

# The Price of Victory

by George Kulp

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*To achieve victory, one must comply with God's terms, meet the conditions, and obey His commands, for implicit obedience is essential for success.*

**Scripture:** 2 Kings 3:16, Malachi 3:10, John 14:15, James 1:22, 1 John 5:3

**Topics:** "Obedience To God", "Victory In Faith"

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## Description

George Kulp preaches on the story of the kings seeking victory over Moab, emphasizing the importance of obedience to God's commands and the need to dig the ditches before expecting the valley to be filled with water. He highlights the lesson that God always lays down terms for victory, and it is essential for individuals and the Church to comply with these conditions to experience His blessings and power. Kulp encourages believers to focus on obeying God, regardless of circumstances or human opinions, in order to receive the promised victory and blessings.

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## Transcript

"And he said, Thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.

"And this is but a slight thing in the sight of the Lord: He will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.

"And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones.

"And it came to pass."

2 Kings 3:16-20

When Commodore Peary was ill the Arctic regions, pushing his way toward the North Pole, he supposed one day that he had made an advance of ten miles, but, in reality, he had lost two, for while he was advancing, the ice over which he was walking had floated twelve miles toward the south. He discovered his error when he looked up and scanned the heavens. Let us get our eyes off of preachers, off of folks and sur roundings, and fix them on God -- then every soul will ascertain his real relation; each one will be located, and God will be glorified in this service.

God commands history to be written that we may know the lessons He has taught in the past, and that we may learn by the experience of others. "These things were written that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope, and they' are profitable for admonition, for exhortation, and for instruction in righteousness." The chapter from which our text is taken has in it a splendid lesson for the perfecting of the saints, that is well worthy of our study.

Ahab, the king of Israel, had conquered Moab and ruled them with an iron hand, compelling them to bring yearly tribute of an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool. Upon the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against the king of Israel, and Jehuam, the successor of Ahab, numbered Israel for battle. He also invited Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, to go with him against Moab, who acceded to the request, saying: "My people are as thy people, and my horses as thy horses." Edom also united his forces with these, and these three armies marched, fetching a compass of a seven days' journey through the wilderness of Edom, and coming to a place where there was no water for the host, nor for the cattle that followed them.

Seeing the danger that threatened them, Israel's king asked: "Has God brought these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab?" But Jehoshaphat, the pious king of Judah, inquired: "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?" And one of the king of Israel's servants answered: "Here is Elisha, the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah," and Jehoshaphat said: "He has the blessing; let us consult him," and these three kings in their distress went to inquire of a man who knew God, "How may we gain the victory?" Elisha believed in separation. When he saw the worldly, idolatrous king of Israel, he said: "What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, I would not look toward thee." Preachers who truckle to wealth and position, D. D.'s and LL. D.'s, might well learn a lesson from this old prophet whose only title was "a man of God."

"Thus saith the Lord," said he, "make this valley full of ditches, for thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet this valley shall be filled with water that ye may drink, both ye and your cattle and your beasts."

We desire, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to call your attention to the lessons in this chapter, for our mutual instruction and encouragement. These kings desired victory, and God gave them the terms in a command: "Make this valley full of ditches." In other words, "If you want the victory, there is something for you to do -- get to digging." God could have slain the Moabites and not used men. He is not scant in His resources, nor confined to one way of working. He could have harnessed the lightnings and as grim messengers of death have sent them on His errands, He could have thundered in the heavens, and, as aforetime, hurled great stones against Moab's ranks. He could have used the hornets and, as the Turks in after years were defeated by the bees, so Moab could have been hurried to destruction. He could have sent an angel, as He did to the hosts of Assyria when one hundred and eight-five thousand corpses strewed the plain before Jerusalem; but to teach men lessons of trust and dependence, He makes them factors in the work and says: "Make this valley full of ditches. Here are the terms of victory; get to work."

God always lays down the terms, and we may know them. "If any man will do My will, he SHALL know of the doctrine." "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith. saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Not only spiritual blessings, but temporal

blessings also. If you doubt it, listen to what follows: "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts."

My God, help thy people to get on to believing ground where they will live, as a matter of course, the victorious life.

I know a sanctified little woman who takes God at His word, and when the caterpillars were destroying the fruit-trees in the yard, she said: "It is written, I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes and he shall not destroy the fruits, and up to her room she went to pray, while her brother went to the door to watch the caterpillars come down out of the tree, and they came, too. MIND GOD and have the victory.

A woman of Israel was left with two sons when her husband, "a man of God," died in considerable debt. The creditor was urgently pressing his claims and threatened to sell her boys, which the law permitted him to do. In her extremity she went to the "man of God" and said, "The creditor is come to take unto him my two sons." And the man of God said, "What shall I do for thee; tell me, what hast thou in the house?" And she said, "Thine handmaid hath not anything save a pot of oil." Then he said, "Go borrow vessels not a few, and when thou hast shut too the door pour out of that one vessel, until all are filled." And she obeyed, and obeying, found the way to deliverance, paid the creditor, and lived the remainder of her days, she and her children, on the balance. She complied with the conditions and got results -- as people always do who meet God's terms.

The Church of God was predestined in the counsels of the eternal Godhead to be a victorious Church. Provision has been made for every battlefield on which the saints must engage the powers of darkness. If defeat comes, we cannot lie on our faces, like Joshua of old, and cry unto God; we know God is always true, some one has sinned, failed to meet conditions, failed to obey God. We know the terms of victory. Make the ditches. Why stand ye here idle? Go work. "IF we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." "They that are after the Spirit MIND THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT." Mind God and have the victory.

God is looking for obedience. The price of success is right here -- "Ye are My disciples if (much virtue in that "if") ye do whatsoever I command you." People are seeking power -- praying for power. Pentecostal power is to be had today at Pentecostal prices; no more, no less. God never alters the terms, neither for peasant nor king, for rich nor poor, preacher nor layman. Pay the price and you always get the goods.

A minister, humble and unpretentious, was attending a camp-meeting. All the star preachers, with their star sermons about the starry heavens, etc., had been up to preach, and yet there was no move. The camp-meeting seemed doomed to failure. Some one suggested that this humble "man of God" be put up to preach, as it was a well-known fact that he had a constant revival in his home church. This was agreed to, and he preached with an unction from the Holy One. The people were swayed under his sermon like the trees before the resistless hurricane, and at the altar call they came to the altar and swept into the kingdom. Some of the "stars" went to him afterward and asked for the secret of the marvelous results, and he answered them: "I told God He could give you preachers the popularity, only give me souls." He had paid the price, met the conditions, dug the ditches, and had the results such as many coveted. God wants men and women in the pulpit who will live in His sight and out of sight of men; who will live, not for the praise of men, but for the praise of God.

Yonder is a magnificent steamer plowing her way across the Atlantic, making for the eastern shore. On she goes through fair weather and foul, through sunshine and storm. On the bridge the captain walks resplendent in gold lace and gilt buttons, straps on his shoulders, gilt band around his cap. He fills every eye, and when the passengers reach the other side they meet in the first cabin and pass a series of resolutions thanking the captain who so safely brought them across the ocean's tide. But wait a moment! Down in the hold of that vessel there is a man stripped to the waist, sweat dimming his eyes, coal dust soiling his brow, shoveling coal -- shoveling coal. No one sees him, no one thinks of passing resolutions thanking him, yet they never would have reached the harbor but for him -- doing his duty out of sight.

Oh, my brother, my sister, fellow-workers for God and souls, would you be willing, are you willing now, to labor all out of sight, no newspaper mention, no bouquets, no applause, no smiles, no cheers; just laboring on for Him, and the perishing around you -- out of sight for Him until He shall say, "It is enough, come up higher"?

Now for the promise. This valley shall be filled with water. When the ditches are all dug -- when you have done your part -- God always does His. I have seen churches assembled in convention asking, "What can be the matter? Why are there no results?" Invariably they have not complied with the conditions; they have either purposely or ignorantly ignored God's terms. We tell the sinner to obey God. Let the Church take its own medicine -- obey God -- and it will be a victorious Church, a powerful Church, a Church that will hasten the coming of Jesus.

God's Word is a sufficient ground for obedience. Suppose these armies had said: "We are not going to dig until the wind gets into a rainy quarter, until we see the clouds arising;" they would have died miserably. The promise was, "Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet this valley shall be filled" when ye are through digging. God requires implicit obedience, and no matter about wind, nor rain, nor circumstances, nor sight, nor folks, nor enemies, nor friends, it is always wise to obey God. We can do all God asks us to do. Every command is an enabling act.

We remember hearing a dear old brother testifying in Berean Baptist Church in Philadelphia ... "When I was sanctified, people said to me, 'Sanctified, are you? Can walk on the water now, can you?' And I told them, I can if God wants me to." Blessed trust, and blessed simplicity that says: "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." When drought had prevailed for forty-two months and the "man of God" wanted water from Heaven, he prayed and water came. When the sacrifice was on the altar and he wanted fire, fire fell for the asking. The God of Israel who gave water from the rock in the wilderness, and spread a table with angel's food seven days in the week and fifty-two weeks in the year, until the old corn of Canaan was reached, can give everything the Church or the individual needs today, and nothing stands in the way but man's willful disobedience, hence, the one thought all through this sermon that we wish to impress on our hearts is, "Will we obey God -- comply with conditions; measure up to the terms."

Men and women today want the baptism that brings the power. They earnestly desire to be efficient workers, (no mean ambition, by the way) in the vineyard; want stars to lay at His feet, and are praying, seeking, running to the altar. Mind the Holy Ghost, obey God, and whether you are preacher or layman, learned or ignorant, rich or poor, popular or unpopular, you may, yea shall have the victory.

"Pastor, call a meeting for next Tuesday night -- there is going to be a revival." "Nonsense," said the pastor, "I see no signs of it." But this woman, like the Syro-Phoenician woman of old, was persistent; she had heard from Heaven after much prayer. "O yes, pastor, God tells me He will meet with us," and, in

answer to that woman's urgent request, a meeting was called, the pastor saying after calling it, "But no one will come."

Tuesday night came, the school-house was packed, and the meeting was scarcely opened when tears and sobs that would no longer be repressed broke out, and that preacher did not preach, of course he did not, for, as the street Arabs say, "he wasn't in it." He could not understand it. But that woman knew. God was sending the results, heart-breaking conviction and soul hunger, in answer to prayer. She had dug the ditches, and lo, here was the water. People came to the altar and prayed through.

Two preachers went to a church in a country district, held a service, sang, prayed, and never had a dryer time in all their experience as ministers, but when the invitation was given, part of the cut-and-dried program, people came to the altar -- they had been waiting until the preachers would get through and get out of the way. The Holy Ghost took charge of that meeting. The preachers did not know what to make of it, were really surprised, but when they returned to the place where they were being entertained they were greeted with the question, "Did they come?" A precious saint, shut in by affliction, unable to get to the house of prayer, had dug the ditches, knew God was faithful, and propounded the question in confidence. He had answered.

Consider the next thought, Victory. "And it came to pass." Ditches all dug, terms all complied with, conditions all met -- what then? What do you expect? What have you a right to expect?

A young man candidate for the position of engineer in the United States Navy was before the examining board at Annapolis Naval Academy and was asked the question, "Suppose your engine is all right, your pump in good working order, your hose overboard. You start your engine, your pump works, but you get no water. What would you do?" "I would examine my pump." "Yes, but the supposition is that your engine, pump and hose are all right. In such a case what would you do?" "Do? What would I do? I would look overboard to see if the ocean had gone dry." Sure enough, and when you, believer, have met the terms, complied with the conditions, as sure as God lives, there can be nought else but victory. No wind, no rain, but it came to pass.

Note here the time. In the morning, when the meat offering was on the altar, it came to pass. How about your altar, brother? Family altar? Altar of secret prayer? No use looking for water, no right to claim victory, no assurance of blessing, until the altars are in working order, and everything on. So-called Christian homes and no family altar, no place of secret prayer! Church altars as fireless as the North Pole! God give us to see that it means much, and costs much, to live in a place where you can constantly claim, and have, the assurance of victory.

Water came by the way of Edom. That reminds me that that is the way victory came to us. The old evangelical prophet standing on one of the mountain peaks of prophecy looked down through the gloom and mist of the coming ages and saw One, by whose majestic presence and stride of conquest he was attracted, and in his rapture he cried: "Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments; from Bozrah, this that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength?" And back came the answer that set him all aglow with prophetic fire: "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine vat? I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Me. I looked and there was none to help, and I wondered there was none to uphold." I see Him coming to the deliverance of a race doomed to die -- on to Bethlehem with its manger, over which angels sang, while shepherds bowed in wondering awe. On to the

Jordan -- to the wilderness; where the arch enemy learned that the Son of God was on the field, as he ran upon the bosses of Jehovah's buckler. on to Gethsemane -- to Pilate's judgment hall -- steadfastly setting His face toward the cross. Yet, as He ever moves onward, He is blessing mankind, plucking brands from the burning, giving health to the diseased, sight to the blind, and at Lazarus' tomb, teaching Death that He is his Master. Then up the rugged way to Calvary -- to the final conflict with the powers of darkness, -- where, stooping to conquer, He bows His head and dies. But still He moves onward. His coming meant victory, and death shall not stop Him. On through Joseph's tomb, where

"Gates of steel and bars of brass

Gave way that the King of kings might pass."

On to Galilee to comfort sorrowing disciples, "and Peter." On to Jerusalem to tell us through those words to Thomas, "Blessed are they who having not seen yet have believed." On to Olivet, His last earthly stepping-stone from which He mounts upward to meet the choirs that come trooping earthward to escort Him to His mediatorial throne. And from that throne this morning He says to every believing child of God: "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" Oh, brother, believe God for victory -- present victory -- eternal victory. He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Comply with the terms, meet the conditions, dig the ditches, and VICTORY IS SUDDEN.

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