

# "THE OTHER SIDE OF LIFE"

Text: Mark 4:35

SERMON by the Rev. Arthur W. Rich  
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Favorite words on the lips of Jesus were "Let us go on." For example, in Mark 1:38, we hear Him say: "Let us go into the next towns." Jesus refused to be localized. He was not satisfied to preach and to heal in one place. He always followed the road to a larger world. He had a keen sense of horizons.

So often a local situation has a way of saying: "Stay here". These words came to Simon Peter on the Mt. of Transfiguration. He must have thought within himself: "This is good. We like it here. Here we have a sure thing. Why take any risks?"

Two of the simplest, but profoundest lines in all of poetry were written by Josephine Peabody in her poem, The House and the Road.

The little Road says Go.  
The little House says Stay.

In a real sense, every Christian has to say: "Let us go on. We must keep our hearts and our minds in motion. Constantly we must push on to the next challenge. That is why I feel that this church must consider more building. Even then, we will only be answering the call of Jesus: "Let us go on."

"Let us go on" is the spirit of the missionary advance of Christianity Paul carried the gospel to the great nerve centers of his world, and at the same time dreamed of "going to Spain." (Romans 15:24) Missionaries going to new work have a desire to "sail beyond the sunset."

Don't you dare limit Christ to Lakeland, to Florida or to the United States. You can't put man-made boundaries around the boundless Word of God. You can't shut Christ up in "some little prison of border, breed or birth." When Christ says: "Let us go on", there is only one proper answer: "Lead on O King Eternal."

This morning I am dealing with another great saying from the lips of our Lord. "Let us pass over to the other side." These words, it seems to me, have great spiritual significance.

## I. LET US PASS OVER FROM FEAR TO FAITH.

We live in a world of fear. Someone has said that fear is a mental blight, a moral mildew, and an intellectual poison. Fear is the central problem of life. So many face the fear of inadequacy, the fear of disease, the fear of insecurity, and even the fear of the unknown.

Jesus refused to live on the side of fear. There were many things that could have made him afraid.

### 1. The size of his task.

Suppose you realized that the whole world was involved in what you did, waiting on you to succeed or fail in your life's mission, could there not be the possibility of fear?

### 2. The strength of the adversary.

We make light of the Devil. Some even claim that he does not exist.

If he doesn't exist, I surely would like to know who is doing his job for him. Jesus knew how strong was his adversary.

### 3. Another thing that could have made him afraid was **the scope of his death**.

In that death he was to bear the sin of the world. Surely knowing all things he must have known that one day he would hang on a cross, and that for a period of time a Holy God would turn his back on his Son, the sin-bearer. For a period of time he would suffer all the pangs of Hell, which come from separation from God. No wonder he would cry out: "My God, My God, why has thou forsaken me?"

Yet Jesus passed over from fear to faith. So his followers must pass over from fear to faith. You and I need to learn the truth that Timothy learned from the Apostle Paul: "God hath not given us the spirit of fear." 2 Tim. 1:7. Paul understood that there were many things to make Timothy afraid. He was undertaking an apparently hopeless task. Surely he may have feared failure. He was following the Lord Jesus who had been crucified by imperial power. Furthermore, he was following in the steps of Paul, going to the same places wherein Paul faced stoning and every kind of persecution.

But God has not given us the spirit of fear. Your fear didn't come from God. But God has given us the spirit of "power, and of love and of a sound mind." God has given us the power, the boldness and confidence, which comes from a faith as contrasted with timidity. God has given us the love, which, having surrendered to God's care, is willing "to trust Him. God has given us the sound mind, which literally means "self-control".

All of the gifts of God are associated with the Holy Spirit who comes to strengthen us. Some people think of the gifts of the Spirit as mere ecstatic emotion. To Paul, the Spirit was more than the King James term, "Comforter". The word translated "Comforter" means literally, "one called alongside to help." Some people do not need sympathy as much as they need strengthening and encouraging.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to convey adequacy to meet life effectively. Fear is often the evidence of inner weakness, self-centeredness, and an undisciplined mind. The Holy Spirit came to say to each of us: "If you have committed your life to Christ. Trust Him. Nothing can happen to you that He does not know about."

Someone has said that faith is fear that has said its prayers. Gwynn Day tells of a woman who had just undergone an experience that would have terrified most people. A maniac entered her home, attacked her husband, and banged loudly and wildly on the piano. She hurried downstairs to find this madman bending over her husband who lay on the floor. The madman was startled as she appeared, and threw up his hands, though she carried no weapon.

"I had no fear. I felt that the Lord was near." She said later. "I wasn't afraid, and I had no repulsion as I took that man's hand and said, 'Come with me'. His face lit up and he became as gentle as a lamb."

It is amazing in the New Testament how a group of disciples, once fearful and cringing, became bold and daring for Christ. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John they (their enemies) took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

## **II. LET US PASS OVER FROM DEFEAT TO VICTORY.**

My soul has been blessed as I have been reading Alan Redpath's book, *Victorious Christian Service*, based upon the experiences of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah faced the scorn and derision of both Sanballat and Tobiah the Ammonite. Alan Redpath says: "When a Christian dares to say that the only hope of the world is the Gospel of God's redeeming grace, the whole force of modern civilization lines up against him, as if to say: You with your feeble little prayer meetings. You with your silly little plan of getting people converted one by one. How can you possibly stand alongside our great socialized economic program, which can revolutionize the world in a few years? You "feeble little lot!"

Even today much scorn is faced. The scorn of a husband who sneers at his wife who received Christ and wants to live for His glory. The scorn of a father and mother who are willing to bribe a teacher for a better grade, but can't understand their youngster who wants to live a dedicated life. Or the scorn of the carnal Christian Who thinks the man who goes to church for Sunday School, morning worship, evening worship and Wednesday night bible study a is just "fanatical and extreme."

Dr. Redpath in dealing with Nehemiah's overcoming calls attention to three things:

1. A mind to work
2. A heart to pray and
3. An eye to watch.

Nehemiah and the people had "a mind to work". They did not press the panic button. They just kept on building the wall. They kept on working. They did not mope over their difficulties, they didn't find fault with each other. They simply did what God had called them to do.

There is a delightful little morsel in Nehemiah 3:5. "Next to them the Tekoites repaired, but their nobles put not their necks to the work of the Lord." A few of them weren't willing to work. They may even have been willing to give, but not to work. I am grateful for everyone who gives to this church, but if you are physically able to work in this church, you can't discharge your responsibilities no matter how much you give.

The people had a heart to pray. The way to cross over from defeat to victory is to pray. Some of us are defeated because we neglect to pray. Have you ever noticed, if you forget to pray, or feel you have no time to pray, how irritable and critical we get? Jesus overcame because he faced the supreme battle of Calvary with the preparation of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

"Nehemiah and the people had an eye to watch. They set up a watch against them day and night." Nehemiah was so practical. Some people are so heavenly minded that they are of no earthly use. While they worked, while they prayed, they maintained a watch. Oh, that you and I might ask Christ to serve as the Sentry outside our lives. He will never go to sleep on the job.

What did Paul mean when he said: "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."( Phil. 1:7) The expression shall keep is a military term, and means to garrison, to stand guard, to serve as sentry.

With a mind to work, a heart to pray, and an eye to watch, we, too, can pass over from defeat to victory.

### **III. LET US PASS OVER FROM INDIFFERENCE TO CONCERN.**

The Devil does many things to hurt the church. He does enjoy doing anything that will hurt that which is close to God. Why did he cause men to sin? Because he knew that man was dear to God, and man's disobedience would hurt God. Why does Satan hate the church and seek to hurt it? Because the church is dear to the heart of the Son of God 'who loved the church and gave his life for it.

The devil loves to start a church quarrel. When the Jerusalem church was growing, despite even the persecution, which Satan fomented, the devil tried to hurt the church by starting a quarrel in the church. Some began to murmur over the neglect of certain widows and in a little while the church had a quarrel on its hands. Only the selection of the first deacons poured oil on the troubled waters. Perhaps that is why, in my judgment, the greatest characteristic of a good deacon is that he is a peacemaker.

Another way that the devil tries to hurt the church is to make church members stumble. This is often a favorite way the devil has to keep the lost from Christ. One day a church member stumbles. He takes God's name in vain. An unsaved man overhears and says to himself: "There is a Christian for you." If he is a sample of Christianity, I want none of it." Let me say in passing, to any unsaved man listening; don't let a hypocrite keep you from God. If you hide behind anything you have to be smaller than the object behind which you hide. If you hide behind a hypocrite, you are smaller than he is~ There will always be those who are not what they should be. When Little Red Riding Hood went to grandma's house, she saw someone in bed dressed in grandma's nightgown and cap, but underneath there was a big bad wolf. Sometimes the devil puts on a good appearance, but underneath he is still the big bad wolf. But don't you stumble over anyone who claims to be a Christian. And, to every church member here I would say: "Don't let Satan make a stumbling block out of you."

As much as Satan uses church quarrels and hypocrites, he uses more effectively something" else. He just makes Christians indifferent. There are many church members who would never lend themselves to church dissension or to a bad example, but they are often indifferent to the needs of the world, to the multitude of lost all around us, to the many opportunities for service.

Have you ever read: "THE MAN WHO PLAYED GOD"? It is an interesting story of a pianist who many years ago was touring Europe, and was playing before the King. Someone threw a bomb towards the king, and in the explosion the pianist was rendered as deaf forever. For a while the pianist was bitter. God does not care for me, or else he would have prevented this, which interferes with the music I love so much. But he learned to read lips. Often he loved to look out the window from his room overlooking Central Garden.

One day he saw a young couple. The young man's lips were read as he said: "We can never marry. The Doctor says I have T. B. If I could go off to the mountains I could recover. But that 'would cost a thousand dollars." Again despairingly he said: " God, help me." A few moments later, as the couple walked from the Park, the pianist who had read the lips of despair met them and handed to the young man a check for \$1,000.00. How amazed that young man must have been. One moment in despair he asks for God's help. The next moment, he receives in answer to his prayer, a check .for his needs. You see the deaf man who read the lips, was playing God. Oh, that you and I might be men and Women who will play God and be concerned about the needs of others. Thus we will pass over from in-difference to concern!