

ROMANS 7

Message 14

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Scripture: Romans 7:15-?

INTRO: We are just entering 2021. In a sense, this final message on Romans 7 is a fitting New Year's message. In a brief summary, in Romans Paul deals first with the fact that all are sinners and need salvation. This takes us to chapter 4. In chapters 4-5 he deals with justification by faith. This is pictured by Israel's deliverance from Egypt. In chapter 6 we learn that sanctification is by grace through faith as well, and chapter 7 shows us how the initial stage of sanctification takes place. The process of sanctification is a life-long one. But the initial stage is pictured by Israel's journey through the wilderness.

Many Christians, like Israel, never reach the Promised Land. They die in in the wilderness. That does not mean they are all lost. It means they never achieved the point of sanctification God wants all to arrive at and then live in victory. This failure to enter is largely due to the failure of preaching the righteous requirements of the law in our day. Sin is preached just by preaching sin, but not by exposing sins. The lack of understanding sin and the sin nature causes many to never recognize their own sinful, deceitful, nature. The teachings of unconditional love, unconditional grace, unconditional eternal security, unconditional forgiveness have distorted our view of a holy and righteous and just God. We have humanized God and deified man and most will never make it through the wilderness. Many pastors, like their adherents never make it through the wilderness.

In Romans 7 we learn that sanctification does not take place by keeping the law. Sanctification takes place by overcoming the sin nature. Sanctification does not happen by denying the sin nature, nor by suppressing the sin nature, but by overcoming it by grace through faith. I demonstrated how that happens in the overhead on sanctification. In this way one is enabled to obey God's righteous requirements.

Only the Christian who overcomes one sin after another can sing the victorious words of Romans 7:25:

25 *I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.*

We have looked at the path to Romans 7, which is Romans 1-6. Then we looked at the path through Romans 7, and now we just want to introduce the path after Romans 7. Maybe in another series some day we will look at this path. But it begins in Romans 8:1-2 like this:

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Now some will use a newer version, such as one of the latest, the ESV and say, "Hey, just a minute. The last words you read in verse 1 are not even there." Where did you get that? I get that from the KJV or the NKJV. The modern versions, using what they call "the oldest and best" manuscripts, do not have these words. Let me just say what I have said so many times, "Nobody can say they are the oldest and best manuscripts." Why not? Because nobody knows that for certain. I agree they may be the oldest, but I do not agree that they are the best.

But if someone should believe these words do not belong here, then let such a person read through verse 4 and you will find them there. Many hold to the view that, "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." But the no condemnation is, "...to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

III. THE PATH AFTER ROMANS 7

A. The Promise of Rest

You will not remember, but our first point was, "The Path To Romans 7." Before one enters the wilderness one is in Egypt. That is a picture of the life of the lost and they must come out of the bondage of Egypt. Then we looked at main point 2, "The Path Through Romans 7." Now we want to briefly look at the third main point, "The Path After Romans 7." So if Egypt pictures the lost, and the wilderness, the

transitional experience of the new believer before he comes to fully rest in faith in Christ, what comes after this? Well, after this comes Canaan.

Canaan, in my view, is not a picture of heaven. There is a sense in which it may be likened to heaven but that is not the main intent. In many songs Canaan is used to speak of heaven because it is the final place of rest. Listen to the words of the song, "Sweet Hour Of Prayer," we sing:

*Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
May I thy consolation share,
Till, from Mount Pisgah's lofty height,
I view my home and take my flight.*

The song writer pictures Canaan as heaven and he wants to share in the consolation of prayer until he comes to the close of his days and he gets a glimpse of heaven. And then he says,

*This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise
To seize the everlasting prize,
And shout, while passing through the air,
"Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer!"*

Moses died on this mountain, and the song writer pictures himself as viewing heaven from Mount Pisgah. But the main purpose is for Canaan to picture the Christian who has come through the wilderness victoriously, like Joshua and Caleb. By the wilderness he is prepared to conquer life's giants by faith. Those who reach Canaan in the Christian life now face heavy battles and they are to be won by faith.

Turn to Deuteronomy 1. It is most interesting that Israel could have passed through the wilderness in 11 days. Verse 1 of Deuteronomy 1 says:

1 These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain opposite Suph, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

Israel left Mount Sinai 40 years ago. And now they are camped before the Jordan River which they must cross to enter Canaan.

Verse 2:

2 It is eleven days' journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea.

They usually calculated one day's travel as 20 miles. Now Horeb, or Mount Sinai is a ways from the Red Sea, but still the journey was much shorter than it could have been.

Verse 3:

3 Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him as commandments to them,

4 after he had killed Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who dwelt at Ashtaroth in Edrei.

Israel is now through the wilderness. It has taken 40 years. The reason they did not go the shorter route was that God chose not to take them that way. Listen to Exodus 13:17:

17 Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt."

If one should take a short cut to Canaan, and not have been prepared by the wilderness, one likely would not survive Canaan. Do you remember the illustration of the butterfly? The struggle it goes through has a purpose. If it does not struggle right, it will never fly. Now, 11 days journey was by the way of the land of the Philistines. I conclude that if one is taken through the wilderness faster than one can handle

spiritually, one might give up when one reaches the land. So each Christian only enters the Christian rest when they are spiritually prepared for it by the struggle of overcoming the flesh and living by faith. From Israel's experience we would conclude that many, maybe even most, who start out never arrive.

So in our passage we are now camped before the Jordan River. On the other side is the promised land.

Turn now to Deuteronomy 3. Moses is coming to the end of his journey. And in Deuteronomy 1 Moses begins to recount their journey from Egypt to where they are now, which is just before they enter the land of Canaan. So we begin now in 3:21:

21 *"And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, 'Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms through which you pass.*

22 *'You must not fear them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you.'*

23 *"Then I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying:*

24 *'O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds?*

Moses is saying, "Lord You have just begun to show me Your greatness and your mighty hand. There is no god like You. Nobody can do what You have done. And then he makes this request:

25 *'I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.'*

Moses, as old as he is, and as many battles as he has been through wants to see the land, not only from a distance, but from within the land.

Verse 26:

26 *"But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the LORD said to me: 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter.*

27 *'Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east; behold it with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan.*

Turn now to Hebrews 3. We want to look at Canaan, the land of rest, from a NT Christian perspective. There is a Canaan for the Christian. We begin in verse 7:

7 *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice,*

8 *Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,*

9 *Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years.*

10 *Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.'*

11 *So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'*"

12 *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*

You see, these verses are not addressed to unbelievers, but believers. And it is possible to grow an evil heart of unbelief and not be able to enter the land of rest. Furthermore, the book of Hebrews makes abundantly clear that believers can depart from God altogether.

Verse 13:

13 *but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,

15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?

17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

The majority of the people who came out of Egypt never entered the land of promise. Only a few did. And the reason they could not enter? Unbelief!

Chapter 4 verse 1:

1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works";

5 and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest."

6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,

7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

Well, we want to just view the land of rest. Maybe someday we will do a series on the life in the Spirit of Christ, which is overcoming the battles in Canaan by grace through faith in the power of the Holy Spirit. Now we just want to view the land from Pisgah's lofty height. This is what Romans 8 is all about. Today we will just view it from a distance.

B. The Land Of Rest

Those who do get through the wilderness like Joshua and Caleb enter Canaan. But Canaan, though it pictures the Christian's rest in faith, is no easy place. In the wilderness one learns to live by faith. I believe that the life of victory over sin is what the land of Canaan in the OT pictures. In Canaan one learns to conquer giants by faith. Here one is to live the victorious life of faith.

I pictured the new Christian in another message as a piece of land covered with trees and willows and unwanted things. The farmer bought it for the soil. To make the soil useful he has to clear all the brush and trees off of it. Those picture things in our sin nature to overcome. And then when all the brush is off, all the roots have to be removed and the water holes drained. And then when it is seeded, weeds that

have lain dormant spring up and they have to be dealt with. But finally the farmer has the soil and it is useful to be productive.

The Christian who enters Canaan should now be useful to be productive. But the world, the flesh, and the devil are there too. And now, by faith, those have to be overcome.

Now the very first thing Israel had to do when they entered the land was to dispossess the land of its inhabitants. Many people reject the Bible because they say the OT is a bloody book. Listen to 1 Samuel 15:3:

3 'Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

We might struggle with this too. A long time before the instructions of 1 Samuel 15:3 were given, God said this to Abraham in Genesis 15:16:

16 "But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

When God said they were to be destroyed, man, woman, and child, their iniquity was full. That which we have now fully entered into in our land, such as same gender marriage and many other sins, these were rampant among the Amorites. There is one cure for a people that reaches such a state, and we are almost to that cure. This cure will ultimately and finally happen at the end of the tribulation. When Christ comes down from heaven with His bride at the end of the tribulation, the angels will gather together all God's elect from every corner of the earth. The rest of mankind will now have reached the state of the Amorites in the OT and Jesus Christ will destroy them all with the sword of His mouth! (Rev. 19). This time it will not be one nation, it will be the whole lost world!

Well, when Israel entered the land, the people of the land lived in every imaginable sin. So we will read this chapter. What we will see in picture form is the conquest the born again believer has to make when he enters the rest of faith:

1 *"When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you,*

2 *"and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.*

3 *"Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.*

4 *"For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.*

5 *"But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.*

6 *"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.*

7 *"The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;*

8 *"but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and*

redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

9 "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

10 "and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face.

11 "Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them.

12 ¶ "Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers.

13 "And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you.

14 "You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock.

15 "And the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay them on all those who hate you.

16 "And you shall destroy all the peoples whom the LORD your God delivers over to you; your eye shall have no pity on them; nor shall you serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you.

17 "If you should say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?' -

18 *"you shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt:*

19 *"the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.*

20 *"Moreover the LORD your God will send the hornet among them until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed.*

21 *"You shall not be terrified of them; for the LORD your God, the great and awesome God, is among you.*

22 *"And the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.*

23 *"But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed.*

24 *"And He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven; no one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.*

25 *"You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.*

26 *"Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.*

Turn now to Deuteronomy 7. When we are saved, God begins to deliver us one enemy at a time. Deuteronomy 7:27-30 illustrates this for us like this:

27 *"I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.*

28 *"And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you.*

29 *"I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beast of the field become too numerous for you.*

30 *"Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.*

God deals with our sins little by little. If God required too much of us too soon, the land would become desolate. That does not work. So those who learn to live by faith will learn to do so little by little. And that which they conquer will be conquered. But listen now to Numbers 33:55-56:

55 *'But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.*

56 *'Moreover it shall be that I will do to you as I thought to do to them.'*"

We have all heard the saying, "It will come back to haunt us." For those who enter Canaan and then fail to overcome in some area, it comes back to haunt them. It becomes irritants in one's eyes and thorns in one's side. We have been crucified with Christ to overcome, not to be overcome.

So the book of Romans teaches that we were crucified with Christ in order that we might overcome sin in every form and at every stage of life. So I have shared with you that I overcame the habit of cigarette smoking. And when we overcome a sin and it no longer can lure us in, then our state in life equals our standing. Our standing is perfect. When we have overcome smoking or lying or cheating or any other sin, then our state or practice with regard to that sin is perfect. And in this way God wants us to become completely perfect at every new stage we reach. So we died with Christ that we should no longer be slaves to sin. When we are not a slave to sin, our position and practice are on the same level.

Canaan is a land in which disobedience is very possible. Listen to Judges 1:27-33:

27 However, Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land.

28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out.

29 Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

30 Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and were put under tribute.

31 Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob.

32 *So the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.*

33 *Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or the inhabitants of Beth Anath; but they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them.*

Consider Saul. Turn to 1 Samuel 15. The time had come for Israel to destroy the Amalekites. We begin in verse 1:

1 *Samuel also said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD.*

2 *"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.*

3 *'Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'*"

Well, you know the story. Saul did not destroy all and he blamed the people. Look at verses:

7 *And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt.*

8 *He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.*

9 *But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.*

Moses could not enter Canaan because he failed God at one point. Saul lost his kingship because he disobeyed God right here. We go on in verse 10:

10 Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying,

11 "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night.

12 So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal."

13 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD."

14 But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

15 And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak on."

17 So Samuel said, "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel?"

18 "Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.'

19 "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?"

20 *And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.*

21 *"But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."*

Well, big Saul pled with Samuel like a little child. But God was done with Saul. There are grave dangers in Canaan. In the end, one Amalekite killed Saul. Now Saul had spared the king of the Amalekites alive. He is, I believe, representative of the self-life, pride, the flesh.

32 *Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."*

33 *But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.*

That is what one has to do with every one of God's enemies in our lives. There must be no pity for the flesh. It must die.

Canaan is a land to be lived by faith. Let me liken learning to live by faith to learning to fly an airplane by instrument. One of our local men with some night flying schooling came in to our town to land and it was a bit foggy. He was encouraged to turn around and go to another town to land but he would need somebody to drive out over an hour to pick him up. So he decided to try to land. He lost visibility and went nose first into the ground.

Those who enter Canaan and have learned to live by faith live in danger of reverting to walking by sight, and that can be fatal. After that airplane crash in

our community I read an article from Transport Canada. It goes like this:

From Transport Canada

178 seconds

If you're ever tempted to take off in marginal weather and have no instrument training, read this article first before you go. If you decide to go anyway and lose visual contact, start counting down from 178 seconds. How long can a pilot who has no instrument training expect to live after he flies into bad weather and loses visual contact? Researchers at the University of Illinois found the answer to this question. Twenty students "guinea pigs" flew into simulated instrument weather, and all went into graveyard spirals or rollercoasters. The outcome differed in only one respect; the time required until control was lost. The interval ranged from 480 seconds to 20 seconds. The average time was 178 seconds—two seconds short of three minutes.

Here's the fatal scenario...The sky is overcast and the visibility poor. That reported 5-mile visibility looks more like two, and you can't judge the height of the overcast. Your altimeter says you're at 1500 but your map tells you there's local terrain as high as 1200 feet. There might even be a tower nearby because you're not sure just how far off course you are. But you've flown into worse weather than this, so you press on. You find yourself unconsciously easing back just a bit on the controls to clear those non-too-imaginary towers. With no warning, you're in the soup. You peer so hard into the milky white mist that your eyes hurt. You fight the feeling in your stomach. You swallow, only to find your mouth dry. Now you realize you should have waited for better weather.

The appointment was important—but not that important. Somewhere, a voice is saying "You've had it—it's all over!" You now have 178 seconds to live. Your aircraft feels in an even keel but your compass turns slowly. You push a little rudder and add a little pressure on the

controls to stop the turn but this feels unnatural and you return the controls to their original position. This feels better but your compass is now turning a little faster and your airspeed is increasing slightly. You scan your instrument panel for help but what you see looks somewhat unfamiliar. You're sure this is just a bad spot. You'll break out in a few minutes. (But you don't have several minutes left...) You now have 100 seconds to live. You glance at your altimeter and are shocked to see it unwinding.

You're already down to 1200 feet. Instinctively, you pull back on the controls but the altimeter still unwinds. The engine is into the red—and the airspeed, nearly so. You have 45 seconds to live. Now you're sweating and shaking. There must be something wrong with the controls; pulling back only moves that airspeed indicator further into the red. You can hear the wind tearing at the aircraft. You have 10 seconds to live. Suddenly, you see the ground. The trees rush up at you. You can see the horizon if you turn your head far enough but it's at an unusual angle—you're almost inverted. You open your mouth to scream but.....you have no seconds left.

If a believer, who has learned to live by faith, turns back and lives by the flesh, how long does he have to live? It may depend on the sin one enters, but however long it is if one reverts to living by the flesh, in the end it will lead to certain eternal death. In life, especially in the dark parts, in the clouds, he must keep his eyes on the instruments. Our guiding instrument is the Bible. In everything it must come first. When life is good, keep your eyes on the instruments. When life is tough, keep your eyes on the instruments.

For some people who have entered Canaan, if they fall into certain sins time may be very short for them. The flesh wants to exert its presence everywhere. In Romans 8, the victory chapter we find this verse: "If you live after the flesh you will die." That death is eternal death. It starts with one sin and ends up in a

life-style. And if you watch someone like this you might say, "I always thought he or she was a great Christian!" They may have been. Because they crashed does not mean they never were a Christian. It may mean they failed somewhere and it led them into a life-style that took them right off the path. Romans 6:4-6 speaks of such. But in verse 9 the writer says:

9 But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.

CONCL: So we conclude this series. There is victory in Jesus. There is a land of perfect rest. There is victory that puts one above the law of gravity and causes one to fly, but it takes constant overcoming of the law of gravity.

We stand at the beginning of a new year. May we conquer our enemies by faith. It is certain that if God gives us any amount of time, we will face battles. Let us learn to overcome them all by faith.

The land of perfect rest is so well described in the hymn called "Once It Was The Blessing." We're going to sing it. It is number 299. Let it be your song for 2021, or as much as we have of it. As we sing it think of it like this as we go through:

Once it was the blessing, Wilderness
Now it is the Lord; Canaan
Once it was the feeling, Wilderness
Now it is His Word; Canaan
Once His gift I wanted, Wilderness
Now, the Giver own; Canaan
Once I sought for healing, Wilderness
Now Himself alone. Canaan

Once 'twas painful trying,
Now 'tis perfect trust;
Once a half salvation,
Now the uttermost;
Once 'twas ceaseless holding,
Now He holds me fast;
Once 'twas constant drifting,

Now my anchor's cast.

Once 'twas busy planning,
Now 'tis trustful prayer;
Once 'twas anxious caring,
Now He has the care;
Once 'twas what I wanted,
Now what Jesus says;
Once 'twas constant asking,
Now 'tis ceaseless praise.

Once it was my working,
His it hence shall be;
Once I tried to use Him,
Now He uses me;
Once the pow'r I wanted,
Now the Mighty One;
Once for self I labored,
Now for Him alone.

Once I hoped in Jesus,
Now I know He's mine;
Once my lamps were dying,
Now they brightly shine;
Once for death I waited,
Now His coming hail;
And my hopes are anchored
Safe within the veil.

Chorus:
All in all forever,
Jesus will I sing;
Everything in Jesus,
And Jesus everything.