

Banner of Love – Part 3: “View of a Lion”

Sunday Morning, October 22, 2017

So far in our series, “Banner of Love”, we learned that our love relationship with Jesus is critical to our joy in the Lord and is not restricted to our salvation alone. But this first love of victory in Christ is only the beginning of a great love relationship with God, a love relationship that God is ready to reveal to us when we’re ready to receive it. This first love experience with Jesus our Savior is just the beginning of a great and unexpected love relationship with Him. Our love relationship with God must make steps of growth. It is not enough to receive Jesus as Savior and then enjoy a private faith afterwards. The Lord expects us to take our private faith public into the world. We may face trials when we enter the world carrying our banner of love and faith, but it is in those trials that we will grow and our love will be proved. We learned that we must be careful not to fall into Spiritual Agoraphobia after receiving Christ. We must not restrict ourselves to our mountain top experiences with the Lord, as Peter experienced with the Lord at the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we learn to walk with Jesus and grow in that love relationship we will realize and learn that it is not about us, but about Him.

Therefore, we are to commit ourselves to following Him into any circumstance He calls us into. This is where our commitment to Him reveals our unrestrained devotion to Him.

The key is to be willing to go along with Him!

God has a purpose for us that will fill our lives completely.

We will never discover the fullness of life in Him, if we don’t commit ourselves to following Him wherever He goes.

(Line of Sight Illustration/Object Lesson)

If our eyes are fixed on Him, then where He goes we will follow. Our maturity is based upon our willingness to follow. Consider what the Apostle Paul says about what is needed to continually grow mature in Christ in **(Philippians 3: 14 – 15)**.

14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

The word “perfect” here in verse 15 is the word “telios” in the Greek and it means: complete growth in mental and moral character, having completeness, full of age (i.e., grown up), hence the word “perfect”.

The more “perfect” or “mature” a person is, the more aware they become of imperfection.

It may not seem like it, but it is a good thing when we become more aware of our immaturity. Once we acknowledge our shortcomings to the Lord, the closer we are to growing out of them.

“Progress means getting nearer to the place you want to be. And if you have taken a wrong turning, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man.” C.S. Lewis, “Mere Christianity”

Walking in light and not in the sins hidden in darkness marks our maturity in Christ.

We are remind in **(Ephesians 5:8)** of our new way of life that we have and how we should live.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

To avoid the darkness and walk as children of the light, we need to apply what is written in **(Proverbs 3: 1 – 13)**.

1 My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands;

2 For length of days and long life and peace they will add to you.

Learn and memorize God's Word and then obey it.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart,

Be merciful to others. Keep God's truth in your heart and apply it in life.

4 And so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man.

Live a godly life that men see and recognize and as a result glorifies and pleases God.

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;

Trust God completely, even when it doesn't make sense.

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Invite God into your everyday life and He will show you what to do.

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil.

8 It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.

Don't use your wisdom to live life your way. Fear God and live His ways.

9 Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase;

10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

God supplies our needs and we are to honor him with our tithes and offerings (in money, possessions and time). He will bless us, when we honor Him.

11 My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction;

12 For whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.

13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding;

Be thankful God loves us enough to correct us to give us a better life and more wisdom

As we reach higher levels of maturity by walking as Children of the Light, we gain spiritual advantages. Look with me at **(Song of Solomon 4:8)**

Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

In this poetic book of the Bible, we learn to appreciate a deeper relationship with the Lord (as symbolized in this book). As God brings us to certain mountain tops of spiritual insight, it is here the bride of Solomon, representing the Church, is brought by the groom, representing Jesus, to the pinnacles of Mt. Amana, Mt. Senir and Mt. Hermon. It is here she gets a "birds-eye" view of roaming lions and leopards. God will show each of us, as we mature, where the enemy roams and how to protect ourselves. Paul revealed this concept to us in **(Ephesians 6: 10 – 13)**.

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

It is one thing to know that the "enemy roams as a roaring lion" and it's another to identify where the danger lies and how to avoid it.

This is the perspective gained when God takes us to high places of spiritual experience. These spiritual mountain tops represent different levels of maturity enabling us to receive what God wants us to gain. It is here on the mountain tops of spiritual experience with our Lord and Savior, Jesus, that we experience a deeper love for Him as He reveals His love for us. It is easy for us to hold up "The Banner of Love" during the height of spiritual experience with God, but we are challenged in the face of that "roaring lion" who seeks to devour us, to courageously and joyfully hold up that "Banner of Love" for Him!