

'NEW LIFE HEALING CENTRE'

(The Bethel)

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A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR RAYMOND

The Bible enables us to view life in all its complexities. As we read through the scriptures we find answers to life's problems. We also find people who have had extreme difficulties and yet testifies to 'overcoming' all these problems. We read that throughout Paul's lifetime he experienced much pain and suffering. If we can relate to Paul's experiences and hear how he overcame these then we can do likewise.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever", Heb. 13 v 8. Learn to remember this one verse of scripture. We read in 2 Cor. 11 v 24-28 - "Five times I received from the Jews thirty nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent adrift on the sea, many times on journeys (exposed to) danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own countrymen, danger from the Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger on the sea, danger among those posing as believers, in labour and hardship, often unable to sleep, in hunger and thirst, often (driven to) fasting (for lack of food) in cold and exposure (without adequate clothing). Besides those external things there is the daily (inescapable) pressure of my concerning for all the churches". So you read how Paul experienced so many extreme life threatening problems to overcome. Even we read how some thought that he was out of his mind. 2 Cor. 11 v 23.

Let us summarise what is being said. Paul knew the pain of persecution, afflictions, beatings, imprisonment and betrayal. Paul endured many deep hurts in the course of his life. Yet listen, hear this . . . they did not overwhelm him or did they defeat him. Why? Because he knew how to REACT to them. The trials, tests and sufferings which Paul experienced did not discourage or weaken him, but these times in his life caused him to grow stronger. In dealing with all this and in dealing with all of our (yours and mine) trials and tests and sufferings in this life, we all need to be aware of where we must look to overcome to be made whole.

Paul. Just as we must, KNEW CHRIST, Paul had an encounter with Jesus which transformed his life, and he then became 'dependent upon Christ'. It was Christ's strength within him that enabled him to deal with all those problems. We, likewise, need to become 'dependent upon Christ' to bring us into a time of 'strength'. Paul, originally known as Saul, Act 8 v 1-3, persecuted the Christians and the church. However on his way to Damascus, to again persecute and approve of executing the Christians, he had an experience from God which changed his life completely. Read it in Acts 9 v 3. *As he travelled he approached Damascus and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him (displaying the glory and majesty of Christ) and he fell to the ground and heard a Voice (from heaven) saying to him, "Saul Saul, why are you persecuting and oppressing Me?. And Saul said "Who are You Lord". And He answered "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do".*

Saul, later to be known as Paul, did as Jesus had told him. We also read that when he got up from this experience he could not see, his sight has gone, which lasted for three days. When God restored his sight, he was also unable to eat and drink for this time. Paul had an encounter with Christ which transformed his life. In times of danger and trouble he turned to Him seeking refuge, help and strength, and each time however hard or difficult it was Christ rescued him and strengthened him becoming more aware of who Jesus was and what Jesus could do.

In our lives we need to know that we have had an experience with Christ where we have put our belief in Him. We also need to be able to turn to Jesus with all our troubles in life where we also can seek refuge, help and strength. Again acknowledging that it is Christ who rescues us and strengthens us as we become more aware of who Jesus is and what JESUS CAN DO. Today let us pronounce this and let us be aware that nothing satan brings into our lives can defeat us. How do we know this? Because satan is a liar! However deeply you may have been hurt in the past, or may be hurting today, those hurts cannot overwhelm or defeat you when you KNOW how to overcome them.

Today I would encourage you to invite Christ into your situation offering Him your hurts and allowing Jesus to ease your burdens.

Get to know Him. Get to know how CHRIST can help you. He is only a prayer away. Take your hurts, place them at the feet of Jesus.

Thank Him for taking them and learn to leave them there and look for Christ working in you. In Jesus Name . . . AMEN.