Exponential - Part Two

More Than Conquerors

(John 16:33)

Welcome to all of you today, we are in week number two of our message series called Exponential and I am believing that you will be challenged, you will be inspired, and every moment invested will be a contribution to your destiny. My hope this morning is that this would be one of those right place, right time moments when it comes to spiritual things, because God is not just interested in adding to your life, but he wants to multiply it.

The title of today’s message is “More Than Conquerors,” and if you have been a believer and coming here for long at all, you know the blessings that God has for you. You know his divine power has given you everything you need for life and godliness, that you are victorious, and you have been seated in heavenly places. And so, as we gather together today, we are more than conquerors, because in Christ we are blessed, we are saved, we are healed, and we are delivered.

Jesus said, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

And so, while many people in the world are living in crisis, we live in Christ. And in Christ we have overcome, we are victorious, because no matter what troubles we encounter the Bible says,

“In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

In other words, in trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and sword we are more than conquerors in Christ. The problem is that there are many of us who are professing these things, but when we look at our lives, we don’t see the reality of what we have professed, and I believe today that the Lord wants to change that.

You see, God doesn’t want me to just give out information week after week, but he wants us to experience it so that we would see a demonstration of his power in our lives. And so, we want to experience him touching our lives, our relationships, our families, marriages, and finances. As we gather together we come not just to sing about God, not just to hear about God, but as the Bible says, that we would…

“Taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psalms 34:8).

Now, last week we talked about Israel entering the promised land, but how Moses didn’t enter the promised land, and the manna didn’t continue in the promised land, but still the promise remained for the people of God. And so, today I want to talk to you about moving from waiting on God to working with God, from professing to possessing.

The Bible tells us that when the people of God were delivered from Egypt they came to the Red Sea and stopped. They waited until God parted the water and then they went across on dry ground. As they were traveling through the wilderness whenever the cloud stopped, the people stopped, and whenever the cloud lifted, the people of God moved, but when they came to the Jordan River, as they prepared to enter the promised land, God changed the rules. As the Israelites gathered along the banks of the Jordan River, this time God said,

“When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river" (Joshua 3:8).

And so, I want you to imagine today that you are standing on the bank of the Jordan River with Joshua. No longer are we just waiting on God to perform a miracle, but now we are called to work with him in the miracle. You and I have to step in the river, we need to have the faith to get our feet wet so that we have the opportunity to be part of this miracle.

Now, let’s fast forward almost 1300 years to the time when Jesus met his disciples after his resurrection and told them to go into all the world and preach the gospel, baptizing those who believe and teaching them to obey his commands. He then follows up that command with these words recorded in Matthew chapter 28, verse 20,

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

In other words, he says, “You go first and then I’m going to come with you.” First comes the command to go and then the promise that he would always be with us.

This is important for us to understand because I’ve heard so many people shift the responsibility for revival in their lives, their ministry, or their church on to God. They say, “Well, the Holy Spirit just wasn’t moving in church today,” but we can’t blame the Holy Spirit for our experience in worship, our effectiveness in ministry, or the sanctity of our home because we share the responsibility with God.

You see, if revival depended solely on God, every church and every community would have it, but the truth is the responsibility for revival is not on God or me, the responsibility is ours. The Bible says this is good and pleases…

“God our Savior who wants all (people) to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

And so, God doesn’t just blindly pick a church for revival, he’s not playing lottery with revival, the responsibility for revival in this church and in our community is on us. The Bible says that God wants all people to be saved, and so the will of God is for all people to come to know him. Therefore, the reason why we’re not seeing revival in our community is because it’s not our will. In other words, it’s more of an ideology, we believe in the great commission, we pray for revival, but it’s not really our will because we’re not witnessing and sharing the gospel like we should.

You see, we share the responsibility for revival with God. And so, when the salvation of the lost becomes your will, your greatest passion, and your desire, as you step out, as you step into it, God begins to move. We can see this partnership with God in Mark chapter 16 where the Bible tells us…

“Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it” (Mark 16:20).

In other words, they spoke, they preached, they went out and used their mouths, and the Lord confirmed his word, he confirmed what they said with supernatural signs that accompanied it. The Bible says that the Lord worked with them, and so we’re partners, you’re not the boss, God doesn’t work for you, he works with you. That’s what Jesus said, when you go, when you step out in faith,

“Surely, I will be with you (Matthew 28:20).

You see, God’s power is already connected to us, because we work in partnership with him, and as we go, he will confirm his word by the signs that accompany it.

Today, there are some of us that have been waiting on God for revival, but God is waiting on us. You and I are like a faucet in the house, the water is already there, but there won’t be one drop in the sink until you reach out and open the faucet. And so, if you’re a Christian, the Holy Spirit has already been connected to your house, you are the temple of the Holy Spirit, because God has already poured out his Holy Spirit on the Church. And today your responsibility, your assignment, is to take your hands and open the faucet, open the faucet in your own house, in your temple, and let the living water of the Holy Spirit flow. You see, God is ready to send revival but he’s waiting on us to preach the gospel, he’s waiting for us to declare the power of God to heal the sick and cast out demons in Jesus’ name. God is waiting for us to step out in faith, to step into the living water, and to open our mouths and declare what the prophets have said.

If you want to see the power of God in your life, seeing revival in your family, seeing revival in your church, and seeing revival in your community, you’re going to have to open the faucet. You’re going to have to let the living water of the Holy Spirit flow and you’re going to have to step down into the flow. If you want to see the power of God moving, if you want to see the supernatural, you’re going to have to get wet, you’re going to have to step into the flow, but it’s your choice, it’s your will.

It’s not God’s responsibility to bring revival, revival in the church is not my responsibility, but if you are willing, revival is our responsibility. And I wonder if every member of our church lived like you do, if everyone in the church fasted as often as you fast, prayed like you prayed, and read the Bible as often as you do, would this church experience revival? This is something that I personally consider regularly because I can’t expect revival out of you until I expect revival out of me. Revival can only happen through us when it has first taken place in us. It’s only as we have revival in our personal lives that it will spill over into our church, our neighborhood, our families and our marriages.

Last week we saw the people of God coming into the promised land and how God taught them the importance of giving the first. Today we looked back as Israel came to the Jordan River and we see how God told them not to wait for him but to step in first. And this is where you and I are today, God wants us to take a risk, to step out in faith, to step into the flow, and as I was thinking about this, I realized this wasn’t the only important instance when someone stepped down into the Jordan River. Israel’s experience was merely a foreshadowing of something so much greater.

It’s the same river, but two different scenarios, and in the first Joshua tells us that the priests stood in the Jordan with the ark, with the presence of God on their shoulders. And now, Mark tells us about the experience of Jesus and his cousin, who we know as John the Baptist. The Bible says,

“Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan” (Mark 1:9).

These two men, one a prophet, and the other our great high priest, both were born of water, now they’re outside of the womb, and they come back down into the water together.

Jesus comes down to the Jordan River to be baptized, he gets in the flow, he goes under, and the Bible says,

“As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove” (Mark 1:10).

My prayer is that many of you would decide to get into the water, that you would get into the flow of what God is wanting to do in your life. But it’s up to you, you’ve got to turn the faucet on, you’ve got to get into the flow, because God is not going to push you in. You’ve got to step into the water, he’s not going to send a tsunami, but by an act of your will, and in a demonstration of faith, you have to step down into the water and watch the Holy Spirit meet you there.

I pray that the living water of the Holy Spirit would flow through this place today until sick people started getting healed by the power of his presence. I pray that the flow or the current of the Spirit of God would move with such force in this place, in such a torrent, that those who are hurting, fearful, and depressed would have their minds uplifted by the mighty power of Jesus. And God can do it now, he can do it suddenly, because as the Israelites came to the shore of the Jordan River, the Lord said to Joshua, “Today!”

"Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river" (Joshua 3:7-8).

This time they weren’t about to make the mistake they made before, they weren’t sending spies into the land, and they weren’t doubting the promise of God to be with them. You see, many of them recognized that they couldn’t do another lap around the desert, they were too old to be around the water and not get in the flow this time.

There are some of you that God is calling out of the crowd to come down into the water. Some of you have been through too much not to get into the flow, you can’t afford to sit there any longer, you’ve been under attack for too long, you’ve got a breakthrough to fight for. And so, whatever it takes, you’re going all the way down, you’re getting in the flow, you want to be saturated, you want to get soaked, you want to be overwhelmed in the flow of God’s presence. Today you’ve got to step down into the river, you’ve got to get wet, you’ve got to get in the flow of the Holy Spirit.

You see, this is important, because everything God will do is done through water. In fact, before God created anything on earth the Bible says,

“The earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (Genesis 1:2).

Even our own bodies are made up of 60% water, and so from the creation of man to the womb of a mother, from the Red Sea to the Jordan River, from the side of Jesus there has always been this flow of water.

The Bible says that as Jesus was hung high on that cross at Calvary,

“One of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water” (John 19:34).

There is a flow coming from God, a river flowing in your direction, and you can choose to get in or you can choose to stay out, but the Bible says,

“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells” (Psalms 46:4).

And so, I wonder who wants to step into the river, who wants to step into his presence this morning, into the anointing, into the flow of the Spirit that is happening in this place? Some of you may be sitting around your kitchen table or in your living room, but Jesus said it this way,

“Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14).

Now, I lead you to the water, but I can’t make you drink, you’ve got to turn on the faucet, you’ve got to taste and see, you’ve got to be willing to step into the water.

In one moment, Jesus went from being just another face in the crowd until every eye was on him as he stepped down into the Jordan River where he was baptized. He got down into the flow, he was soaked, he was saturated, he was overwhelmed by the presence of the Holy Spirit. And when he stepped out of that river he was prepared for the fight, having girded his waist with the truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod his feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which he was able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one” (Ephesians 6:14-16, NKJV). You see, God did not send him into the wilderness until he anointed him in the Jordan. He didn’t begin his ministry, he didn’t receive power until he stepped into the water and the Holy Spirit came on him.

In the same way, God wants to anoint you for the battle, that’s why you’ve got to step down into the water, stepping down into the river, lifting your hands and receiving his presence and his power. You see, you didn’t get here by yourself, you can’t do this by yourself, and you can’t stay here by yourself because you can’t survive by yourself. Some of you today need to step into the flow, you’ve got to step into the water because,

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you…" (Acts 1:8).

And you need power, but you’re going to have to step into it, you’re going to have to get in the flow.

In the same way, Israel needed courage to face the challenges of the promised land, the first challenge was to cross the swollen Jordan River in flood stage. And so, I want you to notice what they did, the priests put the ark of the covenant on their shoulders, the ark being symbolic of the presence of God, and they stepped into the water. The Bible says,

“As soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water’s edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away…” (Joshua 3:15-16).

And so, what the priests put on their shoulders, wasn’t the weight of an impossibility, it wasn’t that problem, that doctors report, that thing that you’re struggling with. It was the weight of the presence of God, it was the ark of God, and some of you have to put something different on your shoulders today. You see, the Israelites didn’t know how they were going to cross the river, they didn’t know how to conquer this obstacle, but they trusted God and did what he said.

“The priests who carried the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything the Lord had commanded Joshua was done by the people, just as Moses had directed Joshua” (Joshua 4:10).

You see, when the ark, the presence of God is on your shoulders, you’re finally able to stand. When you’re going through a heartbreak, a challenging relationship, an abusive situation, something very difficult, you don’t carry its weight. When you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you walk with the presence of God on your shoulders, because as a child of God you’ve been called to conquer it. That’s why the Bible says,

“In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

You see, you can be victorious in all these things as you walk in the presence of God because when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you’re able to overcome every problem. That’s why Jesus promised his followers,

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you…" (Acts 1:8).

And so, when the mountains seem too high, the river too wide, and the waters are moving too quickly, you can be confident, you can be strong and courageous, because God said,

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you” (Isaiah 43:1-2).

As we step into the living waters of God’s presence, shouldering his presence, pursuing him, pressing into him, he takes away all of our fears.

You see, God’s presence changes us, not only is the power of God sufficient to restore the broken pieces, but he has the power to make sure that your future is not a reflection of your past. God goes far beyond that; in fact his power is enough to redeem the pain of the past itself. And this happens as we press into God like never ever before, stepping down into the river, stepping into the flow, all the while keeping our eyes on Jesus. But we’ve got to learn how to constantly look at Jesus and only occasionally glance at our problems or our circumstances. You see, it’s that focus that reveals what you believe and what you value the most. And so, whenever you feel overwhelmed and fearful you need to remember that you’re carrying something that he never intended for you to carry. You want to shoulder his presence because the Bible says,

“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Tim 1:7 NKJV).

That is God’s life for you and I believe that some of you are going to begin to experience that today. God has been with you, he’s been with your family, he’s been with this church, and he will never leave you or forsake you. Let’s pray together, seeking his presence, seeking his glory, and letting the glory of God rest on us right now.

Pastor John Talcott

Christ’s Community Church

303 West Lincoln Avenue

Emmitsburg, MD 21727

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(301) 447-4224

[www.cccaog.org](http://www.cccaog.org)

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