

How to Go On When You Can't **by Lester Roloff**

A test of a Christian's character is what he does after he comes to the blockade in the road and what his attitude is after everything has left him except Jesus. You will never know down here that Christ is all you need until Christ is all you have left. You will never be able to tell the world for sure that He will do in a crisis unless you learn how to live in a crisis. In this message we are going to walk with men in the crises of life. God is going to prove to us that He is sufficient to see every child He has through. When it gets so hard that you and I cannot live for Christ down here, by His grace, He will grab us up and take us Home. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20), and that's the Holy Spirit.

The question is, as a Christian, how far are you willing to go after you cannot go any further? What are you willing to do after you reach the place where you can do exactly nothing?

The children of God came to a tragic place in their lives and they were doing just like people today-- blaming God, blaming the servant of God, and they are standing at an impossible place. They have reached the Red Sea. That old Red Sea is raging, those old waves are rolling and those mountains are defying them to climb either one on either side. All of a sudden, when they got quiet enough to quit murmuring and complaining, they heard the wheels turning. Old Pharaoh's chariots and soldiers by the thousands are coming and the children of Israel have reached the end of the trail. It's all over. What can they do? They can't go forward, they can't go to the left or he right, and they sure dare not go back. There they are, hemmed up. The flesh never likes to be hemmed up. But when it gets hemmed up real good, many times it will lean on the Spirit. As long as the flesh has a strong lean-on, it will never depend on the Spirit.

Here Moses is with all the children of Israel. Now, let's take a look at them and see what happens. Beginning at Exodus 14:10: "And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them, and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?... For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." The truth of the whole matter is that he didn't bring them out there to die. That was some of their fear and doubt. Moses said unto the people, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day." Do you know how Moses got rid of the fear of his people. He spoke that fear out. Do you know how preachers can stop the fear of his people? He can preach it out of them, and preach faith into them. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of

God." Romans 10:17. This generation has no more need to be afraid than the last one. We're having a hard time getting this generation still enough to see anything. I see no hope for a revival among God's people today. They are so enamored and so cluttered up with Hollywood and newspapers and magazines and parties and bowling alleys and camping trips and everything else. How in the world are they going to get still long enough to see anything from God?

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me, speak...!" Speak your way across the Red Sea. Preach your way across the Red Sea. Preach your way through the difficulties. Preach victory into the souls of your people. That's it! When we forget how to preach, we forget how to get people saved. God's preachers have but one thing to do, and that's to preach His Word. "The Lord shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace. And the Lord said unto Moses,... speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: But lift thou up thy rod, and take the power." It's not enough to just talk about it, you've got to have the power to go with it. The rod has to go with the preaching. That's the Holy Spirit. That's what he got out there at the burning bush. "But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it." The rod always divides. It will divide the sheep from the goats. It will divide the carnal from the spiritual. "And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh.. and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen,... And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them." Notice, it was the angel of God. I thought I heard some poor misunderstanding church member or Christian say, " Brother Roloff, if we had an angel like that, we'd make it too." I have good news for you. We DO have an angel. We have the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. "It went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them."

They're going to get some real backing, aren't they! "And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night." Think about that! An angel came to be the night watchman for God's children. He said, "Go on to bed now. There's no need of all of us staying awake all night. I'll watch." Wouldn't it be something if God's people knew that we have protection today. "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea... And the Egyptians pursued and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked

unto the host of the Egyptians..." (That's when God wore glasses!) He looked through the pillar of fire and a cloud. His glasses were made out of fire and the clouds. Are you listening? I believe the Lord still looks at His children through the fire. The fire is the Word of God. The cloud is the Holy Spirit. He still looks at His children through the Word of God and through the Holy Spirit. I'm glad He does. The only way I can see Him is through the fire and through the clouds. There is no other way. It's a revelation, not an explanation.

Notice what happened. It gave light by night. Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. "It came to pass that in the morning watch the Lord looked through the pillar of fire and the cloud and troubled the hosts of the Egyptians and took off their chariot wheels." You'd say, "Brother Roloff, that sounds like a miracle!" That's exactly what it was! "And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen: And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea... Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore." It reminds me of what the Psalmist said in chapter 37, verse 35-36, "I have seen the wicked in great power... Yet he passed away." Christians ought to outlive their enemies. We ought to be here, and I don't mean just physically. I don't believe you can kill a Christian. My work is going to follow after me and yours is going to follow after you. Dear friend, I'm going to have about the same kind of works that follow after me that I had with me while I lived. There's no other way. Whether you like it or don't like it, if you live rotten, you are going to have some rotten works follow you.

What are you going to do when you can't do and where are you going when you can't go? That's the question. How far will you go after you've been stopped? After you've had a deadlock on you? How far will you go from there?

I'm thinking of another instance of Moses, when he stood on the hill and raised up his hands. As long as those hands were held up, the people of God got the victory. I still believe that's true with our preachers. Sometimes it becomes necessary for somebody to come help him hold up those hands. I believe that when the battle was done and the victory was won, that Aaron and Hur got a good deal of credit for the victory, because they held up his hands. We're running short on preachers, but we're also running short of Aarons and Hurs today. I thank God for the many Aarons and Hurs who have lifted up my hands through these many years. It is an impossible task to do what God tells us to do apart from the help of others who believe alike and who will share and care and pray.

Joshua was fighting and victory was being won and the enemy was being pushed back, but Joshua looked over at the Western horizon and saw the sun going down. Joshua looked around in the midst of bloodshed and clanging of swords and spears

and marching soldiers and the shouting of the victory, and he knew that he and his army couldn't fight in the dark. God's people are children of the day and not of the night. I think Joshua never did lose step and never missed a command. He said, "Sun, stand thou still." Think about it. The universe stood still! Even if you don't believe it, that doesn't keep it from being so. Don't you know the enemy got confused and said, "Man, this is the longest day I ever saw." They were going under fast but Joshua was moving! I believe that God gave added strength to the children of Israel to fight another 24 hours. There is no need asking God for a longer day if you're not going to ask Him for more strength. They had to have a lot of strength to keep on fighting until the victory came. But here's the lesson. God will give you plenty of light and plenty of strength until you've won the battle that He has told you to fight for Him.

Joshua, after he had been stopped, marched on to victory, crossed the Jordan and marched seven times around the walls of Jericho and took it. Why? Because he went on after he couldn't go.

There were four lepers out there at a little leper colony by themselves, dying, hungry, starving. They were in the midst of a great famine and the children of Israel were all starving. One of them said, "Listen, why sit we here until we die?" Another one may have said, "What else can we do?" He said, "We can get on the move. I don't know about you fellows, but when I die, I'll die on the move. I'm going somewhere." "Where are you going?" "I'm going into the city. That's where the provisions are." God honored that old leper's faith and he inspired faith in the other three. Those four lepers started walking along the road and God looked down on them and said, "If that's not faith!" He brought so much confusion to that whole bunch of Assyrians and scared them plumb out of town. They left so fast they dropped their shirts and ran out of their shoes, left the horses and left the tables were spread and the least was waiting. Think about it! Why? Because somebody said, "We are not at the end of the trail. This is just the bend in the trail. We're going on." And these four lepers marched on to victory.

Elijah fell down under the juniper tree and said, "Lord, I've had it. This is it! I spent three and a half years out there at the brook. I went up there and we had a great demonstration. You know the fire came down and the great rain broke that three and a half year drought, and now that woman called Jezebel is on my trail. I've had it. Just let me die. I can't go any further." The Lord said, "That's what you think. I'm going to feed you up a little bit and you're going another few miles. I have another preacher boy down there. He's a plow boy now, but he's going to be a preacher boy before it's over. I want you to go down and put your mantle on him. I don't want your mantle to wind up under a juniper tree. It might be all right to just kind of pass under the juniper tree, but it's a sorry thing to lay down and go to sleep under it." Elijah said, "I can't go any further. I'm weary with the struggle" and the Lord said "I can put some strength in you" and He did.

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God's not dead today. He's more alive than ever. In fact, He is the only one who is alive.

Job is at the end of the trail. Ten children have been buried. He lost all the property he had, all of his servants and his health. He was depressed and sick and weary and bankrupt, and even his wife which was the last friend he had in the world said, "Why don't you curse God and die. You know you can't go any further." Then three fair-weather friends showed up and sat there and stared at him for seven days. When they did talk, they said the wrong thing. The Bible says "In all this, Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." Job 1:22. He looked up and said, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." He also said "...when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Job didn't turn back from the commandment of God's lips, but he esteemed the Word more than his necessary food. When you read the last few chapters, you'll find the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends. He came out with twice as much as he ever had before.

Are you going to go on when you can't? Are you going to do when you can't? God said, "I'll fix it where you can."

There were many others, but one last thought, and this is always the top of the truth. The climax of every message is Jesus. Jesus fell on His face in the garden of Gethsemane, and it looks like He said, "Father, this is it. Could you let this cup pass from me? I don't see how I'm going to ever make it." What was wrong with Him? A breaking heart. Dear friend, spiritual heart trouble is the worst thing you'll ever have. Jesus, as He was going up the hill, fell beneath the load. Loss of blood, breaking of heart, weary in body, blind from his own blood that came from a crown of thorns. And Jesus said "I can't make it any further." Yet He climbed on up to Calvary and stretched out his arms as he hung on the cross, and said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He went on when He couldn't go on. He finished it when He couldn't, but He did.