

GET IT RIGHT AND TRY AGAIN

Joshua 8:32-35

Introduction: Not everybody gets back up and tries it again when they've been "knocked" down. Israel suffered an embarrassing and stunning defeat and hurriedly retreated, licking their wounds to find out what went wrong. A single soldier had disobeyed God's instructions that caused their defeat they discovered so they went to God about it and then did what God instructed.

How to recover from their tragic defeat and be able to move on to victory was Israel's most important matter for the moment. How would they overcome the hurt, the loss, the disgrace, the shame of being defeated in such a manner? What had happened to cause their defeat and how they were able to get it right and try again, with victory this time can be used by Christians today in their struggles.

I. GETTING BACK UP FROM A LOSS IS VERY DIFFICULT

1. A few minutes of willful disobedience in the Christian's life often results in a lifetime of being out of God's blessings.
 - Sometimes Christians "go on vacation" from obeying and serving God.
 - Sometimes a friendship draws one away from God and out of His will.
 - Every child of God has weaknesses and sooner or later he/she will be defeated in trying to serve God and live as he/she should be living.
2. Many Christians have no real vision for their dying world nor a burden for the lost, or no real heart to do God's work anymore. What has happened?
 - Somewhere they have been "knocked" down in trying to be like Jesus and are having trouble in getting back up.
3. Israel had been defeated and God's reputation was in question. They had been "knocked" down. How could they get back up and go at it again?

II. GOD GAVE ISRAEL INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO GET THINGS RIGHT

1. God sent Israel to the valley of Shechem some 30 miles away on what might be called a "spiritual retreat."
 - Shechem was where God first promised the land to Abraham.
 - It was at Shechem that Jacob's well would be dug.
 - It was at Shechem that Jesus met the Samaritan woman and cleansed her.
 - Shechem was a valley between two mountains two miles apart, Mt. Ebal, which was rocky, rugged and barren, and Mt. Gerizim, which was wooded and beautiful.
2. Israel was instructed to erect an altar as a place of worship and at the same time to write God's laws upon that altar.

3. The people were to divide in half with one half going to each of the two mountains and Joshua spoke to both sides from the valley which was down below.
 - Joshua told Israel of the blessings that come from obeying God's laws and the curse that comes from disobeying, which they had just learned when losing a battle.
4. If Israel obeyed God's laws, they would live and if they disobeyed, they would die, that clear.

III. FOR THE CHRISTIAN, THERE IS ALSO A WAY TO GET THINGS RIGHT

1. There are laws and rules in the life of the Christian which he/she is expected to keep.
 - Being a Christian does not free one from the obligation and responsibilities the law imposes.
2. The moment of belief in Jesus, a new law begins to work in the life of that believer.
 - The law of Holiness! Holiness is not optional. God's law demands Holiness in the life of the Christian.
3. Many Christians seem to be only "playing" at being a Christian. Why?
 - They don't want to make the necessary changes.
 - Their professions of belief have never become action.
 - They have not yet begun to practice what the Bible teaches.
4. Jesus said, "*...if ye love me, keep My commandments...*"
 - Keeping God's law is a delight for the Christian.
 - The Christian will hate what God hates and love what God loves.
 - A Christian is moved and compelled because of the love that he/she has for Jesus Christ.
5. The Christian also has an altar to return to when defeat has come - the altar of Jesus' Cross.
 - There at Jesus' Cross the Words of God are renewed in the believer's heart.
 - There one can draw near to God once again.

CONCLUSION:

1. For the Christian, the Child of God, there is no neutral place, there is no alternative. It is either life or death, obedience or disobedience.
2. Either a Christian is in earnest for the Lord or he/she is not. Churches are full of so many who are not in earnest. God's man, Gideon, started out with 30,000 men, but when all was said and done, he did better with only 300 of those men.
3. Defeat comes to every believer who disobeys God and always something is lost. However, that which has been lost, doesn't have to keep that Christian down. He/she can get back up and move on, by doing things God's way.
4. God sent Israel on a spiritual retreat where He could speak to them in quietness. Perhaps you might also need to go on a spiritual retreat where you can be alone with God?