

VICTORIOUS *Living* ...in a troubled world

Are you prepared to take over?

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God asked Job this question: “Are you prepared to take over? Do you know more than I do about running your life? The world?” God reminded Job that He’s involved in every portion of our lives. In essence, God asked Job, “Do you have a lesson you want to teach me?” (That, of course, is a synopsis or Job chapters 39-42).

God asked, “Will the wild ox consent to serve you? Did you give the horse his strength? Does the eagle soar at your command?”

God’s involvement in every part of our life is real. It’s not up to us. He is involved

in every portion of our lives whether we think He is or not. Sparrows are a dime a dozen. Millions of them grace the skies and eat farmer’s grain, but God said even the seemingly annoying sparrow is important to him. In Matthew 10:29 He says not even one tiny sparrow falls to the ground that He’s not falling with him. He stays with us to the end.

God will stop at nothing to redeem His people. Read the story of Job. Of Jonah. Of Ester. Of Daniel. Of Jacob and Joseph.

Violence has exploded in our land. The spirit of greed and covetousness has spread through our

society. Families are under a full-blown spiritual attack from Satan. There is barely a family that doesn’t suffer from something. The devil is trying to change the way Christians think of marriage. Of death and life. We all know there is almost no place where a camera is not on us when we’re in public. There seems to be an eye watching everything. The truth is, God has always been there. His watching has gone on since the beginning of time because He has a plan for our lives.

God’s wisdom covers all the things we will never understand. I’m reminded of Job as God explained His power to

him. God continually used mighty and monstrous animals to demonstrate his power over creation. He asked Job if he could control them? God knew the answer was, and is, “no”. Man’s inability to control mighty and powerful animals is just an example of how we also cannot control the big things in our lives without Him.

Are we prepared to take over God’s job in our lives? As the story unfolds, Job concludes that God had won the argument. Job said, “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. Surely, I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful



for me to know. ... My ears had heard of You, but now my eyes have seen You. Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:2-6).

After this, (Job 42:12, 16), the Lord blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the first. He lived another 140 years and died old and full of

years. Full of God’s blessing. Full of peace. Are you prepared to take over?

I don’t think we are. We need God in our lives. We can trust him to deliver and make our latter days more blessed than the first.

Sorrow for Sin

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David was too sick to his stomach to eat and slept on the ground in mourning clothes when Nathan the prophet confronted him about the gravity of his murder, lying, and adultery (2 Sam. 12:7-17). Upon discovering that they only had forty days to get their act together and turn to the Lord, the Ninevites wiped the smiles from their faces and donned frowns of repentance (Jonah 3:1-10). Ezra tore his clothes, ripped out his hair, and sat in the dirt for an entire day when

learning about the Israelites’ insensible iniquity (Ezra 9:3-4). A torrent of tears spilled from the eyes of the sinful woman who interrupted Jesus’ dinner with Simon the Pharisee—enough tears to wash Jesus’ feet, as a matter of fact (Luke 7:37-38). After denying Christ thrice, despite swearing to never do so, a regretful and repentant Peter “went out and wept bitterly” (Luke 22:62).

Every child of God should shed tears of remorse and repentance when realizing the seriousness of their sins against God. And this is the

meaning of Jesus’ command to His disciples then and now to be marked as, “those who mourn” (Matt. 5:4a). Certainly, while the Lord cares about all legitimate mourning (Psalm 56:8), Jesus is speaking having a broken heart for the sin which breaks God’s heart. Christ’s command is repeated in James 4:9, where the apostle exhorted, “Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.”

The Corinthian Christians also felt this holy grief. That is why Paul commended

it in 2 Corinthians 7, where he wrote, “As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death” (2 Cor. 7:9-10). Therefore, believers must weep when they sin against God, taking a page out of Ezra’s confessional prayer: “O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniqui-



ties have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens” (Ezra 9:6; cf. Lam. 5:15-16).

Fortunately, the Lord consoles the contrite: “they shall be comforted” (Matt. 5:4b). God comforts those who experience godly sorrow—never before they do, but always afterwards. Those who continually mourn over sin will be continually restored and reassured by the “God of

all comfort” (2 Cor. 1:3). And this comfort will be fully realized when believers see the Lord face-to-face in eternity, in a place where sin is barred from entering: “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Rev. 21:4).



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I remember the last time I came back from a river-fishing trip with a friend. It was a beautiful morning to be on the water. The early morning, during the summer, is usually the best because the heat really picks up about mid-morning. That day was no different. By 10:30, our hopes were fried, along with our back and neck. But even before that, the action was minimal at best. We caught a few small ones, but never really got into the smallmouth population we had

hoped for. The last few times we had gone, we left with the same results. We had fun. We loved the comradery. The outdoors was beautiful. But the fishing was disappointing. After three times on the same float, discouraging. The thoughts of doing it again? Depressing. And that is the way it works in other parts of our lives as well. More important parts.

All of us get disappointed. To be disappointed means that an appointment has been missed or lost. This simply means that some things we expected to happen, didn’t. As long as we have any

expectations whatsoever, we all will have disappointments. Being disappointed continually can lead to a deeper problem. Discouragement. It is the loss of courage. It’s saying, since I have been disappointed so much, I am no longer confident in anything good happening. I have lost the courage to continue down the same path I’ve been going. If one remains without courage long enough, he becomes depressed. Depression is when life has seemingly been squeezed out. Life has been pressed from us. Many of us know what each of these feels like. Some

linger longer in discouragement and depression. Some suffer in ways that the rest of us cannot imagine. That’s why it is so important for us to encourage one another. Because, while disappointments are universal and even come from strong faith, discouragement comes from its lack. That’s why throughout the scriptures; we are continually told to “be of good courage.” And that is also why we are to be people of “Encouragement.” The “en” means to cause. It simply means we are to cause courage in other people. The temptation to lose cour-

age can come from a lot of things, but it always starts with fear of the unknown. It can be the unknown about a job, a sickness, a death, or the next move. This is the predicament of everyone around us. And while I may not have the answer they need, I can choose to cause courage to come into their lives by my words and actions. When you think of the favorite people of your past – the teachers, friends, family members, neighbors; they are your favorite because they believed you could do anything. They instilled courage. They didn’t ignore your prob-

lems or difficulties, they just believed the greatest partnership known to man was you and God.

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Gary Miller has written Outdoor Truths articles for 21 years. He has also written five books which include compilations of his articles and a father/son devotional. He also speaks at wild-game dinners and men’s events for churches and associations. Stay updated on Outdoor Truths each week by subscribing at Outdoortruths.org

Causing Courage