

A Message for New Christians

by Oswald J. Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of taking a crisis experience, crossing the Jordan River, and entering into a sanctified experience to live a victorious Christian life.

Duration: 47:36

Scripture: Exodus 14:21

Topics: "New Christians"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of four steps to reach the Promised Land. The first step is separation from sin, where individuals must distance themselves from their besetting sins. The second step is dedication, where one dedicates their life to Jesus Christ upon reaching the Promised Land. The third step is feeling with the Holy Spirit, as separation and dedication are incomplete without being filled with the Spirit of God. Lastly, the fourth step is faith, which is necessary to overcome challenges and enter the Promised Land. The preacher also mentions the story of Caleb and Joshua, who were the only two men over 20 years old to successfully enter the Promised Land, highlighting the importance of following these steps to achieve victory in the Christian journey.

Transcript

You'll note that I have placed three books here before you on the pulpit, and I want to use these three books this morning to illustrate what I have to say to the new converts. First of all, there is this book here on my left. I want that book to represent Egypt, the land of Egypt.

Then we have this book in the center. I want this book to represent the wilderness. Then this book on my right will represent the Promised Land.

Between these two books is the Red Sea. Between these two books is the Jordan River. Every convert should understand something of the journey that he is now taking as he lives his life for the Lord Jesus Christ.

He lived here originally in Egypt, and Egypt, as you know, represents the unsaved, those who have never been born again. That's where he was before he made his decision for Jesus Christ. This space between these two books, as I've stated, represents the Red Sea, and the Red Sea in the Bible typifies conversion.

Before this new convert gets into any of these other lands to which I'm drawing your attention, he must cross the Red Sea. He must be converted. Unless he has been converted, he's still in Egypt.

He is still unsaved. Then he gets into the wilderness after crossing the Red Sea. He gets into the wilderness, and here he may live for some considerable time, or he may go completely through the wilderness from one side to the other in a matter of eleven days, for that's all the time it took the children of Israel to get from the Red Sea to the Promised Land, eleven days.

But he ought not to stay here in the wilderness. He ought to cross into the Promised Land by being filled with the Holy Spirit, by being what we call in theological language sanctified, and leaving the wilderness sanctified by the Holy Spirit. He enters the Promised Land, and this is where he should live his life.

This is where he should dwell, not in the wilderness, but in the Promised Land. Now this man in Egypt is an unsaved man. He's living a sinful life.

He doesn't know Jesus Christ. This man in the wilderness is living a defeated life. Sometimes he's victorious, sometimes he's defeated.

He's living an up-and-down experience, sometimes in the will of God, sometimes out of the will of God. He's living a defeated life. He's a carnal man.

This man over here in the Promised Land is living a victorious life, and this is where God wants him to live. I want to say to every convert, every new convert this morning, I want to say that you are already out of Egypt. You have already crossed the Red Sea.

You have been converted. You have been born again. You are now, perchance, in the wilderness.

But if you are in the wilderness, you are not living a victorious life. You are not living the Christian life that God wants you to live. You are wandering around in a circle, around and around and around, and getting nowhere because you're not going in a direct line.

You're making no progress. And there are Christians who have gotten out of Egypt who are living in the wilderness and who, ever since they got out of Egypt and got into the wilderness, have been living defeated lives, wanderers, making no progress and getting nowhere for the Lord Jesus Christ. Then there are those who cross the Jordan River and they get into the Promised Land and here they live in the Promised Land, the kind of a life that God wants them to live, a life of victory, victory over sin.

That's the life that God has designated for every one of His children, a life of victory in the Lord Jesus Christ. I think I told you once before about a story in regard to D. L. Moody. A man came to him and this man had a long list of questions.

And he said, Mr. Moody, I'll become a Christian if you'll answer my questions. And Mr. Moody turned to him quickly and he said, Sir, you become a Christian first and then I'll answer your questions. That made the man angry and he turned and walked out of the building.

And three days went by. The end of three days he came back again and Mr. Moody was again holding a testimony meeting. He was just about to close it when this man rose to his feet and Mr. Moody said, I'm ready now to answer your questions. But during those three days this man had met the Lord Jesus Christ.

He had been wonderfully and gloriously saved. And his answer was, Mr. Moody, I have no questions now. I have no questions now.

They have all been answered. Mr. Moody was wise in dealing with men. He knew that until a man knew Jesus Christ as his own personal Savior, his questions never would be answered.

But the moment he became a Christian and knew Christ as his Savior, most of his questions would be immediately answered and he would be satisfied as he served the Lord Jesus as his Savior. So this man in Egypt is a natural man. As stated in 1 Corinthians, he doesn't know Christ.

He's never been saved. He's never gotten out of Egypt. This man in the wilderness is a defeated man.

He's not living the kind of a life that God wants him to live. Sometimes he's up, sometimes he's down. Sometimes he's victorious, sometimes he's defeated.

He's living a life of victory and defeat by turns and he's making no real progress in the Christian life. He accomplishes nothing for God. There's no reward for him.

He's not where God wants him. There are others who leave the wilderness. They cross the River Jordan.

They enter into a sanctified experience. They get into the Promised Land and while there are still battles because they're still on earth and there are still temptations, again because they're still on earth, nevertheless he's victorious over those temptations. He's living for the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's a reward for him. He's accomplishing something. He's living where God wants him to live.

God says, taste and see and not until you experience God's salvation and take the journey that the children of Israel took when they left Egypt, when they crossed the Red Sea, when they got through the wilderness, when they crossed the Jordan River, when they arrived in the Promised Land, unless that has been your experience, then my friends, you're not yet where God wants you to be in the Lord Jesus Christ. The one thing the man in Egypt needs is salvation. The one thing that the man in the wilderness needs is victory because he's a defeated Christian.

Only when he gets into the Promised Land, only then will he be where God wants him to be. He'll no longer be wandering around in a circle. He'll be going in a direct direction to the place chosen for him by God Himself.

Now you see if he's in the wilderness and he's wandering around, he gets over to this side of the wilderness and he's so near to Egypt that the old temptations get hold of him once again. Now and again he falls, he fails, he's defeated. God can't use him for he's not where God wants him.

When he gets over on this side, he's near the Promised Land and there's a tug in his heart. He wants to be a victorious Christian and if he takes a step and crosses the Red Sea, he'll be the kind of a Christian God wants him to be. When he gets to the Promised Land, he'll be living a victorious life, a Spirit-filled life, the kind of a life that God wants him to live.

And that's the journey that every new convert should take. And unless he has taken that journey, he is not where God wants him to be. Now the children of Israel did not have to wander for 40 years in the wilderness.

It could have taken just 11 days to go from the Red Sea to the Jordan River. That's all. Instead of 11 days, it took 40 years.

And they spent 40 years in the wilderness, living an up and down experience, sometimes victorious, more frequently defeated. And I want to say to every new convert here present this morning, unless you take this journey, unless after having left Egypt, unless after having been converted, unless after having gotten into the wilderness, unless you take this journey the rest of the way and get across the Jordan River and then over here into the Promised Land, you're not going to get the thrill and the joy and the blessing and the peace that God has for you in the Christian life. You should make up your mind at once, and come what may, you'll live in the Promised Land.

You know how many men perished in the wilderness when the children of Israel were crossing? Six hundred thousand men perished in the wilderness. Six hundred thousand men. They should have gotten through the wilderness.

They should have crossed into the Promised Land. But they failed. And only two of them got through, Caleb and Joshua.

For the remainder of Dr. Smith's sermon, please turn this tape over. The only two men who left Egypt over twenty years of age and got into the wilderness, only those two men got out of the wilderness and across the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land, Caleb and Joshua. Every one of them should have gone through.

I say to every new convert this morning, if you find yourself now in the wilderness, still defeated by your besetting sins, still going down before the power of the tempter, my friend, the thing for you to do is to cross the Jordan River, enter into a life of sanctification, get into a place of victory, enter the Promised Land, and live there the rest of your life for the Lord Jesus Christ. I can tell you where you're going to die. You'll die wherever you live.

If you're living in Egypt, you'll die in Egypt. And if you die in Egypt, you'll perish eternally. You'll be lost for all time to come if you die here in Egypt.

If you are living in the wilderness, you will die in the wilderness, a defeated Christian, with no reward, because you have not been victorious. If you are living in the Promised Land, you will die in the Promised Land, a victorious Christian, and God will have a reward for you, a glorious reward. You will have lived the life that he wants you to live for him.

Otherwise, there will be disappointment. Now then, this is a crisis experience. You do not grow into the Christian life.

You do not grow from the wilderness to the Promised Land. It's a crisis experience. There has to be a step taken.

You have to take a step when you cross the Red Sea, and that step we call conversion. And you have to take that step. And unless you've taken that step, you're still in Egypt.

Then when you cross the Jordan River, again you have to take a step. There has to be a crisis experience. You do not drift across, but you go across by a determined effort on your part to get out of the wilderness and to get into the Promised Land.

That means that there are four steps. First, separation. Second, dedication.

Third, feeling. And fourth, faith. Think of these four steps for just a moment, if you will.

Separation from sin. Have you had that experience? Have you been separated from your besetting sin? Have you taken the very first step, separation? The second step, dedication. For when you get to the Promised Land, you dedicate your life to Jesus Christ.

You dedicate your life to God. Third, filling with the Holy Spirit. For your separation and your dedication will never become real unless you're filled with the fullness of the Spirit of God.

And therefore, filling is of paramount importance. Can you honestly say, I've been filled with the Holy Spirit? Not only have I left Egypt, not only have I left the wilderness, but I've crossed the Jordan River. I'm living in the Promised Land.

I'm living a separated life. I'm separated from the world. I'm separated from sin.

I'm separated unto God. I'm dedicated to God. For I'm living now a dedicated life, dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus God fills you with His Spirit. And there's reality in it, because that's the life that God intends you to live. And then faith.

By a simple act of faith, you put your trust in Jesus Christ for a victorious, separated, dedicated, Spirit-filled life. And when you rise from your knees, if it has been genuine, if that experience has been a real experience, then you'll find yourself in the Promised Land, and you'll live the whole of your life in the Promised Land where God wants you to live. I say, have you had that experience? Are you there where God wants you to be? Have you crossed the Jordan River? Are you in the Promised Land? I'm going to ask every head to be bowed in prayer.

Shall we bow before the Lord? I'm going to offer a prayer for you this morning. And before I offer that prayer, I want to ask you this question. You've been saved.

You know Jesus Christ is your own personal Redeemer. Have you crossed the Jordan River? Are you in the Promised Land? Or are you a defeated Christian? Are you living a victorious life? How many can honestly say this morning, Dr. Smith, not only have I left Egypt, but I've also left the wilderness. I've crossed the Jordan River.

I'm in the Promised Land, and I'm living a victorious life in Jesus Christ. I did not say a sinless life. I said a victorious life.

No known, conscious, deliberate sin. But victorious in Christ. How many believe that they are in the Promised Land? Will you raise your hands, those who do? Now will you put them down again? How many are afraid that they're still in the wilderness? And they haven't crossed to the Promised Land yet.

Will you raise your hands? How many believe they're still in the wilderness? And you'd like to cross into the Promised Land. Will you raise your hands wherever you are? Yes. I see those hands all over the congregation.

Now, Father, we bow before Thee. We thank Thee for this life that is possible for each and every one of us. We pray for those who have raised their hands saying, I'm afraid I'm still in the wilderness, and I would like to cross the Jordan River.

I'd like to get into the Promised Land. We pray that Thou wilt meet everyone who raised a hand, everyone who wants to get out of the wilderness and wants to live in the Promised Land. We pray that that life may be lived from this day forward in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hear us, Father, and answer prayer, for we ask it in Jesus' name for His sake. Amen. Will you turn to Hymn Number 107? And let this hymn be the prayer of your heart and the prayer of your life.

Have Thy known way, Lord, have Thy known way. Thou art the potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after Thy will.

While I am waiting, yield it and steal. I want you to sing the first verse, and then I want you to sing that last verse. And if you will, will you look at the last verse? Have Thy known way, Lord, have Thy known way.

Hold o'er my being absolute sway. Not part sway, but absolute sway. Fill with Thy Spirit, till all shall see Christ.

Christ only, always living in me. The young woman who wrote this hymn was a fellow student with my wife in Nyack, New York. My wife knew her very, very intimately.

They lived in adjoining rooms in Nyack, New York. And she wrote this wonderful hymn, Have Thy Known Way. Will you stand now and sing the first and last verses of number 107?

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