

# **Hearts Fit for the Journey**

## **Introduction and Traveling Light in a Heavy World**

### **A Victorious Faith**

**(These Sermons are Based on a Book of**

**Sermons by the Same Title, By: Randall Caselman)**

#### **I. Introduction to the Series**

##### ***A. Life's Journey***

- 1. From the moment we are born we engage on a journey that will take us through this life and into eternity**
- 2. As we travel through life our journey is sometimes exhilarating and sometimes disappointing**
- 3. It is full of:**
  - a. Peaks and Valleys**
  - b. Joys and Sorrows**
  - c. Victories and Defeats**
  - d. Hope and Despair**
  - e. Sunshine and Shadows**
- 4. For those who come to know and obey our Lord Jesus Christ while on their journey, the final destination is heaven**
- 5. A place where “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Rev.21:4)**

6. **My work as a minister of the gospel is to help as many people as possible make their journey a successful one so that they may spend eternity in that home that our Lord has prepared for those who love Him and abide in His words**

***B. Life is short***

1. **As we travel on this journey toward our final destination we must ever keep in mind the brevity of life**
2. **“For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away” (Jm.4:14)**
3. **Life is short whether you live to be 50 or 100 really does not matter because life is short**
4. **This does not, however, make the journey any easier especially in the dark days of life and thus the great need for divine assistance as we travel through life**

***C. Hearts Fit for the Journey***

1. **Today we begin what I believe will be a very challenging and rewarding series of lessons entitled “Hearts Fit for the Journey”**
  - a. **These sermons are based upon a book of the same title written by Randall Caselman, a preacher in Arkansas**
  - b. **I actually heard brother Caselman present these lessons on tape about 8 years ago and it was one of the best series of lessons I have ever heard preached—of course he is a better preacher than me so that does not hurt**
  - c. **However, for some reason I began thinking about these sermons recently and decided to enquire about them**
    - d. **Upon locating the church I called and asked about the lessons and was told they had them in book form and that they would be glad to send me a copy and so here we are today**
  2. **The book’s premise surrounds the absolute truth that far too many Christian’s lives are burdened by the unnecessary things we carry in our hearts on this journey**
  3. **Truth be told, the journey of many people, some Christians included, are made to be much more difficult than God intended for them to be simply because of the fact that we have not learned how to travel light**

4. **Fact is that too many of us make our journey more difficult because we carry so many burdens and unnecessary character flaws with us on that journey**
5. **It is called hearts fit for the journey because “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses and blasphemies and these are the things which defile a man” (Mt.15:19-20a)**
6. **Thus, these lessons are designed to:**
  - a. **Help all of us understand that far too many of us are suffering from heart disease—no not the physical heart but our spiritual heart**
  - b. **Help us lighten the load we travel with through this thing called life**
  - c. **Help us identify those heart defects which make the road less enjoyable**
  - d. **Help us rid our lives of the excess baggage of:**
    - i. *Pride*
    - ii. *Anger*
    - iii. *Fear*
    - iv. *Doubt*
    - v. *Grumbling*
    - vi. *Bitterness*
    - vii. *Apathy*
    - viii. *Lack of forgiveness*
    - ix. *Guilt*
    - x. *Grief*
    - xi. *Materialism*
    - xii. *Discouragement*
    - xiii. *And more*

- e. **Brethren these are the kind of things that we just don't need to carry with us as we travel toward our eternal destiny**
- f. **Of course I am sure that these lesson will just be a big waste of time because we probably don't deal with any of these heart problems**
- g. **Or maybe just maybe there are some things wrong with our hearts to**

## **II. Introduction to Traveling Light—A Victorious Faith**

### ***A. Traveling to Africa***

- 1. As I sat in the airport before traveling to Africa I sat in amazement as I gazed upon the airplanes as they taxied toward the runways headed for destinations unknown**
- 2. These giant planes that travel internationally truly are amazing, although I still was not that happy about the trip that lie ahead of me**
- 3. I had looked at the map and knew that it was approximately 14 hours from Atlanta to Johannesburg, South Africa**
- 4. I knew that for virtually the entire flight we would be over open water and that there was absolutely nothing I could do to control my own circumstances—another thing I don't care for**
- 5. I thought about the flight crew and the responsibility that lay upon them to deliver their passengers safely to their destination**
- 6. I thought about the vastness of the continent of Africa and the ability to find one runway in that huge land mass known as Africa**
- 7. Do you know what I did not think about?**
  - a. I did not once think about getting out of the plane, flapping my arms and trying to get there that way**
  - b. I did not think about going into the cockpit and asking to fly the plane myself**

- c. I did not think about offering to navigate for our flight so that we might get to where we were going
- d. I did not think about these things because I had no ability to do any of them
- e. In getting safely to Africa—my strength, knowledge and abilities were of no value
- f. I had to depend upon the skill and knowledge of the crew to get me where I was going and thus all I could do is sit back and try to enjoy the flight as much as possible

*B. In the book **Traveling Light**, Max Lucado, whom I obviously have some strong disagreements with, nonetheless offers some valuable insights on preparing for the journey of life*

- 1. He says among other things that we have never learned to pack light
- 2. We always take with us more things than we need
- 3. It is like packing 6 suitcases for a weekend getaway, there are bound to be some things in there we just don't need
- 4. The same is true in life as we often are weighed down with burdens and attitudes that we just do not need for the journey and as a result we don't enjoy the trip
- 5. We are often guilty of picking up loads that God never intended for us to carry
  - a. A suitcase of guilt
  - b. A sack of discontentment
  - c. A duffel bag of worry or guilt
- 6. It is no wonder, Lucado says, that we are:
  - a. Tired all of the time
  - b. Depressed
  - c. Short-tempered and impatient with others
  - d. Simply not enjoying the journey which leads to everlasting life

7. **God’s invitation to us and mine to you is to get rid of all the excess baggage we are carrying in our lives—the things you just do not need to make the journey**
  - a. **Our Lord puts it best when He says, “Come to me all you who labor and are heavily laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Mt.11:28-30)**
  - b. **I think that David had an understanding of what it meant to travel light when he wrote, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” (Ps.23:1)**
  - c. **We don’t have to carry a lot of extra baggage through life**
  - d. **We can travel light, we can enjoy the journey, but we must first learn to deal with our humanity and understand that we are going to have to change the way we think about some things**
8. **If we are going to start enjoying this thing called life there are some important lessons we must learn and the first lesson is that our journey is one of faith**

### **III. Learning to Live the Life of Faith—2 Cor.5:7**

#### ***A. The journey of faith is founded in God***

1. **“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb.11:6)**
2. **Without faith in almighty God we are destined to live lives of weariness, heartache, and despair**
3. **It is our faith in God that enables us to overcome the burdens of life and the baggage which weighs us down on the journey**
4. **Faith is a heart condition and thus if we are going to rid our hearts of the garbage that makes the journey less enjoyable we must begin with faith**

5. **And we must take heed to the admonition to “Beware, brethren, let there be in any of you and evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God” (Heb.3:12)**

***B. The journey of faith is pleasing to God***

1. **God wants us to learn to trust in Him and His provisions for our lives**
2. **He wants us to learn from Him what we do and do not need to carry through life**
3. **It is our faith through God’s grace by which we have been saved—Eph.2:8-9**
4. **Faith is what sustain us—“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb.11:1)**
5. **And faith is our trust and confidence in God to fulfill all of the promises He has made to us**
  - a. **God wants us to:**
    - i. ***Acknowledge Him and trust in Him***
    - ii. ***Believe that His power is at work in our lives***
    - iii. ***Have confidence in His assurances so that we might obey Him***
    - iv. ***Do we have this kind of faith in God?***
    - v. ***The kind that obeys even when we do not understand***

6. **Jesus taught His followers, that is us, to:**
  - a. **Hear His Words**
  - b. **Believe His words**
  - c. **Obey His words**
  - d. **Stand fast in His words**
  - e. **And it was in doing so, He said, that we demonstrate our faith in Him and thus prove to truly be His disciples**

7. **There has always been the tendency for mankind to trust in its own strength and wisdom and never has this been more true than now**
  - a. **God wants you to know that you are not going to make it through life on your own for “it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jer.10:23)**
  - b. **If we are going to enjoy and finish the journey which leads to heaven we are going to have to start trusting in the wisdom and might of God and not our own**
  - c. **Through God’s help we can truly do all things**
  - d. **If you have ever really considered God’s call of Moses from the burning bush you probably realized that at no point in the conversation does the ability to God’s will ever revolve around the strength or wisdom of Moses**
  - e. **There was no one more qualified for this task than Moses and if we had been there we might have urged him on saying things like “you can do it” or “Moses, you are more than qualified”**
  - f. **God says nothing of the sort**

- i. *He says what is in your hand*
- ii. *He says who made man’s mouth?*
- iii. *Moses’ strengths and expertise are never mentioned because they are not the issue, God’s is*
- iv. *God wants us to know as well that when it comes to living the Christian life, our strength and wisdom is not the issue, His is*



8. **I know that we know this in our heads, but if we are going to start enjoying the journey we are going to have to start practicing this in our lives**
9. **Do you trust in God enough to let Him “Have His way with your life”?**

***C. The journey of faith is strengthened by an understanding of God’s names***

1. **In the OT there are more than 80 names used for God and this is no accident for each of these names reveals something about the nature and character of God**
2. **Knowing these names helps us to know more about God, and knowing more about God helps us to have a stronger faith in Him**
3. **I want to consider a few of these names with you and the faith-building lessons we learn from them—and don’t worry we are not going to cover all 80+ of them**
4. **Elohim**
  - a. **This is the first name for God we find in the Bible and it is used 32 times in Genesis 1 alone**
  - b. **It speaks of God as the creator and judge**
  - c. **He is the God of creation and if He can create this vast universe in which we live; for what do we need to worry?**
  - d. **Trust Him as your make your way along the journey**
5. **Jehovah—Jirah**
  - a. **This was Abraham’s name for God and it means “God will provide”**
  - b. **We are probably all familiar with the event where God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son that God had promised Him—Gen.22:2**
  - c. **This Abraham was willing to because he knew a God that would provide for his needs**
  - d. **Do we know this God?**

- e. **Do we believe that God will supply, as Paul told the Philippians, “all of our needs” (Ph.4:19)**
- f. **When Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount about “the birds of the air and the lilies of the field” He was saying the God will provide**
- g. **If we truly believe God will provide, then why are we so often beset by worry, materialism, and discontentment?**

#### **6. Shepherd—Raah**

- a. **This is how Jacob and David knew God**
- b. **He is the one who leads us, guides us and feeds us—he is always our shepherd even in the valley of death**
- c. **As Jacob laid upon his death bed he blessed his son Joseph and spoke of the God who had “fed him (literally been his shepherd) all the days of His life” (Gen.48:15)**
- d. **God was Jacob’s shepherd even though at times he was a less than cooperative sheep**
- e. **Even though like us, Jacob was often not a candidate for the most-well-behaved-sheep God never forgot Him and He will never forget us**
- f. **God is my shepherd, I shall not want and if God says I don’t need it for my journey I will leave it behind**
- g. **That is what these lessons are all about**

#### **7. Jehovah-Shalom**

- a. **Which is how Gideon referred to God and the name means “God is peace”**
- b. **Judges 6 tells of the unfaithfulness of the nation of Israel and of how the Midianites had invaded the land and destroyed their crops, and animals**
- c. **Verse 2 of this chapter says that the people were so afraid that they were dwelling in caves and crevasses in the rocks**

- d. Finally they hit rock bottom and cried out to God who then sent Gideon to lead them**
- e. Of course Gideon, much like Moses objected to this task feeling unworthy of such a responsibility and to be quite honest he was afraid and for good reason for the Midianites were a brutal people**
- f. But God showed him a sign and assured him that His “peace would be with him and he would not die” (Judg.6:23)**
- g. It was then that Gideon realized something I am afraid all too often we do not—that being when we hear God’s call and respond He will bring peace to our lives as well**
- h. It is the peace of God that “guards our hearts in minds in Christ Jesus”**
- i. And thus if God is our peace, why do we struggle with:**

*i. Discontentment*

*ii. Fear*

*iii. Worry and anxiety*

*iv. Grief and guilt*

*v. Perhaps it is because we really do not know the God of Peace*

## **8. Jehovah—Nissi**

- a. Which is the name Moses used to refer and it means “Jehovah is my banner” or standard or emblem**
- b. When Israel fought the Amalekites and Moses raised his arms and they prevailed, when they grew weak and fail they lost**
- c. Thus, with the help of Aaron and Hur, Moses kept his arms raised and the Lord’s people won the victory—it was because of this that Moses said the “Lord is my banner” (Ex.17:15)**
- d. By referring to God as such Moses was signifying that though the victory was won when his arms were raised, the credit for the victory truly goes to God**
- e. This is a lesson that we too must learn—as we talk about freeing our lives from the excess baggage that so often weighs them down and make the journey less enjoyable**
- f. Even as success is achieved, we must remember that the victory is the Lord’s—He is our banner, He is our standard and it is thus in His name that we can be victorious over the struggles that keep us from enjoying our journey**

## **IV. Conclusion**

### ***A. The names of our God***

- 1. The words which describe Him**
- 2. Tell of His nature and character**
- 3. They describe His power, His unending love, His bountiful blessings and a number of other attributes**
- 4. This is because God is all and in all and thus He is everything and the only thing we need to be victorious in whatever battles we face**

5. John writes in the Revelation that God is “The Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, who is and who was and who is to come” (Rev.1:8)

***B. The Robe—Lloyd Douglas***

1. He tells the story of his college music professor who was wheelchair bound
2. Every day he would ask his teacher what is the good news of the day
3. The answer was always the same—as the teacher tapped his tuning fork on the side of his chair he would say “The good news is that that is middle c
4. It was middle c yesterday, today and will be middle c tomorrow and 1,000 years from now
5. The tenor upstairs may be flat and the piano across the hall may be out of tune, but my friend that is middle c
6. The point of the illustration is simple from a spiritual point of view
  - a. It does not matter what happens today, tomorrow or 1,000 years from now
  - b. God is God, and Jesus Christ is the “same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb.13:8)
  - c. My life may be flat, my relationships may get out of tune; but God is God and when I learn to place my faith in His person and my trust in His will I have no need to carry all of this excess baggage around in my life
  - d. With Jesus as the Lord of my life I have no need to carry very much else with me as I travel on my way to eternity

***C. How is your walk of faith?***

1. Have you even begun it yet?
2. Have you started down the way only to be sidetracked somewhere along the way picking up more things than you needed for your journey

- 3. Before we can rid our lives of all this excess stuff that we carry around we must first establish our faith in the Lord so that we can truly “walk by faith and not by sight”**
- 4. By which are you walking?**