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SURMOUNTING THE VALLEYS



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I thank the Lord for giving me His strength, His boldness and determination in the crucial moments of struggle and situations apparently hopeless, when nothing else seemed to help me, showing with this that He is sovereign above all things, and powerful over the enemy, destroying his traps and ties and, this way, increasing my faith in His promise and my hope in victory.

I dedicate this book to all brothers in Christ who even hurt e dirty with the blood and the dust of battle remain faithful to Him and firm on the promise given to them, fighting with courage until the conquest of their promise land to be completed.

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- ¹ The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
 - ² He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;
 - ³ he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.
 - ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of shadow of death, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff – they comfort me.
 - ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies, you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
 - ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.
- (Ps. 23: 1-6)

Introduction

Who among us has never gone through situations seemingly unsolvable that trouble us for years and seem to defy our faith? How many of these situations have caused us deep inner conflict! And how many of them were dangerous and ‘narrow’, forcing us to walk slowly and cautiously in order to get out unscathed!

This book was given to me by the Lord after I win another battle in the war that afflicted me for years, seemed to have no solution and still insisted on affronting my faith and steal my hope in the word and in the promise of God.

The bible speaks repeatedly about the word ‘valley’ in many different circumstances of the people of Israel under affronts and dominions of the enemies, leading the Israelites to the point of almost giving up their covenant with the Lord, because they could not believe that they would win one more test in their way. Thus, ‘valley’ has the meaning of *old situations and seemingly unsolved, situations of inner conflict* that require urgent intervention of God so that we can proceed. Since 1987 I came looking for His project for me, even before being converted to Jesus. For nine years I wandered in many places until I met Jesus and began to walk in faith. However much I wanted to understand the totality of His purpose, many situations of the past returned, family heritages and wrong human concepts from the world through other people and that prevented me from proceeding with clarity in the right direction. I didn’t see, only the Lord. So, holding firm to the promise given to me and strengthening myself in the faith of the Spirit, I could walk for many years till have the answer to the existential question made so long ago, “Who I am and why I was born; what is the purpose of God for me? What could I do with joy and love, bringing me true feeling of accomplishment?” In 2003, for having to overthrow a professional and spiritual structure of about twenty-five years, many times my strength and my hope almost came to an end, renewing only by divine mercy. The frustration was so great that when I seemed to be closer to the objective, the blessing seemed to be cowardly stolen by the enemy, affronting my fidelity and trust in God. However, the covenant with the Lord was stronger and His Spirit kept me stuck to Him all the time, preventing me from giving up. If the fight seemed to be big, it was because the victory would be greater. Another four years followed under the power of God, rebuilding my ‘inner Jerusalem’ as Nehemiah did. I already knew what He wanted of me. The problem now was how to conquer the project materially, which still took many more years and more ‘valleys.’

We can find a reference to ‘valley’ in the book of *2 Kings, chapter 3*. At the time that Elisha was called by the kings of Israel and Judah to give them the word of God in the war against the Moabites, he said, “Thus says the Lord, ‘I will make this wadi [*valley*] full of pools’ [NIV, ditches]. For thus says the Lord, ‘You shall see neither wind nor rain, but the wadi [*valley*] shall be filled with water, so that you shall drink, you, your cattle, and your animals. This is only a trifle in the sight of the Lord, for he will also hand Moab over to you. You shall conquer every fortified city and every choice city; every good tree you shall fell, all springs of water you shall stop up, and every good piece of land you shall ruin with stones.’ The next day, about the time of the morning offering, suddenly water began to flow from the direction of Edom, until the country was filled with water (*2 Kin. 3: 16-20*).” This meant to make room for God to act. When the Lord directed them to do pools in the valley so that He filled with water, this meant to open space (pools, holes, caves, pits, ditches, no matter the word the bible uses) in the heart so that the old situations and seemingly without solution (valley) could be flooded by His life and His word. Another passage in the bible where we see

the word valley is in *Psalm 23: 4a*: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.” In Palestine, between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, there is a dangerous and narrow track that cuts through the mountains and it is called by some, “*Valley of the shadow of death*”, although the expression “*of the shadow of death*” in Hebrew means ‘shade of death’, ‘deep darkness’, ‘deep shadow’ or ‘the darkest shadow’, ‘darkness’, ‘the grave’ (which is a figure of calamity); figuratively: distress, extreme danger; characterizing world of the dead. Thus, the phrase can be translated as: ‘When it is deeply dark’ or ‘when I pass through a valley of dense darkness.’ Therefore, the shepherd carries a hard and heavy rod, about 2 to 3 feet length, whose function is to protect the flock from the attacks of wild beasts. He also leads a staff of nearly 10 feet length whose tip is bent, forming a hook. Its function is to fit it in the breast of a sheep that falls into any ravine in the valley to hoist it up, back to the right path. Hence, ‘valley’ can also have the meaning of a *dangerous and narrow situation, which requires caution and vigilance* so that we can cross it safely. Like sheep in danger of life, we are guided by our *Pastor* and hoisted up when we fall into the ravines of the way.

Great victories were given by the Lord to His people in the valleys of the land of Israel. Some of them are:

1) *Valley of Esdrelon*, Greek form of the name *Jezreel*. The Kishon River flows through it (Judg. 4: 13; Judg. 5: 21), where Barak defeated the Canaanites. In the valley of Esdrelon Saul’s army camped before the battle of Gilboa (1 Sam. 28: 4; 1 Sam. 29: 1; 1 Sam. 31: 1) and where Joram and Ahaziah were killed by Jehu (2 Kin. 9: 16; 24; 27). It is a symbol of final Judgment (Hos. 1: 4; 11); it’s also a symbol of fertility and divine favor (Hos. 2: 21-23). *Jezreel* (*yizre’el*) means ‘*God plants*’. Another name for it is *Armageddon*. This Greek word comes from the Latin word ‘*Har-Magedone*’, which means *Mount Megiddo*; thus, *Armageddon* can also refer to the plain or valley below the hill of *Megiddo* – *Har Megiddo* (item 6). *Megiddo* today is an archeological hill (‘*tell*’ = mound) made of 26 layers of ruins of ancient cities, which were built on the first settlement of *Megiddo*, thousands of years before Christ.

2) *Valley of Beracah* (from the Hebrew, which means ‘*Praise*’ or ‘*Blessing*’): where *Jehoshaphat* defeated the *Ammonites*, the *Moabites* and those from *Mount Seir* (2 Chr. 20: 26).

3) *The Valley near the hill of Moreh*: where *Gideon* defeated the *Midianites* (Judg. 7: 1).

4) *Valley of Salt*: showing the victory of *David* over the *Edomites* (2 Sam. 8: 13; 1 Chr. 18: 12), and where *Amaziah* also defeated them (2 Kin. 14: 7; 2 Chr. 25: 11).

5) *Valley of Hinnom*: to the south of *Jerusalem* where people burned the corpses of criminals. *Josiah*, for example, burned the bones of the idolatrous priests of the time of *Jeroboam* (2 Kin. 23: 15-20), because in the same valley were also offered human sacrifices to *Moloch*, the god of the *Ammonites* (2 Kin. 23: 10). The meaning of ‘*Hinnom*’ is unknown; some scholars suggest ‘*Ben Hinnom*’, son of *Hinnom* [because of the Greek term for the Valley, *Geenna* – *ge* (valley of) *hinnōm* (*Hinnom*)], hinting that it is a proper name (2 Kin. 23: 10; 2 Chr. 28: 3). In Jer. 7: 32; Jer. 19: 6 the name is altered by the prophet to ‘valley of slaughter.’ It’s also called ‘*Valley of Topheth* or *Tophet* = ‘*place of fire, burning place*’ or ‘*roasting place*’ by the *Canaanites* (Jer. 7: 31-32).

6) *Valley of Megiddo*: where *Josiah* died (609 BC) in the confrontation with *Necho II*, Pharaoh of *Egypt* (2 Chr. 35: 22). *Harmagedon* (in Latin, *Har-Magedone*; in Hebrew, *Megiddo* or *Esdrelon*), in Greek, is *Armageddon*, a word used in the *Textus Receptus*. *Textus Receptus* (‘*Received Text*’) is the name given to a series of prints of the NT in Greek, which was the basis for several translations between the sixteenth and nineteenth

centuries. Megiddo = place of troops; Armageddon = hill of Megiddo, mount of the place of multitudes.

7) *Valley of Elah*: where David defeated Goliath (1 Sam. 17: 2; 1 Sam. 21: 9). It is usually identified with the modern Wadi es-Sant, eighteen kilometers southwest of Jerusalem. Wadi is a word that refers to a valley with a stream of water; in this case, the brook where David took the five stones to put in his shepherd's bag before facing Goliath.

From what we can draw from all these situations, *'valleys' are places of difficulty, but also of victory and reconstruction; place to burn what is old, what is no longer useful to us; place to throw away the idolatry of our lives; place of confrontation with the forces of the enemy and place to prepare ourselves for bigger battles.*

This work intends to provide some hints and directions for those who also are going through the difficult situations of valley, where we seem to be 'underneath', 'defeated', and the enemy apparently dominates the situation, watching us from above.

Throughout our walk with the Lord, we'll go through some valleys (as happened with our brothers of the past); but the day will come, when we'll be on the mountains, from where we can have a more panoramic view of our life, of His spiritual vision for us, and so we shall better understand His work, His thoughts and His true projects concerning to us. In the book of Jer. 29: 11 it is written: "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." And in Isa. 55: 8-9 the Spirit tells us: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." May you have a good reading and be ministered by the Lord for healing. I love you in Jesus.

Tânia Cristina

Notes:

- Words or phrases enclosed in brackets [] or parenthesis (), in italics, were placed by me, in most cases, to explain the biblical text, although some verses already contain them [not in italics].
- The version used here is the New Revised Standard Version, NRSV-1989 (1995)
- NIV = New International Version (it will be used in brackets in some verses to facilitate the readers' understanding).

1

To leave the past



One of the first things we must do when we enter a valley is to learn to leave the past, for this will set us free from unnecessary burdens and facilitate our journey. By letting go the past, we'll be closing the gaps that the enemy insists on touching, trying to perpetuate the conflict in our lives and giving us the false impression that nothing else will be resolved. The greatest biblical example of someone who decided to cross the valley and let go the past was Abraham. God had told him: "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you'" (Gen. 12: 1). Until here the order of God would be incomplete from the human point of view, because nothing was given, theoretically, to replace the 'loss' that was to come. However, the Lord completed the order with the promise: "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12: 2-3). Then the bible says: "So Abram went, as the Lord had told him" (Gen. 12: 4a) ... and "and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan ... they had come to the land of Canaan" (Gen. 12: 5b).

Thus, when God proposes us a challenge, which is to overcome once and for all the old situations of our life that have held us for years, He also gives us a promise of conquering something new that will put us on a level of leadership before men and of authority over the enemy. Therefore, it's necessary to enter the valley with the certainty that we'll have to lose something that is no longer useful to us but that, finally, will bring us another kind of reward; it is also have the certainty that we are being prepared for a bigger mission, for there, we'll have definitive victory over the enemy and he will no longer affront us. Often, we enter these challenges of God like Abraham, by faith, without knowing for sure where we're going, believing only in the divine direction, which goes being revealed gradually as we move forward.

Many things are left behind, for example, our idolatry, religious learning, the wills of our ego and our carnal limitations so that the boldness of the Spirit begins to direct us. We become aware of the real priorities of the Lord for us and thus we can rationally choose what must stay and what our soul must leave. For the new to enter, we must throw off the old. We must proceed with the divine work to us and move on to the next step. Abraham left behind not only a physical land, but also a part of the family, the customs which he had acquired so far and the idolatry he was used to, in order to enter into a higher level of intimacy and knowledge of God. He dared to be different from all his ancestors to experience more of the Almighty based on the promise of being a father of a great nation. We can say that his valley was long, about twenty-five years, where he was treated, cured, perfected, freed, learning to divest of himself to get hold of the gift

of God. It should not have been easy to believe that an old man could be a father, even more with a barren wife; something almost impossible for a human to carry out alone. Moreover, we can imagine that Abraham was a creature unique in his generation, because he had a vision larger than all other men; he was a true 'innovation' of God and paid the price for being different. Nobody believed in him, but he remained believing and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

How often we dream of something new, different from what already exists, but we have to defeat all the contrary voices! Breaking with the usual and leaving behind the carnal vision implies a great exercise of faith, besides a large enablement from God to overcome the human rejections that arise with our innovative attitude. Leaving the past is to release forgiveness; it's to forget the evil that people have done to us, and look ahead to the good that the Lord proposes to us.

I want you to do an exercise now, which is to ask the Lord what needs to be left behind in your life so that you can move forward. Feel free to expose your thoughts and feelings to Him, but be willing to listen to Him and to give Him what He asks of you. This way, you'll be climbing a step toward the self-knowledge and the true knowledge of God and His will for your life. Firm up on this word: "I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1: 9).

2

To cling to the promise



When we move to the step to cling to the promise, we're talking about facing the obstacles that begin to arise on our way trying to make us give up on it or to prove to us that it does not exist and that we are chasing a 'mirage.' If we are not persistent and we are not sure of the promise made to us by God, we'll end up losing it and we'll experience the pain of frustration.

When we talk about this subject, we have a very interesting biblical example in Joseph, son of Jacob, who was taken to Egypt as a slave, sold to the Ishmaelite merchants [(Gen. 37: 25), also known as Midianites (Gen. 37: 36)] by his own brothers by jealousy of his relationship with his father and for being a prophetic instrument in God's hands. Joseph had told to his brothers the prophetic dream in which he would be used as head of his family, but this caused much envy in their hearts, culminating with the sinister plan to get rid of him. Despite the bad circumstances like the Egyptian captivity, Joseph *clung to the promise*, valued God's prophetic dreams for his life and submitted to His work. Like Joseph, we must believe in what the Lord once said to us, clinging to the promise and never giving up on it, even though everything around us seems to have led us astray.

In the case of Joseph, he had to fight against family problems, facing the jealousy and quarrels within his own home, and to feel the pain of rejection by being sold to foreigners by his own brothers. Aware of the Lord's love for him, Joseph acquired the strength to survive in a hostile environment and still take advantage of the opportunities to grow internally, doing of captivity a thriving place, showing everyone the power of his God. Acting in a positive and correct way before the wicked, he could gain the confidence of his taskmasters and climb the posts of honor in the government of Egypt. The more time passed, the more distant seemed to be the promise that he once received, for thirteen years in captivity seemed an eternity to him. In addition to the pessimistic environment he faced in prison, the selfish behavior and willing to strife within his own family seemed to remain the same. In the first meeting he had with his brothers, he could notice that they had not changed much over the years. However, God was already preparing them for the next phase that was the repentance and forgiveness and, consequently, the so longed family reconciliation. On leaving prison and be honored by Pharaoh before the whole Egyptian nation, a new phase began for Joseph that was the rebirth of hope in his heart regarding the promise made so long ago. Surely, he felt rewarded by realizing that the Lord had not forgotten him; on the contrary, He had forged him over the years to be a better leader, to be a person better prepared to enjoy the blessing. In other words, we can summarize the experience of Joseph in one phrase: "No captivity lasts forever."

Therefore, even when the circumstances of life seem to deviate us by tortuous ways and try to kill our hope that one day we will achieve victory, we must never give into the hands of the adversary the ‘pearls’ that we received from the throne of God. We must understand that He knows what He’s doing and what we are experiencing has a purpose. Many people will learn from the challenges that we managed to overcome and will begin to see the spiritual realities through our determined posture, but apparently foolish before the world. How many times I had to cling myself alone to the promise of God, because the attitudes that I had taken in the Spirit had led me, apparently, to dead ends and that seemed to be an error to everyone around me and knew nothing of the divine plan for me! They were years of a very hard struggle, feeling myself without any support, except of a few brothers in Christ who still interceded for me. In the eyes of men, what I was delivering to God (about twenty-five years of a secular professional life and other things resulting of it) was actually a great loss. Like all other human beings, I almost gave up the blessing, but the Spirit Himself day to day lifted me up and put me back in the position I should be.

Ask the Lord to remind you the promise that He Himself made to you, even if it was many years ago, and to give you strength to cling to it. Also remember the story of Joseph and receive the comfort of knowing that those who caused you harm, may one day be brought to you by God Himself to ask you for forgiveness or to know the eternal life. Meditate on the following word: “Wait for the Lord, and keep to his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on the destruction of the wicked” (Ps. 37: 34).

3

Do not ever give up



One of the characters in the bible most struggling and most willing to take possession of the blessing was Jacob. From childhood we see him fighting with his brother and relatives to receive what had already been promised by God to him. Later, we see him fight for the love of Rachel, enduring all the snares that his father-in-law put in his path, and then, with the angel at the ford of Jabbok never again to lose the blessing for which he fought all his life. In the previous chapter, we talked about clinging to the promise. Here, more than to cling to the promise, it's to struggle so that it becomes a reality, not caring about what needs to be done to get it. As we saw in the case of Joseph, he believed, waited, exercised the gift and was faithful. Jacob fought for it with his own strength, initially, until he learned to fight in God's way. He stepped over the tricks of the devil, here personified by Laban, who changed his wages ten times, and over the human rules, in the case to want to marry the youngest daughter, instead of the eldest as was the custom, in order to take possession of the blessing. It is interesting to make a parenthesis to compare this attitude of Jacob with that of another biblical character that was Paul. He also did everything for the gospel to be preached, surpassing all obstacles (1 Cor. 9: 19-24). Both in the case of Jacob and Paul, there was a great effort to sow, and a fight against their own flesh and human limitations. The flesh, often, in the bible, has the meaning of the body, the material life; however, it has also the meaning of the part of the soul that tends to sin. Paul fought against his own carnal nature to let the Spirit prevail (1 Cor. 9: 25-27). In other words: to subject the body to the dominion and discipline ('slavery') of the Spirit.

Returning to the case of Jacob, he knew from an early age that the blessing of his grandfather Abraham belonged to him, but he still lived in the flesh, not truly knowing God, for he didn't yet have profound experiences with Him; so, in the strength of his own arm he decided to ensure his blessing. He passed over all the adverse circumstances and human rules to achieve his victories, but also had to contend against himself because throughout his journey he began to acquire the full knowledge of the Lord and His will, as well as His strategies to fight for the promises. Being contradicted by the father-in-law, who was an instrument of God to shape the character of His son, Jacob came to realize that the conquests he wanted would be at his disposal from the moment that he could understand the divine strategies. Even being old, he still mistrusted God and His intentions toward him, so that he fought desperately with the angel at the ford of Jabbok to be blessed. However, this fight against God Himself, in fact, was a landmark in the life of Jacob, for there in Jabbok, figuratively, he put his ego aside forever, and thus let the Spirit prevail; hence he achieved the change of his name to Israel, no more Jacob. In other words, by having this definitive encounter with the Lord and to receive the true revelation of His character (Gen. 32: 30), his soul was

really transformed and he could then have the inheritance of the kingdom of God, exemplified in the blessing of Abraham: the blessing of offspring, prosperity (wealth, land ownership) and intimacy with the Lord.

For us, the learning is that when we are going through situations of valley, of unsolvable conflicts, the hint is *never to give up*, even if at first we are fighting the wrong way. If the Lord sees determination within us, He Himself will make us see the proper way to fight; thus, to achieve our victory. Another important 'ingredient' is what Jacob and Paul did, *to be always willing to do whatever it's necessary to conquer the promise*, not caring about any trick that the enemy can put in our way; in other words, nothing can prevail against the word that was already released to our life, and absolutely nothing has power to prevent the Lord's work from being done.

Therefore, the third challenge for you is to place yourself before God, to assess the promises already given you and what you are actually doing to make them a reality. It is important to be aware of your own weaknesses and change your pattern of behavior. Go to the fight and take Jesus with you. Throw down your giants. All things work together for good for those who love Him (Rom. 8: 28). The Holy Spirit will give you the strategies of war.

Let's finish with the Word for your meditation:

"Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay; but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back" (Heb. 10: 35-38).

4

To be attentive like Nehemiah



In this chapter we will see that valley not only concerns to a place where we fight, we destroy and deliver, but also where we *rebuild*; and to rebuild something we must *be attentive*. In addition to Ezra, who rebuilt the temple, Nehemiah was another great builder because he led the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem that were destroyed by the enemies, especially the Babylonians. His book in the bible speaks of restoration: restoration of our ‘walls’, our personalities, emotional balance, relationships; in short, of what has already been lost in the soul. It brings back the lost time. *Nehemiah* means ‘*God comforts, or consoles.*’ Through this book, God calls us to build our soul and our life where our walls were destroyed.

Nehemiah was the cupbearer of King Artaxerxes, when he heard about the state of the city after the return of the exiles to it. He sought the king and asked for mercy so that he could lead the restoration of the walls. His compatriots besides discouraged felt humiliated by the governors and the foreign people of surrounding nations. The enemies mocked Nehemiah at first, however, began to get angry and sought to thwart the reconstruction when they saw that Nehemiah was determined. Despite of all, he paid no attention to the mockery and provocations; on the contrary, he put God ahead of everything, because what he proposed to do seemed impossible in human eyes. So we must put God ahead of our project and ignore those who have a carnal vision of things and say what we do it is very difficult. When we are in a valley, trying to rebuild something that was very important to our soul, we must be attentive, first, to the mockeries and provocations that the adversary raises to discourage us; secondly, to be aware of his snares and even violent actions to try to interrupt our work. Nehemiah watched over and worked at the same time, with courage, strength and perseverance; even under threat, he didn’t leave the work for anything. With one hand they held the shovel; with the other, the sword and the spear, clothed in the armor. This means for us to keep praying, prophesying, but acting in a practical way. Nehemiah didn’t let himself be distracted by futile and unimportant things that his opponents put in his way so that he abandoned the work. The same way with us, we must resist the provocations of the enemy and clothe us with the Holy Spirit to have spiritual discernment and not to fall into the snares of the devil.

When everything was over, he no longer allowed self-indulgence and stagnation come upon his spirit in relation to the work of God. We too, after rebuilding, we must not let ourselves be accommodated. Now we have a new life and a new reason to exist, which it is to do the work of the Lord, and the accommodation can no longer be part in this project.

Try to be away from the worldly activities that may prevent you from hearing the voice of God. Perhaps He shows you an area of your life that needs reconstruction. Why

did you stop building? What is the reason for it? The weakness of the flesh allows the external spiritual influence takes advantage of this frailty to exert pressure and dominion. Deliver to the Lord what He already asked of you. Often, we need to destroy an old structure first so that we can build a new one and that takes time. Do things that please the Lord and do not behave the same way you did in the past. “Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps. 37: 4).

5

The enemy lies



When Jesus quarreled with the Jews in the temple: He said, “Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word. You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (Jn. 8: 43-44). The Jews were unable to understand what Jesus spoke, for their heart was closed by the pride and haughtiness and their mind was taken by the religiosity, false teaching and the rigidity of the Law. The desires of the flesh made them tend to sin and death (the nature of the devil), moving them away from the true light of the gospel. Then Jesus says that the devil was a murderer from the beginning, because when he tempted Adam and Eve and succeeded in making them sin, he killed them spiritually; he also instilled in human nature this ‘death’, so much that the descendants of Adam had nothing more of the spiritual nature created in him by God Himself. Cain killed Abel his brother, physically. Since then, many people began to discover the crime. Furthermore, Jesus says that what the enemy did was based on a distortion of divine truths, i.e., in lie and in deception. Therefore, besides the desire to kill, human being also acquired the habit of lying, not only for others but for himself and even to God.

Nehemiah overcame this test, for his enemies distorted the intentions of his heart and used of cunning to make him give up of the work, almost trying to confuse him to enter the temple without being a priest, for he could be killed because of this. That’s what the enemy does to us often when we are tired and exhausted in the valley. Our tired mind can not reason with firmness; our spirit weakened by the fights can give gap to the lies of the darkness, and then, we lose the blessing. Thus, it is the constant reading of the Word that goes firming in us the power of God to be in these hours a barrier of faith against the onslaughts of the devil and a sharp sword to cut evil. Knowing that the enemy lies, if we listen to all things people tell us, without checking the information, we can lose, without knowing, everything that is already very close to us, and if we don’t have the boldness of the Spirit to fight for our rights, we will end up frustrated. Once, the Lord gave me a great victory concerning something that I was waiting for, when I managed to overcome the enemy’s lies. Getting the blessing in my hands, I acted and ‘brought into existence what did not exist.’ I was amazed at what was happening, but it was true. God was giving me what my heart longed most. This victory not only rekindled my hope; it also made me feel more sure of the promise given to me by the Lord, throwing away all the words that once tried to make me think otherwise. The false prophecies were being broken. After the weeping, a song came to my mind very clearly. It said all that my heart felt, and prophesied what would come next. It’s called *‘Surmounting the valleys’*.

*Long is the time I'm waiting for God's blessing
Fights and wars trying to steal what's mine
Weeping and tears, anguishes
Nobody seems to hear me
And the feeling that God has forgotten me*

*But suddenly, a hand lifts me up from the valley
The powerful voice of the only King is heard
Everything bows down before
The One who is powerful
And gives back to my being
What is precious*

*I can dance with the joy of someone who is free
I can dance before the throne
The hope returning
The dream coming true
And my soul feeling Jesus loving me*

*Today all is different
A rising new life
Living the real promise of the Omnipotent
Living the real promise of the Omnipotent*

(This is the literal translation of the song to English)

With it came also the inspiration to write this book. I knew that I still had to overcome more challenges, but I was strengthened. The Lord would continue to hold me and protect me until the blessing to come full.

Look inside you and look to your life and receive now the truth of God's word in your soul and spirit, with the awareness that His truth has more power than every lie and will make you walk safely to the destination designed by Jesus for you. Release forgiveness for the 'envoys of the devil' that came to you to take away the peace, faith and joy. Leave them in the hands of the Lord and follow your way. Remember that the Holy Spirit, besides Counselor, teaches us the whole truth, as the bible says (Jn. 14: 26; 1 Jn. 2: 27). Ask Him to firm this truth within your soul. It needs to be a shield against lie. "These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace, do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath; for all these are things that I hate, says the Lord" (Zech. 8: 16-17); "So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another." (Eph. 4: 25).

6

The final battle



When we are going through a situation of struggle or suffering, we eagerly wait for it to come to an end. What seems harder is to keep our strength to the end, when it already seems exhausted, giving the false impression that the enemy, seeing us in a state of fatigue and disadvantage, has more chance to win. The bible tells us in Revelation the great *final battle* between light and darkness, establishing the eternal reign of Jesus Christ. However, until then, we have a personal path to go through, our individual trials and struggles that will enable us to enjoy the *New Jerusalem*, because through them we are improved. The victory that there will be in the second coming of Christ has been already conquered, in fact, on the cross of Calvary. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross already assured spiritually our victory. Therefore, when we speak of the final battle over our situations of valley it means to repeat in ourselves the sacrifice of Christ that was a total surrender of Himself to God's will to save us, that is, we should surrender ourselves to the Father's will for us, taking hold of all the blessings conquered by the Son in His death; to have the same willingness to give of ourselves, but at the same time to exercise all divine authority that was already entrusted to us. In fact, Jesus' greatest strategy was not to fight against what men wanted to do with Him; it was, however, the surrender and the submission to the Father that gave Him the spiritual victory over darkness.

If you are crossing a valley and it seems that you came to a dead end where you have no more strategies to fight or strength to continue, look at the cross. There you will find the way out to your problems and the true freedom. At the cross we find forgiveness for our sins, the healing for our wounds and diseases, the breaking of our curses, the justification, the peace, love, full communion with the throne of God and the freedom and power of His Spirit on us to accomplish the same miracles that Jesus did. The secret was that 'He hung His ego' there, He submitted to the will of the Father fully and accepted the suffering with the certainty of the victory that would come later, as well as the restitution of His eternal glory, making Him triumph over Rulers and Authorities of the darkness and putting Him back at the right hand of God. On the cross we must 'hang' the will of our ego, the desires of our flesh, our fear, insecurity and pride so that the divine plan is done in us and through us.

Before the cross idolatry falls, all the false gods, all the traps of the devil, blindness, lies and carnality. Everything is submitted to the Lordship of Jesus.

It's worth remembering that our faith in Christ should never nullify our reasoning before all the situations in our lives. Often we face the valleys without having the divine revelation of why of many things. Many current chains may originate in our wrong attitudes of the past and were hidden from our eyes and our reasoning, but are still unconscious 'prisons' that need to be broken; this can only be achieved in constant

spiritual contact with the Holy Spirit, receiving His messages in our hearts, and that lead us to take, now, the right attitudes for us to be really freed. When He decides to heal, He heals deeply, touching the same wound repeatedly, if necessary, to clear it completely. This takes time, patience, perseverance and fidelity. When we know His time in our life, we are prepared to face *the final battle* of our valley, to get out of the earlier vicious cycle and to be boosted to a new spiritual, emotional and material level.

Put yourself before the cross, exposing your heart to the Lord and asking Him to show His truth, freeing you from the unawareness in which you lived until today. May all forged weapons of the darkness over your soul and your spirit be completely destroyed by the force of this holy blood. Continue to surrender with confidence to Jesus, 'hanging' on the cross your 'inner self' and making an exchange: your 'self' wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked (Rev. 3: 17) by the Spirit of the Son of God in you, taking you to live the full life of God. It's your time to win, to start living again as a new creature.

"Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed" (Isa. 53: 4-5).

7

Restitution



We enter now in the chapter where we'll talk about restitution and reward for those who manage to overcome the valleys. We have a biblical example very instructive in Ruth, who left her personal valley (her past life in Moab, a land of idolatry and scarcity) to follow her mother-in-law back to Bethlehem of Judah, where she met the real God, made a covenant with Him and could, then, take possession of a fertile and prosperous land. She arrived in a poor and humble way, perhaps feeling rejected because she was a foreigner there; she sought a simple and dishonored job before the people, such as to pick up the rest of the ears of the crops of barley and wheat (*'to glean'*, as the Word says); however, she found grace in the eyes of Boaz, *the kinsman-redeemer*, which prefigures Jesus, thus being entitled to a new life. From gleaner Ruth became 'the owner of the field'; the mistress of all that land, along with her husband, her son Obed, and her mother-in-law.

When we overcome our valley, we are ready to materialize the dream of our hearts, for we find favor with Jesus, our *Redeemer*, and we receive the right to rule in our own land. Here the intruders do not enter, only those whom the Lord has already prepared to be our fellows, workers of His harvest here on earth. Here, our dream, our son, our Obed, can glorify God for the conquests He has provided to us and we can rejoice because we know that we will leave a holy offspring before Him.

As I said in the beginning of the book, many years were required to give birth to the dream of my heart that was to do a work that I loved and that brought me joy and fulfillment, as is today, to minister the word of God. The long trials of the valley, where nothing seemed to make sense or be true, where the enemy several times attempted to 'abort' my dream, were, however, a training to reign, and a learning on how to serve the Lord with integrity. Every day on earth, we will continue to learn from Him and grow to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ, as the bible says in Eph. 4: 13. Nevertheless, the freedom, joy and the personal fulfillment, generated through the victory over our valley will ensure us a smoother walk and of peace until our true land in eternity. The strongest enemies and most difficult to overcome are the internal ones; the external ones are easier to destroy and defeat when our foundations are firm and our temple, built on 'the Rock.' Ruth let herself to be shaped by the Lord, she let go the past, surrendered to His will and experienced ransom. In addition to ransom, she gained the honor of begetting offspring, for she was great-grandmother of David, where the Messiah would come from. A humble girl, foreigner, and apparently ignored and with no future was honored, being grafted in the genealogy of the Anointed of God, Jesus (Matt. 1: 5).

Ruth worked on the same land that was given to her, that is, she 'sowed' her work and her dreams there and was honored, she received multiplied, everything that she

‘invested’ and cared for; she would no longer be a worker of Boaz, but his wife; she would no longer be servant, but the mistress of that field; she would no longer be led, however, would lead many other employees.

One of the things we need do while we pass through the valley is *to sow* in the land we want to conquer, in order to have rights to it. There is no harvest without sowing. It’s necessary to work diligently on what we desire to have or in the projects we want to achieve; it’s necessary to know how to invest of all manners in our dream, including financially. When we ‘throw the hoe’ deeply, with effort, with crying, with pain, with no real help from anyone, we can be sure that someone sees us, Jesus, and He will never forsake us; on the contrary, He’ll contribute to our victory, guarding our treasure to the end, as the bible says (2 Tim. 1: 12). He knows how to multiply the seeds we sow, especially when we plant in the fertile soil of the kingdom of God, prophesying our blessings with faith, in accordance with the Word, and clinging to His truths. Ruth had more than hope and trust in the *kinsman-redeemer*, she had determination to go her way and be entitled to a new life.

If you could overcome all the tests so far you’re able to take possession of your land. You’ll enter the phase of *restitution* in your life; you shall enjoy the fruit resulting from the seeds planted with weeping. What the Lord gives you, you will not lose anymore, for it is written: “No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven” (Jn. 3: 27).

Receive, then, the consolation of the Holy Spirit through the Word: “When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, ‘The Lord has done great things for them’. The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses in the Negev. May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves” (Psalms 126: 1-6).

8

Epilogue



I hope you have understood the purpose of this work and have been truly ministered by the Holy Spirit. If you went through all these steps and managed to emerge as a winner, surely you are ready to be a powerful instrument in the hands of the Lord. Many need to know Him through you. If, however, you are still going through the situation of valley, do not give up; on the contrary, may this book besides being an incentive, be a prophetic word of victory and fulfillment over your life. The Lord is faithful and will not keep His mysteries forever. Your blessing is reserved and guarded by God Himself, and at the right time, it will come to you. Just persevere and believe. See you soon.

“Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” (Jn. 11: 40).