

GOD OF THE IN-BETWEEN

INTRODUCTION

A month ago we had our Victory conference. We were really encouraged and built up and God took us and placed us on a new level of faith with Him. There is one more message we need to hear about victory and I want to share it today.

Have you ever felt that you have been trying so hard and trusting God with different areas of your life, but it was as if you were just stuck? Maybe that's you today. You have tried and tried, and you almost feel like giving up. You feel stuck in-between where you started and your destination.

I believe there is hope for each one struggling with circumstances, feeling as if they are in-between, somewhere in no-man's land and on the verge of giving up. Today I want to speak about our God, He is "the God of the in-between".

MESSAGE

DEFINING THE IN-BETWEEN

Isaiah 43:16-19 (NKJV) Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea And a path through the mighty waters, 17 Who brings forth the chariot and horse, The army and the power (They shall lie down together, they shall not rise; They are extinguished, they are quenched like a wick): 18 "Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. 19 Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert.

Isaiah was speaking to the people who were about to go into captivity – they were in-between their behaviour and the consequences.

This captivity was different – it was not a slavery, or violent, it was a captivity where they were comfortable – In Babylon, there was not an economic disadvantage. They may have even had a measure of prosperity, but they knew they were not at home.

Isaiah was preparing them for the gap – the time of captivity, in-between freedom and their next period of freedom.

Sometimes there is an in-between that only God can speak to. Everyone at some place or stage in their life has an in-between.

IN-BETWEEN WHERE I AM NOW VS. WHERE I WANT TO BE

When we have an in-between, the encouragement is **that God is in the in-between.**

We have a dream of who we want to be, but we are not there yet. We want to be solid Christians with massive faith, we dream of not having questions and doubts. We dream of having a personality that NEVER loses it's cool. We dream of having all the right things to say and never putting our foot in our mouth, we dream of knowing scriptures backwards and not only knowing them, but actually living the truths out. We dream of successful ministry where we are a church of Irresistible Influence, where there are no empty seats and people are being healed, delivered and set free. And sometimes we even get a glimpse of the reality of being at that point, but normally, the person we see in the mirror is not there yet, and it can be soooo frustrating.

We struggle with all sorts of things such as selfishness, anger issues, e.g. road rage, racism, drifting eyes, greed etc. and we think, will I ever get to a place of victory.

The risk is that start to think we are going nowhere and that we have got ourselves into a rut that we can't get out of and we give up.

Do illustration of the in-between gap using 2 people.

Progress doesn't always look like a straight line – it may look like a circle. Think of Joshua and the people walking around Jericho. These people had already been walking in circles for 40 years, then God asked them to walk around again.

They must have been tired of walking by then, they probably wanted to fight, they wanted to do what it took to take that city, then God said, "walk some more!"

- When you have been praying for something for years. When you have been trusting the Lord for healing, or for a promotion or a financial breakthrough or a breakthrough in your family, and God says, do another lap, it can be easy to feel like giving up.
- You may be tired of putting on a brave face and coming to church and pretending everything is all right when you know that when you get home the problem will still be there waiting for you.
- You may have thought you were going from glory to glory, going higher, but God says, "wait a little longer".

The Bible account of Jericho tells us they walked around the city 7 days... what if they got tired and frustrated and gave up after day 6 because they didn't see any progress?

The same question applies to us. What do we do when we have been trusting God and working and obeying and we haven't seen any progress?

Wouldn't it be great if we just saw little glimpses of progress? But God says, "I don't want your faith to be in what you see me do, I want your faith to be **in the character of My nature and the promise that I made to you**".

So, when we are walking, and we see nothing happening, then we have a tendency to think that we're stuck. What a tragedy for us to have had enough faith to survive the wilderness, and now because we're on lap 6 we're ready to give up, and we stop on day 6 and never see the promise of God that's right on the doorstep.

The truth of the matter is this, just because you don't see it doesn't mean that God isn't working! Just because your progress isn't obvious doesn't mean your faith isn't working...

Sometimes **what God is doing in us, is far more important than what God is doing for us.** It's in the in-between that God is busy working, He is moving us forward even though we can't see it!

- ***Are you stuck somewhere in-between where you are and where you want to be?***
- ***Are you stuck somewhere in-between who you are and who you want to be?***
- ***The devil will point out that gap and tell us what a failure we are. He will point the gap out and say, "you are never going to make it".***

We need to be encouraged that gap between where we are and where we want to be is important, we need it. It keeps us humble, it keeps us praying and it keeps our eyes on Jesus.

God says He can use us because we have we have not yet "made it", it's in the in-between where the grace grows, and where the glory abides. It's the gap where we realise God does not only love the future me. He loves me and He is with me right here in the gap, He has already saved me, He has already achieved amazing things in my life, but He is far from finished!

- ***What's your in-between – do you know what you want to be, what you want to achieve?***
- ***Are you waiting for healing or employment?***
- ***Is there a financial need that you have been waiting for the Lord to meet?***
- ***Has the enemy been taunting you, saying, "you're not going to make it?"***

THE IN-BETWEEN WHERE I AM NOW VS. WHERE I STARTED FROM

We need to realise that there are two sides to the "in-between! The other side of the in-between is very encouraging. This is the gap between where we used to be, and where we are now. It's the gap between who we used to be, and who we are now!

This gap ahead of us is the Goliath gap – in the gap behind us, we have been learning, that's where we've killed our lions and the bears. God was building up our character because He knew that we have to face a Goliath in the future so He has been preparing us.

When we can remember what God has already done, it will give us faith for what lays ahead.

We also need to remember what God did, but then we must forget... Isaiah said: **Isaiah 43:18** "Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old.

- "Remember what I did, but don't remember how I did it, because if I do the same thing, the same way all of the time, you will start relying on the formula, on the way I did it and not on Me."

Sometimes, because of how God came through for us in the past, we may be depending on a certain person, or on doing the same thing He showed us to do last time, but that's exactly what will prevent us from going forward.

Sometimes we try to do things the ways that were previously successful, and then when they don't work, we want to give up.

A good example for those who watch cricket was Paul Adams. He was this South African spinner and at first he was amazing and effective, South African cricket fans were elated, we thought we had our own Shane Warne, but the international teams figured him out and he lost his effectiveness.

Sometimes yesterday's move of God worked great yesterday. Everyone tried to copy what happened in different revivals such as the Brownsville revival or the Azuza street revival, but what worked then doesn't work now. However, the One who worked there has not changed, He is just progressive, He wants us to keep our eyes on Him and on what He's doing now and then we can have another great revival.

Have you been trusting God to move for you but you haven't seen what he has been doing because you've been waiting for Him to move the same way he did in the past?

THE PLACE WE ARE AT RIGHT NOW

When we look at where we are right now, we may be wanting to get out of a circumstance but there is no way we can get out. God is not perturbed because He is going to come in and help us right here **within** our situation.

Psalm 138:3 (NLT) As soon as I pray, you answer me; you encourage me by giving me strength.

Is it possible that we feel like we are failing because we are not getting out of our situation, but God is right here with us giving us strength to go through what we are going through? We are not failing, we are succeeding because we are coping and being victorious and having joy right where we are!

- We are victorious because His glory is right here with us in the middle.
- Here in the in-between is where we are trusting God.
- Here in the in-between is where our faith can be grown and released.
- Here in the in-between is where our light shines the brightest because when people look at us, they can only glorify God for how we are managing in the midst of the impossible and difficult and we still have our joy, we still have our faith, we still have our hope, we still love, we remain children of the Most High God.

CONCLUSION

Today we are encouraged about the in-between. Just because we think we are stuck or in a rut doesn't mean that that's where we really are!

- We need to look back and see how far we have come.
- It's time to realise that God has given us victory over lions and bears already and that was in preparation for the giants we are still going to slay!
- We need to realise that God doesn't work the same way every time. We must never rely on the method, but we must rely on the faithful and merciful character of our God who promised that He would never leave us nor forsake us.
- Sometimes what God is doing in us, is far more important than what God is doing for us.
- We must look at our here and now and realise that God is right here with us, giving us the strength we require so that we can cope with and deal with what we are facing right now.
- Finally, we must look forward and know that we must not give up because we could just possibly be in lap 7 of our personal Jericho.

I leave you with these final thoughts:

John 16:33 (NKJV) These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Philippians 1:5-6 (NKJV) for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, **6** being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

We may be somewhere in the in-between, but in Jesus Christ we have encouragement. As He has overcome, so will we, and we must remember the Lord's promise on Philippians, our Lord is busy with us, His masterpieces, He will complete what He started. We won't be here in the in-between forever.