

# **Before the THRONE**

## **Inner Court Ministries**

### **“Remember Lot’s Wife”**

Dealing with the Unresolved Issues of the Heart

by Mark D. Spencer

***But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

***1 Corinthians 15:57***

Why don't Christians see more victory in their lives? God's will is for every believer to experience His victory. He has predestined us for victory. Jesus said that one reason He came to earth was to give us life and that life was to be a more abundant life. (John 10:10) In 3 John 2, Jesus reveals one of His highest desires for us through His beloved disciple John. *Beloved I wish above all things that you might prosper and be in health even as your soul prospers.* 2 Corinthians 1:22, reveals still more of the heart of God for us, *All the promises of God are “Yes” and “Amen” in Christ Jesus.* Psalm 89, says, *My covenant will I not alter. Numbers 23:19, says, God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent, that which He said He will do, and that which He has spoken, He will cause to come to pass.*

If this is the Lord's will for us to walk in victory, why then do we often experience just the opposite? Why does there often seem to be so much turmoil, confusion and failure present within the Christian life? To be, sure, these are hard questions. There are no easy answers. However, there are two words in the Bible that offer us great solace: “but God But God has an answer. Jesus alone is sufficient for us to find all our desires, dreams and longings met, and met in such a way as to provide benefit to us, blessing to others and glory to God!

#### **Faith Alone**

First, it must be stressed that all progress in the Christian life is achieved by faith and faith alone. You must believe God. It is by faith that those who are justified in Christ shall live. Nothing comes to the Christian except by faith. Nothing pleases God except our faith. *Without faith it is impossible to please God for he that comes to God must believe that He is and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.* (Hebrews 11:6). Again, you must believe God. Without faith, you will not see the promises of God manifest in your life.

#### **Wholly God's**

Secondly, we need to understand that the Lord has called us into covenant with Himself. In its most elementary level covenant means this—if you give yourself wholly to God, He will give Himself wholly to you. This is the missing key in the church today. We have taught people that all that is necessary to receive all the blessing of God is to ‘believe and receive’ An while this is a great truth of the Bible, we must forever remember that the simple

message of 'believe and receive' will not work unless it is first built upon the foundation of "repent and believe." Without repentance, our hearts are incapable of being perfect before the Lord, and it is at this point that we often miss the full blessing of the Lord. In the Old Testament we see this worked out practically in the lives of various kings. Those kings whose hearts were perfect toward God prospered and the Lord blessed their lives. But those kings who turned their back upon God and then went in their own ways found their lives coming to destruction.

If my heart is perfect toward God, God will release whatever it takes to cause me to be blessed. The key here is: "Is my heart perfect toward God?" We often say today, "Jesus is my righteousness," and by this we mean, "so I can do whatever I want." It doesn't work that way. If there has been a true foundation of repentance laid within our lives we will not want to do those things that are not pleasing to the Lord. And when our hearts are not right toward the Lord our believing is often in vain.

Dissatisfaction and ultimately destruction come to the Christian who has not built his life upon the foundation of repentance from dead works. Disappointment comes to the believer who does not lay a life of faith upon this foundation. (Hebrews 6:1). Faith toward God will not work until you have first repented. Faith's foundation is repentance. Until your heart is broken before God with a brokenness because of its sin toward God, not only because of what your sin has done in your own life but because it has been committed against the Living God, the building of your life in faith, more often than not is futile. King David understood this principle. In Psalm 51 David *declares, Against Thee and Thee only have I*

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sinned. "Against Thee and Thee only?" How can this be? David took a woman in adultery, he killed her husband and then he says, Against Thee God, and Thee only have I sinned? The whole philosophy of humanism has been so ingrained into our lives that we think, *I shouldn't steal because of its effect upon others*. However, Biblical truth is that we do not steal

because God has commanded it! And the result of our obedience is that those around us are blessed. As I am faithful to my wife because God has commanded it of me, and in my faithfulness to Him, my wife, children, neighborhood, and society is blessed. As long as we hold to an unrepentant heart, there will always be unresolved issues that keep us from realizing the full manifestation of God's best within our lives. It is of utmost importance that we settle these issues of the heart once and for all.

### **Moses**

The Scriptures offer us a wonderful view into the lives of many people who had unresolved issues within their lives and the ultimate price that these issues exacted. God wants to reveal these unresolved issues of the heart for one reason, so they won't continue to hold us captive, hindering us from fulfilling God's best. We will begin with Moses. The first unresolved issue Moses had to face was his anger. We can see this issue in Moses when anger rose up in him and he killed an Egyptian that mistreated a Hebrew. This unresolved issue later kept him from entering the Promised Land. The second issue, after his many years in the desert, was that the Lord called him to be the deliverer of his people. At God's command Moses began the journey, and yet we see the Lord Himself standing before Moses preparing to kill him! Why? Was not Moses doing what the Lord asked? Was he not obeying

the Lord in going down to Egypt? Of course he was, but there remained an unresolved issue between him and God. His sons were not circumcised. It is at this point that we can rejoice for a wife who prayed! Zipporah, Moses' wife, stood in the gap and interceded for Moses. She circumcised their sons and God spared her husband. With this issue resolved, Moses would later face the unresolved issue of his anger. After many years of wandering in the desert, the Lord gave Moses instructions to speak to the Rock. Moses responded not in obedience to the Lord's word, but out of his frustration and anger. Rather than speaking to the Rock, he struck it. The same anger that caused Moses to flee from Pharaoh so many years before had once again arisen within his heart, and this time it cost him his opportunity to enter the Promised Land!

### **Uzza**

Uzza is a Bible character that has often brought much confusion. David had been made the king and he brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem with much celebration. Things seemed wonderful until tragedy struck. One of the oxen that was pulling the cart upon which the Ark was resting stumbled—the Ark began to tip and Uzza lifted up his hand to steady it. Immediately he was struck down, and the celebration turned into a funeral procession. David's zeal for God and his lack of understanding concerning the Law of God has been blamed for this tragedy. And while this may be in the strictest sense true, something else was transpiring here. Is it possible that Uzza had an unresolved issue of heart? Could it be that he had never allowed the Lord to deal with his youthful pride? Uzza's name means "strength." Here was a young man who had always been proud of his strength, his power, and his ability. Not only that, but he was a close friend of the King, and now he was found in the very focus of all Israel—standing beside the very Ark of God!

How often had the Spirit of God called to Uzza, "Son, you are glorying in your own strength; Uzza, watch out for the pride of life. O Uzza, watch out, be careful, repent!" And now Uzza's response, "Oh, look at me now, look at me now, I'm in front of all Israel. Imagine, I'm the one chosen by the king himself." And in a moment of

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pride he reaches out to steady the very Ark of God. And God's response is quick and final, "No you won't. My cup is full of your pride and your arrogance." Is God like that? The Lord hates arrogance. You may say, "my God is a loving God," Of course He is, but how many hours do you suppose the Spirit of God strove with Uzza to repent of his pride and his arrogance? If Uzza had walked humbly before his God, there might have been a different ending to this tragic story.

### **Remember Lot's Wife**

We do not know what her name was, but she is remembered merely as Lot's wife. To capture fully the essence of this story, we must begin as Lot who was living in Sodom, was kidnapped by a band of thugs. The entire town was captured, along with all of their property. Everyone and everything had been taken. And who came to deliver them? Abraham, the prophet of God, the friend of God, the father of many nations. Now Sodom had not become evil overnight. God in His mercy sent His prophet to deliver Sodom, and, no

doubt, to warn them of impending judgment and destruction. The Lord never sends His judgment without a warning.

When you have an unresolved issue in your heart, it will take precedence over everything else in your life. Lot and his family had become so entwined with the culture of Sodom that as the angels of God came to destroy the city, and the perverted men of the city came to sexually molest the angels, Lot offered the men his virgin daughters! Unresolved issues of the heart. In the morning, the Lord was ready to destroy Sodom, and yet Lot and his family lingered! Total destruction was eminent, and we find them lingering! The angels of God had to take them by the hand literally and physically remove them from the city. And here we see the unresolved issue in the heart of Lot's wife. As the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, as He overthrew those cities, Lot's wife was longing for her home. The unresolved issue of her heart was the home she had made into an idol. Rather than looking for a city that had real foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God, she had put her hope and her desire upon the temporal lust of her eyes. And as she looked back, she became a pillar of salt. You see friends, Lot's wife, whatever her name, had an unresolved issue of the heart. All she could see was the home that she had made. All she could see was the furnishing, the portraits on the wall, and the view over the city. All she could see was that home. It held her captive. And when she turned, her life was forfeited. In Jesus' warning concerning the last days He says, *Remember Lot's wife.* (Luke 17:32) When the day of destruction comes, it comes suddenly. And if our hearts are not prepared, at a moment's notice we may find ourselves wasted even as was Lot's wife.

### **The Sacrifice of Fools**

We could speak of Samson and of Solomon, but we will move quickly to the New Testament and look briefly at Peter. Yes, Peter had an unresolved issue of the heart. Ecclesiastes 5:1-3 says, *Be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools. For they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with your mouth. Let your words be few. A fool's voice is known by the multitude of his words.* In Matthew chapter seventeen Jesus takes his three closest disciples on a little hiking expedition up a mountain, and it is here that Peter's unresolved issue of the heart manifests itself. Peter has never learned to control his tongue. Jesus has a summit meeting with Moses and Elijah. The transformation is glorious, and Peter begins to offer the sacrifice of fools! *It is good for us to be here. Let us make booths, tabernacles for you, Moses and Elijah.* Can you see how foolish he is acting? Everyone has done this; spoken out of turn, interrupted others, said something that should never had said. Can you imagine interrupting Jesus, Moses, and Elijah? Even after a rebuke from God the Father Himself, Peter fails to resolve this issue. Later he boasts, *I won't deny you Lord, I will go with you even unto death.* But before the cock crows, Peter has denied Jesus three times.

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### **A Conscience Void of Offense**

Now let us go very quickly to the apostle Paul in Acts 24:16. *And in this do I exercise myself so that as to always have a conscience void of offense before God and before men.* Do you make it a practice to be certain that there is no offense in your heart toward God or toward

men? Paul did. People often speak of the greatness of the apostle Paul. Do you know why? Because he exercised himself to make sure that there was nothing in his heart that kept him from His God—or kept him from his brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul said, “I exercise myself.” Do you exercise yourself? Or do you allow even the littlest unresolved issues in your heart? What have you allowed to gain entrance into your heart? Like Moses, Uzza, Lot’s wife, Solomon, or Samson have you allowed unresolved issues to remain in your heart?

### **The Prince of This World Comes**

Unresolved issues. You may not be able to see them, or they may be continually nagging upon your heart. Ask the Lord. The Lord may have shown you, but you keep pushing it back. This is a vital issue. We are on the brink of that which the apostles longed to see. The Day is approaching! Are you ready? Are there things residing in your heart that you have struggled with for years? Now is the time to get right with God. For you see, we are entering perilous times. If they were perilous two thousand years ago, how much more perilous are they now? The things that the prophets could only see in a fog are beginning to clear. And much of the western church lies asleep. Will we allow these things, these weights to linger and to cling to our hearts? Jesus said in John 14:30, Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world comes, and he finds nothing in me. What is the sacrifice of fools? It is found in much talking. In the multitude of words there is much sin. You need to pray for yourself. Are you gossiping? You need to pray that you will not sin. When you get in the middle of the fire, close your mouth. There are many reasons for guarding the tongue. One is that you need to agree with God. When all of your life is tumbling down, if you speak you may start to sin and you will sin against God. The words may come that God is unfaithful. You might say that God has forgotten me. You might even say, “God doesn’t love me.” And it is all a lie. Keep your mouth quiet. Be quiet. Jesus said, “Father, I thank you that you always hear me.” Jesus said, “It is written in the volume of the book concerning me, I delight to do thy will. Nothing in my heart have I kept back. Nothing in my heart, O God, it is all before you.” Jesus came and lived a life leaning upon the Holy One—leaning on His Father. Are you relying and leaning on the Holy One? Are you leaning on the Father God?

### **Resolving the Issues**

These issues of the heart are often not solved overnight. There are few instant remedies for these kinds of deep heart conditions. That is why Jesus came, to give us new life, abundant life, and victorious life! Formulas seldom bring lasting results. Only that which is built upon the Lord Jesus Christ will remain. He is our full provision for abundant living. We need to know why God comes with a sword to separate the spirit and soul. If you don’t understand the principles of the Lord, you will remain confused in your Christian life. You will be forever stymied; wondering is going on in your life. This is not just talking about knowing Jesus in the sweet by and by, but about knowing Him intimately now in the power of His resurrection and in the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable to His death. Once the believer has come into that place of walking with

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Jesus, he is enabled to embrace much of what is happening in his life. He will begin to experience God's victory in the midst of trouble.

Let's look at five points that will help resolve the unresolved issues of our hearts. **First**, come to the cross daily. "The life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." "Take up your cross and follow Me." Unless we are willing to embrace the truth of God by becoming ruthless with ourselves, we will forever remain at the mercy of the carnal nature and its whims.

**Secondly**, remember the apostle Paul says in Galatians 6, *you reap what you have sown, God is not mocked*. Sin does not just happen. It is first sown as seeds in the heart and it is then cultivated by our thinking patterns. You begin by allowing the thought to remain. Pretty soon you are meditating on it. Eventually these thoughts turn into a stronghold in your life. At this point these thoughts begin to consume and totally control our thinking and personality. Lust and covetousness begin to dominate. Don't say, "It just happened." It didn't just happen. You have meditated upon it. You have been sowing seeds. You have been sowing lustful thoughts, prideful thoughts, and angry thoughts. Your harvest is coming. You are going to reap a harvest whether you like it or not. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Don't coddle it. Don't give it room. Don't give it time. Determine in your heart to rid yourself of all unresolved issues. Remember, you will reap what you have sown. Jesus is wonderful; His forgiveness and mercy can readily be received. The steadfast love of the Lord is new every morning; great is His faithfulness. Our sin can be washed away. Though it was red as crimson, He will make it white as snow.

**Third**, develop a love for the truth. *And with all deception of unrighteousness in those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. For this cause God will send a strong delusion that they should believe a lie. (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11)* Selah! Stop and think about that! God is going to deceive those who do not love the truth!

**Whatever the cost—develop a love for the truth of God's Word.**

Whatever the cost—develop a love for the truth of God's Word. Submit yourself to the authority of the Scriptures. Order your life by the Word of God. Determine that if you must choose between your opinion, the opinion of lawyers and doctors, or those in authority in the government, and the Word of the Living God; that you will always choose the Word of God. It will not fail you.

The apostle Paul was writing this letter to the saints at Thessalonica. Now why would he say that unless we love the truth, God will send us a strong delusion? In Acts 17 we find our answer. Paul is preaching to the Bereans. These Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica. They were more noble, why? Because Paul says, they received the Word of God with readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily to see if those things were true. There was something within the Thessalonian church, something that caused them not to love the truth the way the Bereans did. Are you a Berean or a Thessalonican? Can you pray: "Jesus, I love the truth, even when it hurts and when it upsets my predetermined position and doctrine. Lord Jesus, help me to develop a love for Your Word. Should there be something in me that is not aligned with Your truth, please show it to me."

**Fourth**, we need to cultivate our ability to listen to the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:30, commands us to, *grieve not the Holy Spirit of God*. We need to cultivate our ability to listen to God. Faith will only come by listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 10:17) Prosperity will come only by listening to God. (Deut 28:1) Healing will only come to those who are listening to God. (Exodus 15:26) The saving of your family will only come by listening to God. (Romans 10:14) Your physical safety may one day depend upon your ability to listen to the Holy Spirit. How often we grieve the Holy Spirit by the things we watch on television and at the movies, or the things we say about others. It grieves the Holy Spirit inside of us. We say we want to listen to His promptings yet all the while we are grieving Him. He is gentle. He is precious. As long as we continue to pursue that which grieves Him we will never develop a listening ear to His still small voice.

**Accountability before the Lord, before our families and before the Church will become a necessity in the coming days.**

**And finally**, avoid every opportunity to turn back. *And truly if they had been mindful of that country from which they had come out, they might have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better country that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city.* (Hebrews 11:15-16) It is said of Abraham, that he was looking for a city that has foundations whose Builder and Maker is God. (Hebrews 11:10) Abraham had opportunity to say, "It looks like a desert to me. That wasn't God. Let's go back to Ur." And if we had been Sarah would we have said, "Abraham, are you sure? I want to go back to the comforts of our real home." Everybody will have opportunity to turn back and to walk away. Avoid the opportunity to turn back. Jesus asked His disciples if they too would turn away. Their response must be our response as well, *To whom shall we go, You have the words of eternal life.* (John 6:67-68). Avoid every opportunity for turning back. If it is an adult bookstore, don't drive that way. Go twenty miles out of your way if necessary. If you can't handle this or that situation, avoid the opportunity. Paul told young Timothy, *Flee youthful lusts.* (2 Tim. 2:22) Run from it. Don't say, "Oh, I can handle that situation." No you can't! Run from it. If you are given to lying, do something, tell (your husband, tell your wife, tell your kids, tell somebody the truth just once about yourself and then they will never let you get away with falsehoods. Accountability before the Lord, before our families and before the Church will become a necessity in the coming days. Our faith is precious. Guard it. Watch over it. Cultivate it. Never, never, never, abandon it. Press into the things of God. Avoid at all costs the opportunity to turn back.

Father,

I want to thank You that Your word is true. There are things in my heart that have been left unresolved. Before that evil day comes and catches me off guard, Lord help me resolve these issues. Thank you Lord, that in Your gentleness You reveal what lies hidden within my heart. Thank You Lord, that You come not to wound, but to heal and restore. Thank You Lord that You came to destroy utterly the works of the devil. I open my life to Your Spirit's work that I might be free from all unresolved issues and that, as I stand before You, my heart may be perfect.

In Jesus Name, Amen.

## STANDING ✕ IN THE GAP

***The entrance of Thy Word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple***  
Psalm 19:130

From our perspective life is often a myriad of bizarre happenings and unanswerable questions. And yet, perspective is everything. Without the correct viewpoint our choices and decisions produce miserable results. The fruit of these choices never meets our expectations. Often Christians pursue life from a position that has little if any of God's perspective and then they are either disillusioned with the Christian life and eventually submit to defeat, or they settle for something far below the standard set within the Scriptures—abundant and victorious life. More often than not, these Christians are bitter toward God, His Church and life. But this is not God's design for us!

The Psalms often reflects for us how to live a life fully in touch not only with God, but also with our emotions and deepest struggles. Many psalms mirror for us our deepest longings, desires, and inner failings, all the while convicting us of the need for a deep abiding faith and trust in the Lord. One theme that continually surfaces in the psalms is the necessity for viewing life, not from our perspective, but from the vantage point of Heaven.

How do we begin to obtain this perspective from the Lord? In the Seventy Third Psalm, we see this classic problem and its answer. The psalmist begins by bemoaning his problems and how it seems the others are blessed by God and that even the wicked are prospered in all their ways. His turning point comes when he goes into the sanctuary of the Lord. *Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.* (verse 17) How often we would rather complain than enter the sanctuary of the Lord! How often the issues of our heart so overwhelm us! The perspective of our lives needs to be interrupted by the Lord's perspective. Jesus always sees from a perspective of eternity. He knows and understands the beginning from the ending, for He is the Alpha and the Omega; the Beginning and the Ending. We can trust His perspective. In fact, we must have His perspective if we are to become effective in our life of prayer. It is from His sanctuary that the struggles and trials of life come into focus. It is from His sanctuary that we can easily navigate what once we thought was an endless maze without ending. It is from His Presence in the sanctuary that faith issues forth for complete and unqualified victory. It is from this perspective alone that we can run the race not only with endurance but with unequalled confidence of assured victory.

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