

Believe God's Word in Your Heart and Confess it with Your Mouth by Zac Poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2009

## Believe God's Word in Your Heart and Confess it with Your Mouth

by Zac Poonen

The Lord told Joshua: "Be strong and courageous and be careful to do everything that is written in God's word. Don't turn to the left or the right" (Joshua 1:7). If God's Word says, "Sin shall not have the mastery over you," (Rom.6:14), believe it and confess it. Don't turn to the left or the right. That means: Don't reduce the breadth of that promise. Don't reduce it to include only some sins. At the same time, don't make it to mean more than what it says. Don't say that we can be as perfect as Christ was, on this earth. We cannot be sinlessly perfect on this earth. That is not what that promise says. It is referring only to victory over what we know to be sin (conscious sin). We can be fully like Christ only when He returns. 1 John 3:2 is very clear on that. So let's not go beyond Scripture, and let's not believe less than what Scripture promises.

Becoming like Christ can be compared to occupying the whole land of Canaan or to climbing a very high mountain. When we are converted, our sins are forgiven and our past is blotted out. But we are still enslaved by many sins. We could compare it to coming to the foot of this mountain. Then we begin to climb this mountain. The top of the mountain is perfect likeness to Christ. We will reach there only when Christ returns. But we don't have to live at the foot of the mountain - defeated by sin - perpetually. No. The Bible says, "Let us press on to perfection" (Heb.6:1). We are exhorted in 2 Corinthians 7:1 to "perfect holiness in the fear of God." We should not be afraid of the word, "perfection". We must press on to it. Paul said towards the end of his life, "I have not yet reached the top. But I am pressing on" (Phil.3:12-14). The Lord is now saying to many of us, "You have stayed at the foot of this mountain long enough. Now climb it. Press on." So let's not turn to the left or to the right.

"This book of God's word shall not depart from your mouth" (Joshua 1:8). We should have God's word in our heart. Here we see that we also need to have it in our mouth. We must confess the promises of God's Word with our mouths. The trouble with many Christians today is that they are confessing the things they are lusting after. They say, "I confess that I will get a large house. I confess that I will get a better job. I confess that I will get a good car"!! Instead of confessing all that, let us confess God's Word: "Lord, I confess that I will overcome anger. I confess that I will overcome lusting with my eyes completely. I confess that I will overcome the love of money." These are the things that we should be confessing with our mouths. But the Devil doesn't want us to confess these. And so he makes us confess our lust for material things.

You can't build the church with people who are interested in material things. You can build the church only with people who are interested in heavenly things and a godly life. Don't attract the wrong type of people to your church by offering people earthly prosperity. Does God's word promise you that He will give you a house or a car? No. God's Word promises that you can overcome sin, that you can come into a life where you rejoice in the Lord always - 24 hours a day - without being depressed, discouraged or defeated - always triumphant, always rejoicing and always giving thanks, in everything and for all people. This is the new covenant life (Canaan's land flowing with milk and honey) that the Bible promises. Confess it then and say, "Lord, this is the life I want to live all my days."

That's the life I wanted to live, when I was a young Christian and saw what the Bible offered me. But when I looked at the Christian leaders around me, I saw that they were defeated by sin. So I said, "Lord, I don't want to judge them. That's not my business. But I don't want to look at them as my examples either. I want to look at God's Word alone. I want to look only at Your promises. I want to look at Jesus as my only Example." I was defeated for many years as a believer. But once I saw my inheritance in Christ, I kept on confessing the promises of God in Scripture - that promised me a life of constant joy and constant victory. God finally gave me the desire of my heart. That is how I want to live now, and that is how I want to live when I am 70, when I am 80 and when I am 90 - until the end of my life.

So don't let God's promises depart from your mouth. If you preach this message, you may find at times that you are a lone voice for God in the midst of popularity-seeking preachers. Don't get discouraged. God will stand by you until the end.

Joshua was commanded to meditate on God's Word day and night. We are not to meditate on the need of the heathen. That looks like a good thing to meditate on. But you can't help those heathen, if you don't meditate on God's Word day and night. God promised Joshua both prosperity and success, if he did that (Joshua 1:8). The real "prosperity gospel" is o

ne where our lives become prosperous and successful in a heavenly and spiritual way. 'Prosperity and success' are the two things that everyone in the world seeks for. But they don't seek for these in the way God says in Joshua 1:8.