

# Overcoming Faith

preached by Rev J. O. Soyinka  
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**O**vercoming Faith is the theme of our teaching this morning. In the song that was just rendered *Lead Me Gently Home, Father* the quartet prayed that God will lead us Home. It is my prayer too that God will lead us Home. The reason why we have denied ourselves some essential things of life to be here is that we want to see God and it is that God Who will lead us Home.

*"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Numbers 13:30).*

*"And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes:*

*"And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land.*

*"If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.*

*"Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not" (Numbers 14:6-9).*

The portion we have read is the testimony of the two spies who were sent with the others to spy out the land of Canaan. Many years before this time, God promised Abraham that He would give him and his children after him the land of °Canaan. Before this promise came to pass, they had to go through many problems, difficulties, heartaches, and persecutions. When the time was near for the fulfilment of the promise, God brought them out of the land of Egypt where they had been in bondage.

After the Children of Israel were delivered from the bondage in Egypt, they journeyed to Canaan, which was to be their permanent abode. God, out of His mercy and might, delivered them from bondage and it was through the same might and power that He would lead them to Canaan., Because of their lack of faith, they decided that they would send 'Spies to the land. Truly, they sent spies to the land but what they discovered was a great challenge to them and it became a problem for them.

The deliverance God gave the Children of Israel from Egypt is the same as the deliverance Jesus gives us from sin today. Just as God determined to take the Children of Israel to Canaan, He is also determined to lead every soul that has been redeemed to Heaven. But in between the time we are saved and the time we get to Heaven, there is a lot on the way.

*"And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.*

*"Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.*

*"The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.*

*"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.*

*"But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.*

*"And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it,, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are*

*men of a great stature.*

*"And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (Numbers 13:27-33).*

That was the report which the spies brought back from Canaan. Truly, they discovered that the land was flowing with milk and honey. The cities were built, walled, and very beautiful. They also discovered that the inhabitants were great people, very strong and above all, were giants.

The Children of Israel had been saved and God was leading them to Canaan. Between their salvation and the land of Canaan; they discovered certain things. These are the type of things we shall also discover along our pathway when we turn to God and we are on our way to Heaven. Giants are on the way, they are around us, they are right in our homes, they are in our places of work, they are in our towns, they are everywhere we live. They want to frighten us out of the way and bar us from going to Heaven. They want to tell us that it is impossible to make Heaven. May God give us the spirit of Joshua and Caleb.

Truly, Joshua and Caleb saw the giants like the other spies did, but they trusted in God. They even said that the giants were no more than food for them because they trusted in the power of God. Do you know that of all the people that left Egypt for Canaan, none of those who believed the evil report got to Canaan? Only Joshua and Caleb, despite the problems, dangers and the perils, got to Canaan.. Similarly, there are giants along the way — giants of persecution, giants of famine, giants of need, giants of oppression — as we go along life's journey as Christians; but I am sure that God Who helped Joshua and Caleb will help us too, and lead us Home.

As believers, we should understand how God deals with His children, so that we shall not be deceived by Satan. The fact that we are saved does not mean that trials will not come our way. It is trials that help the children of God to grow. Each time we receive a great blessing from God, we must sit up because Satan is not happy. He will want to frighten us, trouble us and do everything in his power to weigh us down, so that we may miss our goal.

*"The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret.*

*"Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.*

*"Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king" (Daniel 2:47-49).*

*"Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?*

*"Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?*

*"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.*

*"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king" (Daniel 3:14-17).*

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego were people of God and those around them could see God in their lives. Because of their righteousness and faithfulness, God highly exalted them in the land of Babylon. They Were rulers and leaders in the land. Their promotion came from God, not from the king. It was God Who blessed and exalted them, and it was God Who had helped them thus far. When we are blessed by God and receive help from Him, the world is not happy. At such times, we should sit up and be fervent in prayer, in the study of the Word of God and in our fellowship with God.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego had been promoted chiefs in the land of Babylon, but they knew that despite all that, the will of God must prevail and come first in their lives. Now, they were faced with giants and

one of the giants was that they should bow down to the king's image. They were in important positions, highly promoted, but they did not want to disappoint God. They wanted to be faithful to God because they knew that God was able to help and support them. Therefore, they took their stand. God is also able to lead us through any problem that might come our way.

These children of God did not argue with the king because they knew that God was on their side. They simply said, 'We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. Whatever you want to do, we know that God is on our side.' Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego were highly exalted; yet, the fiery trials came their way. When God wants to promote us spiritually, He will bring fiery trials along our way; so fiery that humanly speaking, we may not be able to see how we could weather it. These people were rulers and assistants to the king. The fiery trial came their way and it could be so in the life of anybody. It can be so in your life. If you are a boss in your place of work and some people require you to deny God and keep to the service and regulation of your office, would you not prefer to remain with God in that condition? Similarly, as secular workers, you may be required to come and work on Sunday and may be you are tempted that if you do that work, you will get more money. Remember, if you do that, you will disappoint God and God cannot promote you. It is better to remain with God when we are faced with trials because God will use that to promote us.

At times, the giant that comes our way may be illness. It may come on us, our wives, our children, or any members of the family. There may be the temptation from our relations advising us to lean on the arm of flesh; but we should take our stand. Do you know that when we remain with God, it will be a way to show God's glory? If we remain with God in such a situation and we depend on God for healing, it may be difficult, it may be fiery as a trial, but God will deliver us and the glory of God will be proclaimed in our lives.

***"And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not;***

***"Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.***

***"O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.***

***"And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.***

***"Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation;***

***"And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.***

***"Tomorrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel.***

***"Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you" (2 Chronicles 20:10-17).***

In our Christian journey, problems and confusions may come and we may not know what to do. When sinners do certain things against us, we just overlook them; not minding them so much. But within the same Christian fold, some people, whom, at one time or the other, God had used us to assist or people with whom we once shared fellowship, could do certain things to us which might weigh heavily on us. That is similar to what the children of Moab did. When the Children of Israel were passing, God did not allow them to destroy Moab because they were relations. Later, the Moabites attacked Israel. The Israelites were troubled and confounded, they didn't know what to do, Jehoshaphat and all Judah with him. They went to God in prayer telling God that they did not know what to do but their eyes were on Him. The Spirit of God came upon Jahazel and he told Jehoshaphat and all Judah that the battle was not theirs but the Lord's and that the Lord was going to fight for them. That is similar to what happens to every Christian. Troubles may come our way and we may have to fight a warfare spiritually. All we have to do is to trust in God, and just stay and watch. God will fight the battle for us.

***"For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.***

***"He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is***

*mine adversary? let him come near to me.*

*"Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.*

*"Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God" (Isaiah 50:7-10).*

We may be in utter darkness, so dark that we may not be able to see any way out. From where we have read we are told to stay on God. After all, we were made and created by God and any moment we are in utter darkness, all we have to do is to lean on God because to Him, darkness and light are the same. At times in our pilgrimage, we are faced with death, a giant, a great giant indeed! An adage says, cowards die many times before their death, a brave man dies only but once. When you are faced with death, you have to say, "Death, you can come; I will remain with God and I will die in God."

*"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

*"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.*

*"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

*"Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:28-31).*

The only death we should fear is to die in sin. If we die in God, it is great gain, it is no loss. It is only when we die in sin that we have lost. Therefore, we have to be bold even when death stares us in the face. The Word of God says that it is God Who is able to kill the body and send the soul to hell, that we should fear. We do not have to fear people who can only destroy the body, and after that can do no more. We should fear God only. Besides that, we have the promises of God about God's tender care. God says, 'Are two sparrows not sold for a farthing and yet none of them will fall down without the knowledge of God? We are of more value than many sparrows.' God says that even the very hairs of our heads are numbered. How many of us can count the number of hairs on our heads? That shows the extent of God's care for us. Therefore, when we, are in a problem, let us know that God cares and whatever may be the outcome, let us remain with God. We have seen in this church in the past, some people who were so ill that all hope seemed lost, but God in mercy, restored them. We have also seen some people of God who were ill and died, it was joy to God, Don't you know what the death of the righteous is to God? Don't you remember how happy you are after you have worked and you have your salary? You don't know how happy you are when you have traded and you earned profit? Precious in the sight of God is the death of His saints. Therefore, you don't need to be afraid of death. It is death that opens the door to everlasting life to believers. The one we refer to as death, is really not death to believers, but sleep.

*"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.*

*"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isaiah 25:8, 9).*

When something is swallowed, you have overcome it. God is waiting for us this morning. Are you prepared to lean on God so that He can lead you to Heaven? Are you prepared to lean on God so that He can lead you through this life of problems? Do you want to lean on God so that He can give you victory along your way? Trust in God, you will swallow death in victory. Trust in God, everlasting life will be yours.