

Building the King's Highway

By R.T. Nusbaum

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

"Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."
(Matthew 3:1-12)

When a country gets ready to build a new highway, they buy the land through which the highway will run. That is only the beginning. Then, after purchasing, you must go to work on that property. Where the land is high, it must be brought down. Where it is low – it must be filled. Just as in building a regular highway, these are the main elements involved in building the King's highway.

In the above scriptures, we see that John the Baptist was preparing a highway for the Lord and making His way strait. What does it mean to make things strait and how does that relate to us spiritually? It means to remove all the highs and lows in order to bring life into consistency and stability. Jesus is stable – we are the ones who are up and down all the time. Only the coming of Jesus as LIFE can do this within us. We can have Him as Savior and Lord and yet our Christian lives appear like a roller coaster. What are these mountains that must be brought down? What does saying that the valleys must be filled up mean? We will discover the answer to these things as we take note of John's method of preparing this highway for the Lord.

John the Baptist came preaching the message that we should prepare the way of the Lord. This involved making His way strait. To help us understand what this would entail, John said that every hill and mountain should be brought down and that the valleys would be filled up (Luke 3:4-6). He went on to say that if this were accomplished that it would make a highway for the King. In order for our lives to become "strait" and a highway to

be made for the King, at least two things must happen then. The mountains and hills must be brought down, and also, the valleys must be filled up.

The mountains and hills represent those areas of our life that are strong and proud. These are areas that need no help from the Lord for we are well able to carry them out. But the proud and self-reliant one will be brought low. The valleys represent weakness. Valleys are areas of depression in the earth. For us, this might represent areas of insecurity and inability. God's answer for these areas is that they will be filled. The scriptures declare to us that we can be "filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:19).

All our ups and downs are due to our lives constantly being challenged in areas of either our strengths or our weaknesses. When it comes to our "mountains" this is the operation of man in his natural strength. But when we encounter areas of weakness, we prop ourselves up with scripture and prayer – God has a better answer – its called filling. God doesn't remove all weakness from our lives. What He does is fill it. When the situation arises that is beyond us, we may, at that moment, still acutely feel our weakness but, as we step out trusting in God's provision, God pours out His abundant supply through us.

Paul shows us God's ways of dealing with weakness which he learned in practical matters. In his situation concerning his "thorn in the flesh" God didn't remove it. Instead, in every case that involved weakness on Paul's part, God came through with strength of His part. Paul began to rejoice and even take pleasure in this for, he found that when he was weak (empty) that God was strong (would fill him -- II Cor 12:10). Our weakness is the means by which God will display His strength. This is the King's Highway!

This processes of bringing down what is mighty in us and then filling what is weak in us is nothing more than the constant in-working of death and resurrection. The King's highway is built of no other substance. Even though God is constantly at work to remove what things are of us, He also is constantly at work to fill us with all His provision and life.

Broken In Place Of Strength

One of the greatest examples of this process of building the King's Highway into the life of a person is found in Jacob. This man had mountains of pride that had to be brought down. Once God started the process, Jacob ended up being a prince with God because of his reliance upon the Lord due to his own weakness.

After a period of time where the Lord has moved in His "heavy equipment" and gone to work on our lives, we finally reach a day when all the ups and downs cease. This is a day of blessing. For Jacob, that day of blessing came at Peniel. There, God blessed him and changed his name from Jacob to Israel. The blessing comes in the very place where we become completely broken. In truth, the blessing is the brokenness that God brings about in our hardened and inconsistent lives. The name change reflects the character change.

War Between The Flesh And The Lord

But, before that change came, there was a war. At Peniel, we see a wrestling match between God and Jacob going on. However, that wrestling match had been going on all his life. Jacob was a strong man who had relied on his natural strength all of his life. It was not easily broken. Even though this life-long wrestling seemed like war to Jacob, it was nothing more than God preparing him to be part of the King's Highway. God is not in a negative battle against us but in a positive posture of mowing down our hills and filling up our valleys for the Lord.

At times, we may become faint, thinking that this battle will never end but all the wrestling will soon cease. Before Jacob could ever have his valleys filled by the provision of the Lord, he would have to realize that he has valleys and weakness. In order to do this, God touched Jacob's hip which became dislocated. Our walk depends on having a strong thigh. God is not just interested in touching us in our weakness but in touching us in our strong points also. Until these have been touched, we will continue to depend on our own natural strength. That path is the ways of man and has nothing to do with the King's Highway.

Out Of Weakness Made Strong

Proof that the King's Highway has come to our piece of dirt is found in the fact that we cannot do without Him. Only after Jacob's mountains had been brought down did he want God to fill him and be his fullness. It was then that he said, "I will not let you go." This statement did not derive from Jacob's confidence in his own strength to keep God from going. No, this came from a place of deep weakness that knew that God's withdrawal would be the loss of the only strength Jacob now possessed. It is when a man is most weak in himself that he has the potential of having the greatest power with God. When Jacob was defeated was the same moment he became a prince with God. To on-lookers, it may have appeared that Jacob was soundly defeat however, for the first time in his life he had truly "prevailed." From then on, the power he had was not based on his own natural resources but he had "power with God" (v. 28).

The Example Of Peter

Peter was very similar to Jacob in that he depended on his own strength. Peter's strength had proven faithful when building up his own successful fishing business. He had much confidence in what he could do and in his own determination. This same attitude came forth in his conversations with Jesus. Peter thought that he would never deny the Lord. His stand was so strong that he almost shames Jesus for thinking that Peter would do so. But Jesus set on a course to show Peter that his valleys needed to be filled. But before that could take place, his mountains would have to be brought down. As we know, Peter not only ended up denying the Lord but doing it three times in one night. This was the end of Peter, the mighty fisherman as God began to lay the ax to the root and prepare to lay the King's Highway within him.

The path from being a rocky road to the King's Highway is not an easy one. Much agony and failure lay before Peter yet. To make sure that all mountains were completely down,

God allowed Peter to go back to his fishing business. But all his strength, might and know-how produced absolutely nothing that first night. Then what happened? Jesus – the strength of his life showed up. Now, what Peter cannot do, Jesus can do and with abundance. It was at that point that the time for filling the valleys began. All natural strength was taken from Peter while at the same time, all the fullness of God was afforded to him. All of the sudden, Peter's fishing nets were so filled that it was impossible to get all the fish in; even with help from other men. His mountains of pride were brought low while, at the same time, his nets were filled.

Our mountains are made of our own personal abilities, self-confidence and pride over what we can do and possess. Those mountains will have to be leveled before it is possible to lay the King's Highway. How can a cup be filled with Living Water when it is already full of something else?

God is not a God who believes in bringing everything to an end. He is not trying to destroy us. He wants so much more for us. But, in order to bring that about, He has to clear away way much dirt and devastate our landscape. He will remove in order to bring about something greater. This is the whole theme of the Cross. Israel was a much more useful person to God then was Jacob. When a person's mountains have been brought down and their valleys are filled then when you meet them you are not so impressed by their natural ability or lack of ability, as with the Lord. There is a sense of depth beyond themselves that has touched the Cross and gone the way of self denial.

God has great riches in store for you. But to gain them, you must proceed along the King's Highway. Maybe you know these things but they are not active in your life at this time. Or possibly, God is just now opening your ears to see the path He is preparing before you. God wants to either bring us to a fresh view of the Lord Jesus, or a deepening view of what we already know. Will you allow Him to build? ***