

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

June 20, 2010

Victim or victor?

by David King

"The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. . . . [W]e were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight" (Num. 13:33).

"As it is written, 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:30-31).

The juxtaposition of these two passages, and the contexts behind them, reveal the secret to a successful life — if we will learn.

The first passage is the message of the ten spies who brought back a bad report to the children of Israel on the border of Canaan. In the minds of these men, the bounty of the land was overshadowed by the power of the enemies who lived there. The inhabitants were physically and numerically large, protected by fortified cities. If the Israelites tried to take the land, they would be "devoured," squashed like grasshoppers by their enemies. The conclusion was inescapable: God and Moses had led them out of Egypt on a fool's errand. They were doomed.

The second passage summarizes Paul's answer to the question, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (v. 31). Yes, the deck is stacked against us (v. 35): tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness — each one of us can add our own hardships to the list. Like sheep led to the slaughter, our fate is sealed. But in Paul's view, these physical travails pale

in comparison to the final reward for which we are striving, a reward that is guaranteed to us. Satan can do his worst to separate us from God, but he will fail miserably. When the battle is finally over and the smoke clears, we will be revealed as conquerors — no, **more** than conquerors. With Christ our captain leading the way, the outcome is already predetermined. We will receive a reward that is infinitely beyond what any worldly tyrant can seize for himself.

The difference between the Israelites and Paul was not in the nature or degree of the difficulties they faced, but in how each party chose to **think** about those difficulties. In their minds, the Israelites gave up before they even began. They assumed the worst possible outcome, and their fears became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Paul, on the other hand, forced himself to take the long view, to look beyond the immediate pain to the final outcome. That vision gave him a rock-solid confidence that no earthly threat could shake.

If there is one lesson that fairly screams to us from the pages of the Bible, it is this: Life may be tough, but with God's help, we can be tougher. Success is not a function of what happens to us, but how we choose to think about those circumstances. It's a decision each one of us must make, not just once but every day.

Each one of us has our own giants to fight, our own hardships to endure. Am I a grasshopper or a conqueror? A victim or a victor? The answer is determined, not by the challenges that confront us, but by how we choose to confront our challenges.