

## CONQUERED BY GOD

The following is a summary of a sermon given by Bob Morton

Brethren, we must become converted - that is change from what we are and become something totally different....Now to accomplish this brethren, a certain attitude is required if we're going to put sin out of our lives. Jesus Christ talked about this kind of attitude in a number of parables but I want to pick two to start off with.

In Matthew 13:44 Christ talked about a man who happened to be walking through a field one day and his foot struck something and he fell over. As he got up and he saw a glint and started to remove the turf and the grass he found something and this is what Christ said about him in this verse, 'And again the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and when he found it he hid it again and for joy for what he found he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.' You see, brethren, here is a man who discovered something that was so infinitely priceless to him, so valuable that he decided to buy that field so that he might have it.

The hidden treasure what s talking about here, of course, is the knowledge of the truth, the calling God has given us, the goal and the purpose of human life and He says our reaction needs to be the same joy and the same excitement by which we are willing to go and give everything up we have for what God is giving us and again in the second paragraph in verse 45 He says this, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls who when he found a pearl of great price.'

Now I was reading a story about pearls, about how they were produced today and in olden times and the story took you back to the days of the ancient Arab Middle East traders who traded down along the African coast and the coast of the Persian Gulf where pearls were discovered and it told of the great excitement of the pearl market where pearl traders would sit around and haggle over for hours and hours, sometimes over just one pearl in fact, a perfectly formed pearl of a certain size and a certain lustre was one of the most valuable things a human being could stumble over and here is a story of a trader who knew pearls - he knew what was valuable and one day he spied one in someone's hand at an auction market he decided that it was so beautiful that he wanted to possess it, not just as an investment - he just wanted it to be his own. He considered it to be so beautiful and so priceless that 'he went and sold all that he had and he bought it.'

**In these two parables an attitude is being described, an attitude of an overwhelming desire to possess and have what they had found and what Jesus is telling us here is that the kingdom of God is just like that and that our desire to be there in the kingdom of God needs to be just the same. It needs to be a very powerful, overwhelming desire.**

Jesus Christ has set us a goal. He has offered us something that is so infinitely priceless and so precious that our attitude needs to be the same attitude you find depicted in these two parables. In fact, Christ told each of us what that goal is in Matthew 5:48. You see these two men had to go and sell everything they had for what they had discovered.

Well, we also have to do something in order to have and achieve what is offering us. And so in verse 48 He tells us what it is we must do. He says, 'Therefore you shall become perfect just as your Father in heaven is perfect.' You see, brethren, this is the goal He has set for us. It is the goal of becoming perfect like God.

**Now in order to do this we must develop God's holy righteous character, a character that wants to live by God's holy, righteous, spiritual law and brethren this is what we must achieve, not alone, not without the help of God but it is something we must achieve if we're going to qualify for the single most important thing we can do in this life - that is to enter into the Kingdom of God at the return of Jesus Christ and brethren this is something we are told to seek, to seek earnestly, to seek diligently and to seek first and foremost in our lives above every other thing.**

Let's go to the next chapter in verse 33 where Christ says, 'Seek first.' Now, brethren, that means seek it ahead of everything else, put it first in your life, put it foremost in your life, make it the thing that you sacrifice everything for, do this ahead of everything. He says, 'Seek first the kingdom of God' and then He tells us how to do this by seeking first 'His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.' In other words Christ will give us the kingdom of God and we will qualify for the kingdom of God and enter that kingdom at Christ's return.

Brethren, if we are going to qualify then this must be our primary goal in life above everything else and unless it does then we have no guarantee we'll be there. Let's look back in Matthew, chapter 5 and in verse 6 where illustrates it over and over and over again in different ways, in ways we can grasp and understand.

**In Matthew, chapter 5 and verse 6 He puts it this way. He says, 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled.' Now the type of hungering and thirsting Jesus is talking about here is not the**

**way we feel after we've missed a meal, it's not the way we feel at the end of the day when we're about to sit down for dinner, it's not even the way we feel at the end of the day of Atonement, here He's talking about the type of hunger only a starving man knows and the type of thirst a man dying of thirst can possibly understand.**

He is talking about an intense, gnawing, aching, longing for God's righteousness, an intense desire to live God's way of life, to obey His laws and to acquire what He is offering us....

Now Jesus Christ takes this in the book of Luke in referring to one of these occasions which we've already read, He takes the coin over and contrasts in Luke, chapter 6, verse 25. Notice what He says in what appears to be a second version of the Sermon on the Mount but Luke adds one thing when He says, 'Woe to you who are full now for you shall hunger and woe to you who laugh now for you shall weep.' What did He mean brethren? Well, He meant woe to us if we're satisfied with what we have, woe to us if we're content with the way we are, woe to us if we don't intensely desire to live God's way of life and obey Him and woe to us if we're content to just cruise along and not put any pressure on ourselves.

He's saying we may live happily now but the day will come when we realize our lack. That day will be when God's people enter into the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ back in the book of Matthew illustrated even further in chapter 11, verse 12. Let's just look at a couple of more of these illustrating a kind of attitude we need to have to put sin out of our lives. Notice what He says here in Matthew 11, verse 12. 'And from the days of John the Baptist to now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and men of violence take it by force.' What did He mean? - That people were going to wrest the kingdom off God and possess it themselves? No, that's impossible. Those who do enter the kingdom, who are qualifying to enter the kingdom is for those who want it so much they're willing to fight for it, not fight Jesus Christ, not fight God but fight themselves, fight their own lack of desire, fight their own spiritual inertia.

**You see brethren these scriptures that I have read highlight something, they highlight what really is one of the chief causes of failure among God's people, one of the biggest barriers all of us face and that barrier is the barrier of not wanting it enough....**

**Now brethren, why is it we lack this desire that Jesus Christ is talking about. Well, the answer to that question is also the answer to why it is that we have so much trouble obeying God and putting sin out of our lives and after all isn't that what the Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about.**

It's about putting sin out of our lives. It's about coming out of this world's ways and there's a reason why we have so much difficulty putting sin out of our lives and it's the same reason why we lack the desire Jesus Christ is talking about him.

**There is a fundamental principle in God's word brethren that we all need to understand....That fundamental principle is the attitude described by Mr Armstrong so many times - the attitude of being conquered by God.**

What Mr Armstrong went through is what every single one of us must go through in order to begin to put sin out of our lives in any serious or real way. **You see Mr Armstrong described it again and again as being totally and completely crushed and conquered by God with his will being totally surrendered to God's will, with the vanity, with the spirit of resistance, with the desire for self will and independence completely crushed out of him.**

Now brethren, that is the attitude we all must come to before we can truly obey God and that is the attitude that is pictured and symbolized in the verses quoted before. It is the attitude of being conquered by the Creator of the universe.

Now what brethren do we mean by being conquered by God? Now that if we don't be careful can become a cliché that we use. **Now what do we mean by being conquered by God? To answer that question let's ask another question. What is God's attitude? Have you ever stopped to answer that? Does God really want to sin but because He has such great power He's able to resist it and He's so powerful that He doesn't give in? Is that what God's attitude is? No, that's not true.**

**You see brethren sin is absolutely abhorrent to God. God does not want to sin. God has no such desire to sin. God hates sin more than He hates anything else. God desires and loves holiness and righteousness. That's what He loves, that's what He desires and that's what He does. Now what about you?**

**Do you have the same attitude God has or do you find yourself wanting to be a part of this world? If you're a man do you find yourself wanting to look at women other than your wife or steal a glance at the pornography in the magazine rack or watch torrid bedroom scenes on TV and find yourself having to strive against that desire? Well brethren, if you do you have not been conquered by God. You don't have His attitude. You see the self will, the vanity, the resistance to God's will has never been crushed out of us, your will then has never been totally surrendered to God's will. And if that is the case you do not have the mind of Christ or the attitudes Christ described in the scriptures we read.**

**Now brethren, what I'm trying to say is this - we cannot want to sin even though we might strive to resist it.**

**We cannot want to sin and hunger and thirst for God's righteousness at the same time. We either have one attitude or we have the other. We cannot have both of them.**

Now the Bible illustrates this in many ways brethren and this is what I want to talk about this afternoon. I want to talk about what it means to be conquered by God because if we have not been completely and totally conquered by God then we're going to have great difficulty putting sin out of our lives. In fact, we may be able to stop smoking, start tithing, begin keeping the holy days and the Sabbath and do a number of things and resist and fight and strive against our desire to do those things and force ourselves to do right things and still not have the attitude God has.

Brethren, what is your attitude when you examined yourself before Passover? What did you find or what were you even looking for? Did you find an attitude that had been totally conquered by God? Did you find an attitude in which the self will, the vanity had been crushed? Did you find an attitude in which all desire for your own way has gone? Did you find an attitude that is earnestly hungering and thirsting for God's righteousness that wants to obey God's laws and wants to know what that law is, that wants to go as far as it possibly can in obedience to that law or on the other hand did you find a different attitude, an attitude that wants to get into the Kingdom of God but at the same time wants what this world has to offer, an attitude that wants eternal life but also wants to go as far as it possibly can in the wrong direction as God will allow?....

**Do you tithe because you have to or do you tithe because you have come to want to because it's a part of God's way of life and you want God's way of life? Do you give because you have to or give because you want to help others which is what tithing is all about?...**

Notice what Christ says in Matthew 6:22, 'The lamp of the body is the eye'. Now what is He referring to here? Well, if you put all the scriptures together on the subject you'll find the Bible uses the eye to symbolize the attitude of mind....He is saying 'if you're eye' or your attitude 'is good'....You see, God's way of life is not a smorgasbord. We can't want some of God's way and reject the rest. We've got to want it all. Christ says 'if you're attitude is good'....'your whole lives will be full of light.' Your lives will be full of spiritual light, with righteousness. You will want to go God's way. You will not want to sin. Sin will be absolutely abhorrent to you! You will hate sin like God hates sin!...In verse 23 he says 'but if you're eye is bad'. In other words if we have the attitude of wanting to go in the wrong direction

as far as you can but still be right with God, of maybe wanting to keep the letter of the law but not keep the spiritual intent of the law, He says 'if your eye is bad your whole body will be full of darkness'...

**You see...Christianity is not for those who are interested, it is not for those who just want to fellowship with those of like mind nor is it for those who are attracted to the teachings of the church. It is for those who want to live the way of life that God lives, the way of love, of outgoing concern for others. It is for those who want to live that way of life more than anything in their whole life....**

I want to illustrate this another way by a story I once heard about three men who applied for a chauffeur's job and their job was to be a chauffeur of a very important rich magnate and they called them all in one after another and tested them over and over again....and they came down to just three men. They'd eliminated all the rest and so they decided to find out which one would be best at protecting the life of the man riding in the back seat so they asked them all one question and they took them out to a gravel road which came right around to the edge of a cliff.

They asked them, 'How close could you drive to the edge of that cliff and still be safe?' The first one looked at it, thought about it and said, 'Four inches'. The second one after being asked the same question said, 'Six inches'. Then they called the third one and asked him the same question, 'How close could you drive to the edge of that cliff and still be safe? We want to know if you're a good enough driver to protect the man we're going to have you drive around.' The man looked at it and said, 'I wouldn't go closer than six feet.' He said, 'I'd probably be crazy to do that but I wouldn't even go closer than twelve feet.' And then they said to him, 'O.K. you're the one who's got the job.'

**You see brethren, that's the way we've got to be with God's law. The man said, 'I'm going to keep as far from that cliff as I possibly can. I'm not going to be that foolish.' We've got to realize brethren that we too have got to have that same attitude towards sin....**

**Now brethren, if you have been totally conquered by God you will want His ways. You will find you won't have to struggle against the desire for what this world has to offer. You'll hate sin. We're talking about something which comes after years of seeking God. Jesus Christ never sinned, not because He had the willpower not to but because He hates sin and God says in Phillipians 2:5 to let Christ's mind be in you and if you will seek it you will be able to put sin out of your life.**