream and the soap. "I had noticed how he had cut his chin because he had shaved without soap. So I gave him those things. When I gave the cream he realized that whatever I told him about the wonderful Savior, the Lord Jesus

Christ, was true. When we comfort someone in distress or visit the sick the Lord builds His House through us.

2.Dwelling Place of God:

As our first responsibility is of an active nature our second one is of a passive nature. We are the material "lively stone" with which He builds His Dwelling Place. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house "(1 Peter 2:5). The day we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, His life is poured into us. Our Lord Himself says, "Whosoever believeth on me hath everlasting life." we are called stones because God uses us as the building material of His Spiritual House. (Unless one has everlasting life he or she no has no right to be called a Christian, nor can he or she become part of God's House). Not only does God want us to build Him His Dwelling place. Just as human beings long to have home where they can live, love and be loved freely so also God longs for spiritual home where He can live and love and be loved by us. God is love. Love is God's main characteristics and it is everlasting, universal, sacrificial, unchanging and beyond our human understanding. Is it not wonderful that He should want us to build Him and to be built by Him as His Everlasting Habitation?

When stones are used in the building of a house first they must be quarried from the rock-bed, then chiseled to fit in with each other and for the right purpose. The Lord also has to quarry us and chisel us so that we fit into the main pattern. If we learn to submit ourselves to His loving chiseling we shall be able to live in harmony with other "lively stones". Many believers find it hard to live amicably with other believers. They can live peacefully and be happy by themselves in their scheduled corner. But they find it difficult to get on with others and quarrel for the least thing. When we live in harmony with other believers we are in a better position to understand God's plan for His House and our labor becomes more fruitful.

3.Suffering for God:

In verse 3 of Psalm 128, we have, " Thy wife shall be a fruitful vine.... Thy children like olive plants." This is a beautiful picture of how we as members of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ come under His discipline. The Lord wants each believer to enjoy fruitful life. The vine needs to be pruned every year. Only then will it bear much fruit. Even so if our lives are to bear any fruit for the Lord we will have to go through trials and sufferings. By pruning the entire vine is brought under control. The branches are not allowed to grow haphazardly.

All these lessons are to be learnt in the House of God. Verse 5 says, "the Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem." Zion speaks of the heavenly Church and Jerusalem speaks of the Church on this earth. The vine needs rich manure and strong scaffolding. In the same way as we gather as fellow-believers for prayer, worship and Bible study we are strengthened in our inner man. It is in His House that our burdens are lifted, questions are answered, and lives become more subjective to His will. When we are together we feel His presence more strongly and are protected against he seen and unseen devices of the enemy. We can conquer our trials through love co-operation and prayer fellowship of other believers. Our godly friends can share our joys and sorrows. Worldly friends have often had a wrong motive in their friendship. If they give you a gift they always expect to get a better one in return. But God's children do everything as unto the Lord. This kind of love and fellowship brings much blessing in our lives

When we come under the Church discipline the enemy opposes us with all his fury. The first two verses of Psalm 129 describe how God's people have to go through all types of suffering. God wants to defeat the enemy and reveal His glory and love through the church. The Lord Himself promised that the gates of hell should not prevail against her (Matt 16:18,19). Hence by being together as a Church, His body, we can be saved from the attacks of the enemy.

Till the year 1940 we were convinced that our ministry was only to preach the Gospel. We had many Gospel campaigns all over India. Our intention was that many people should be born again and become strong witnesses for the Lord. But in each case we found that after few months most of the people who were born again through this ministry had backslidden, and only a few had grown in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then the Lord graciously revealed to us through His Word that these newly born babes in Christ could not grow by themselves, and that they had to be brought into full fellowship in His Church. In Eph. 4:11-14 we have God's plan whereby His children can reach maturity. God gives five-fold gift to the Church viz. apostles; prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers through their fivefold ministry souls are born again and brought to the full stature of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then we started following God's plan to build the Church according to His Word. Immediately the enemy also began his work of opposition. People whom we thought were spiritual became our bitter

enemies. We never dreamt that so called Christians could be so much against the Word of God. They tried every possible method to prevent people from attending our campaigns or from coming for breaking of bread and for worship. They had no criticism against worldly amusements. We have experienced how, whenever people begin to obey God fully by taking full share in the House of God, in baptism, worship, prayer and Bible study the enemy brings opposition from many sides. As the Psalmist says in Psalm 129:2 he tries to weaken our hands by false propaganda and does many other things to hinder the work of God. But if we really trust God and take no notice of their words or activities, the Lord will work on our behalf and confound them. We see this happening in many parts of the world like Australia, America and India. It is difficult to believe that servants of God can tell lies and disobey His commands, and thus hinder God's work. But we have only to trust God and not to take any notice of their words of activities. Many times some people come up against you and speak against you and try to harm you. At such times you should not take any notice of their words or try to take revenge on them in any way. It would help us to remember that those who try to spit at the moon get the spit on them. Our enemies can do anything to harm us but the evil, which they have devised, will only go back to them. There is a promise for us in Psalm 129:5, "Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion ", they themselves will come under reproach and condemnation. If you begin to worry about their opposition you will lose your sleep, appetite and peace. Instead you should leave them to themselves and enjoy God's favor.

The enemy hates Zion the House of God. He is not bothered about the denominations. But if you want to be in the House of God according to His plan then he will raise people to hate you and hinder you from obeying fully God's revealed truth. When you desire to obey God's word fully and follow His heavenly plan and do His will you will be ridiculed, hated and despised. But you can enjoy His promise in Psalm 129:6, "Let them be as the grass upon the house tops, which withered afore it growth up." Generally after rain you can notice some kind of grass growing on the housetops. It does not last long, because it has no deep root. There is no need to worry about removing it from the housetop because it will surely wither away. It would be a waste of time and energy for anyone to climb up to clear the housetop. The Lord says that our enemies also will wither away like manner. We need not be worried about them or try to resist them. If we are patient we can see the Lord Himself dealing with them.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SOVEREIGN VICTORY

1.Humility:

We learn more of the Highway in Psalm 130. Upon this earth we can never find anyone who is perfect. All of us as human beings have the old sinful Adamic nature and hence we are bound to fall again and again. Only when we see the Lord Jesus Christ face to face shall we be like Him. Till then all of us make mistakes, sometimes, somewhere. The Psalmist says in verse 3, "If Thou Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand?" Yes if we truly examine ourselves in the light of His word, and before His searching eyes, none of us can stand. Even apostle Paul said in Romans 7:18, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." He also tells us about the battle between the flesh and the spirit, which was going in his heart. We too have to face such battles. But there is no need to be discouraged. Our Lord is full of compassion. Psalm 130:4 say, that there is forgiveness with the Lord. The moment we go to Him confessing our sins He forgives us because He died for our sins. His love and compassions are far more than we can ever understand. Any time we fail or are defiled by thought, word or deed we must humble ourselves and by faith claim His precious blood for deliverance. Then we will be cleansed, forgiven, restored enabled to walk in the spirit according to Gal. 5:16.

We find in verses 5 and 6 that the Psalmist is waiting for the Lord. When we are sick or are undergoing some painful experience we cannot get sleep at night and so we go on counting the minutes and hours and waiting anxiously for the morning light. Here the same thought is expressed. The Psalmist says that he waits for the Lord; with a great longing that He may come to him to forgive him and to deliver him. Whenever we are defiled we must go to the Lord at once and confess, saying, "Lord I have defiled myself. Have mercy upon me. I trust in Thy mercy for forgiveness, and in Thy precious blood for cleansing." This is how our fellowship with Him will be restored. We have His promises in Psalm 37:23,28,38,39 and also in Proverbs 24:16. In our weak moments the devil sometimes deceives us, but there is always provision for us in the precious blood o f Jesus for cleansing and full restoration. In Psalm 131, when the Lord blesses and uses us, it is our nature to become puffed up and let pride take hold of us. Even though others may think that we are still humble. So

do not yield to pride or begin boasting of yourself or of others. We do not realize how easily we rob God of His glory. What we do in His service is only by God's grace.

Paul was humble in that he took every opportunity to name it clearly to others, that all he was and all he did was only by the grace of God. He gave glory to God alone. Even so, the Lord used a thorn in Paul's flesh to keep him humble. Paul was a great servant of God. He was given many revelations and was caught up to Paradise, the third heaven. God knew His servants temptations to become proud and so He gave him a painful thorn in the flesh (see 2 Cor. 12:7). We need to pray, "Lord keep me humble lest I allow the enemy to come in and rob Thee of Thy glory" Through pride many of the God's servants have lost out in the end. Pride often wells up within us in response to remarks of other people. We may talk and write exaggerating things and thus people will be deceived and think more of us than they should.

In Psalm 131:1 the Psalmist tells the Lord that his heart is not haughty and his eyes are not lofty, and he does not exercise himself in great matters or in things too high for him. But we often want to show off as if we are very important, and take a prominent place. By such means the devil seeks to bring about our downfall. We must pray constantly, "Lord, keep me humble and save me from all enemy's attacks ". By taking these steps we are helped. We will be taught as we obey the Lord and follow His plan. Then we will learn all these things.

2.Obedience:

Now in Psalm 132 David begins to see the real purpose for which God had called him. In the beginning he thought God called him to be a better king than Saul. God rejected king Saul because of his disobedience and stubbornness, and though Samuel His prophet He chose David in his stead. At first David did not know the real purpose for which he had been called and chosen. God wanted a man after His own heart, a man to whom He could reveal His heavenly plan concerning the Temple. He desired a man willing to be governed by Himself, who would thus be able to gather the true material for the Temple. So David was chosen and Lord took him through many sad and painful experiences, which he mentions in the Psalm and which are also recorded in the books 1 kings, and 1 and 2 Samuel. As believers we often go through trials and afflictions, which are beyond our comprehension. In our early Christian life our concern is to live a good life in the eyes of men, and to expect God to bless and help us

according to all our personal needs, without any thought of our taking part in Church meetings and activities. Very few believers know the real purpose for which God has called and saved them by grace, which is in Christ Jesus.

Only after David had gone through many sufferings and afflictions did he realize that the Lord was preparing him for something far more wonderful and important than he had ever imagined. That is why he said in his testimony, "Lord remember David and all his afflictions." He was not praying to God for sympathy, neither was he asking God to lessen his afflictions, but he earnestly desired to know and to understand the purpose that God had for his life.

Job could not understand why God was taking him through such painful trials. Only when God came and spoke to him face to face did he realize God was preparing him for more than double the blessings he had before his afflictions. So also David through his sufferings was being prepared to be God's partner and co-worker, to accomplish His purpose on the earth, not just to be a king instead of Saul.

When David considered the affliction he was going through, he began to see that God wanted him to build a house for Him, and he vowed to God saying, "I will not give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob" (Psalm 132:4,5).

God had been working His purpose out from old when He redeemed His people from their bondage and afflictions in Egypt. God sent ten plagues on Pharaoh and the Egyptians so that His people Israel might be freed and brought out of Egypt to serve God's purpose. Then God called Moses up to mount Horeb for forty days and forty nights to give him the pattern of the Tabernacle and reveal more of the purpose for which He had saved His people out of Egypt. The Lord said, "... let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). The people forgot about God's need and great purpose for them and thought only about their own needs and trials. So they continued to live life of defeat, shame and barrenness. Through the centuries God sent many prophets with His word to remind His people of the glorious purpose unto which He has called and redeemed them. He had to send trials and afflictions to work out that purpose in and through them.

So also the Lord reveals His own purpose for His Church. He has to take His redeemed ones through many refining fires, before His

work of building them together for eternal habitation for Himself is completed. Though we often talk about the "Church," many of us do not know what the true Church, now being built by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (see Math. 16:18; Heb. 8:5; 9:11).

God spoke to Moses on the mount to free him from the human conceptions for His purpose. God took David through difficulties, afflictions and battles to deliver him from human wisdom and ideas about His purpose.

In Joshua's days God's people failed to drive out the Jebusites from Jerusalem. When the Lord gave His people the whole land of Canaan to possess, He commanded them to drive out the seven nations because of their abominable heathen practices. But the Israelites allowed the Jebusites to remain in the strongest position of the city. Years later when David became king in Jerusalem, they began to mock him, and were so self-confident. When David and his men went out against them they said, "Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither," thinking they could not be overcome.

3.Dedication:

But God's purpose was not to have the Jebusites driven out, so he gave David and his men victory (see 2 Sam. 5:1-10). It was only when he became the true king of Zion over all the tribes of Israel, God showed Him that the Jebusites must not remain. If you want to share in the building of the House of the Lord then you must yield completely to Jesus Christ as the heavenly King. As we enthroned the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts, in our family and in our church we will begin to see something of God's plan for His Church.

Now the Jebusites had no part whatsoever in God's House as in these says persons not "born again" have no place to share in the House of God. Many are found like Jebusites in the work of God today. Though they are not "born again" they have been elected to hold the offices and to be members of the committees because of their influence through their money, positions or other worldly qualifications. Others not "born again" hold positions as pastors, deacons and bishops. Such cannot truly have any part in the House of God, or any share whatever in the work of the Lord. They cannot lead and care for God's flock as true pastors and shepherds and like the Jebusites, must be kept outside. The presence of even a few Jebusites hinder God's work. Even though David, when he came to Jerusalem

had driven out many, he left some there perhaps thinking not to trouble them because they did good and were nice people. But God had to punish David till he drove them all out. David knew whatever victories he had were not by his own strength but God's power; yet we see in 2 Sam. 24:1-4 how he told his commander Joab to number the people and to find out how many fighting men were in his kingdom.

Any country going to war needs to know the strength of his army, compared to that of his enemy. But Joab reminded David that he had been trusting the Lord for their victories in past years, whether they had few or many; for the battles were not men's but the Lord's. This time David's words to number his men prevailed and then a plague came upon the people of Jerusalem and many died.

Then David repented of his sin at the threshing floor o f Araunah the very place, which became the site upon which the temple was built. Even before that occasion David had a desire to know where the Temple should be built. So he says in Psalm 132:4,5 " I will not give sleep to my eyes,.....until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God o f Jacob." Now he knew God wanted him to discover the site where the Temple should be built, and so he was willing for God to take him through any trial and affliction to find that place. While the Jebusites still lived in Jerusalem he could not find it. When David sinned by counting the people seventy thousand men died of pestilence from Dan to Beersheba. Through the prophet Gad, God told David to rear an alter for sacrifices for himself and for the people, on the very place where he had repented of his sin. He sought forgiveness and built an alter for burnt offerings and peace offerings, and there he got the revelation and bought the place from Araunah (2 Sam. 24:24). So having bought the place he was able to send away the last Jebusite from Jerusalem. Even one Jebusite was only in Jerusalem was a hindrance for the purpose of God. So also in God 's house today, just one ungodly man will be a hindrance. So we must be sure that any man appointed as an elder or a shepherd among God's people is truly born again, other wise he will be a trouble maker all his years. After David fully humbled himself he was freed from human wisdom. A threshing floor is the place where chaff is separated from the grain and on two occasions God brought David into the threshing floor (1 Chro.13, and 2 Sam.24). There he showed him what he thought was wisdom but in the sight of God it was only chaff. So what men call knowledge, wisdom and cleverness God calls only chaff and rubbish. Paul, long after his conversion, said that he now counted it dung or refuse which used to be gain to him.

4. Satisfaction:

David having been freed from chaff at the threshing floor of Araunah is given the plan for God's Temple to be built on the very same site. At that very place too, Abraham proved God and passed his last test of faith. In Gen.22: 1-2, God appeared to him and told him to offer up his only son Isaac on mount Moriah. Without questioning God Abraham took Isaac and prepared to offer him, laying on the altar, declaring with increased faith that though he should slay his the Lord was able to raise him up.

With like faith and without doubting or questioning God's Word or His ways, we too may take our share in the House of God. Whatever God says, believe and obey Him. He cannot make mistake. Sometimes we begin to argue like Peter as if we know better than God. In Acts. 10:9-16 God spoke three times to Peter, and Peter said, "Not so, Lord...." The Lord never asks any body to do anything wrong. But Peter refused to obey Him, and argued with all sincerity. We do not realize how much we grieve the Lord by questioning His dealings with us. We ask why the Lord permits such sufferings, such difficulties, and sorrows and painful experiences in our lives even though we are so good and obedient and active in His service.

We see in Acts 9:11-15 that the Lord said to Ananias, "Arise, and go to into the street which is Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus...." Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem. And he hath authority from the chief priests to bind al that call on Thy name." But the Lord said unto him, " Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me..."so we too must obey Him without knowing, and must not doubt, question or argue. Our wisdom is foolishness with God. So we must receive the revelation of God's purpose for His House. We may build good buildings and have campaigns and yet not come into God's plan and purpose. In Psalm 132:7 David seem to have had the revelation of God's purpose and for His House. As we come to His feet in humility and brokenness we will receive revelation. God wants humble and contrite hearts, which will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Those who have learned to worship thus will be true to Him day by day. They will be willing to take share in the building of the House of God. In worship we learn to give to God. But many want only to receive. Many worship in words but not from their hearts. In verse 8 of Psalm 32, David says he wants to give God rest, satisfaction and pleasure.

We need to seek God even in the smallest matters of life and in these also to know and to do His will. Such a life is only possible as we enthrone our Lord Jesus Christ as king. Then we will learn by experience. Our obedience will give God His rest.

Once when David wanted to join the Philistines without seeking God's will, he was sent back only to find that the Amalekites had burnt the city of Zigelag and taken captive his wives, children, and all the people in it. Only when he repented, and his men with him were able to recover all the loss (see 1 Sam. 30).

In verse 9 of Psalm 132 we see what place the righteousness and heavenly joy have in building the House of God. As we fulfill God's will we should rejoice with Him even though He permits persecutions, sorrows, difficulties and trials in our lives. When we learn to rejoice in the Lord always, we will enjoy our share in building God's House.

In verses 9 to 12 we see the need to claim God's promises for us and to remember His faithful covenants as we wait upon Him.

In verse 13 we find David reigning in Zion as king over all tribes, having driven out the Jebusites. There in Zion he wrote Psalm 48 in which he calls Zion, 'the city of the great king' in verse 2, 'the city of our God' and 'the mountain of His holiness' in verse 1, and 'the city of our God' in verse 8.

There David begins to have clear revelation of the House of God, using these names. Abraham too had a vision of the 'city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God' (Heb.11: 10). That is why he was able to leave his kith and kin, property and possessions, and follow God living in tents for the rest of his life.

The Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts will enable us not to give any place, anywhere to the Jebusites. If we so give them room, we will only grieve the Lord.

In Psalm 132:14 David was not thinking of an earthly building. He desired to build the House of God, by God's own plan, which was a shadow of the true spiritual House, which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is building. In verse 17, the Lord says, "there will I make the horn of David to bud....." David is a type of Lord Jesus Christ. The "horn" speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's anointed one. Thus David began to see that there would be a great revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ

in his own house. Only when we come to the House of God, is our hunger for Him fully satisfied (v16); and it is there that we find great joy among God's people in spite of all our trials, persecutions and afflictions. Those who take share willingly in building the House of God have abundant joy and true fellowship. Those who only come to enjoy singing in the meeting or even for lesser purposes, and taking no share in the work of building will get easily offended and also loose their joy.

In Psalm 133 we are made to see how to share God's fullness. First of all we are brethren in the Lord and then we come together under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Aaron was the high priest set apart for the Lord's service. Specially prepared anointing oil was poured upon his head in full quantity; it ran down upon his beard and went down to the skirts of his garments. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is God's fullness, is our great High Priest with a perpetual anointing of the Holy Spirit without measure. As we come under His headship the anointing comes upon us to give us the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We should not be proud of caste, creed, education, community or anything; but we must keep the unity of the faith among all our fellow - believers. Thus the life of the Lord Jesus Christ will flow freely into us and give us our share in the building of His Church, the heavenly Zion. There the Lord commands the blessing even life for evermore. A blessed Church shares God's fullness. The spirit must increase in the whole Church.

Psalm 134:1-2. As we continue to worship and praise the Lord as fellow - believers we learn to serve and magnify and glorify Him under all circumstances. That is an expression of God's purpose in having us saved.

Thus we see that these Psalms take us on step by step, teaching us to serve Him for His own sake and not for the sake of a reward. There is great joy in such service to the Lord. May He give us the experience of these fifteen Psalms, and our share in God's fullness with the privilege of being kept under the headship of our Lord Jesus Christ.