

A door of hope in the valley of trouble

There was a place southwest of Jericho, known since the days of Joshua as the valley of Achor. Achor literally means 'trouble' – a valley of trouble. In the book of the prophet Hosea, God said that He would open a door of hope in the valley of trouble – that is the reason for the title of this message today.

Hosea 2:15: *I will give her, her vineyards from there, and the **Valley of Achor as a door of hope**; She shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.*

Introduction

Last week I spoke from Mark 9, about the power of a 'mountain experience'. I spoke about going higher to places of greater intimacy with Jesus, away from the distractions of our busy lives. I spoke about the transformative power of an encounter – a 'mountain experience'. Jesus described that experience as seeing "*the kingdom of God present with power*" (Mark 9:1).

I love mountain-top experiences. But what about the valleys? What about trouble? What about the challenges of life?

In fact, after that mountain-top experience, Jesus with Peter, James and John, faced some sort of trouble down the valley (verses 14-27). At the bottom of that mountain there was a great commotion involving a crowd of people, with pharisees and all, and a father who had brought his demon-possessed son to the disciples but to no avail: they could not cast the demon out of the boy.

What a contrast of scenarios: up the mountain the kingdom of God present with power, but in the valley absence of power. For a moment it looked like the enemy was the prevailing power in the valley (until Jesus showed up, obviously).

The enemy wanted to be in charge of the valley, but Jesus demonstrated that He is the same in the valley as in the mountain!

God is not just the God of mountains, but He is the God of the valleys too!

1 Kings 20:23, 28: *²³Then the servants of the king of Syria said to him, "Their gods are gods of the hills. Therefore they were stronger than we; but if we fight against them in the plain, surely we will be stronger than they.*

Verse 28: *Then a man of God came and spoke to the king of Israel, and said, "Thus says the LORD: "Because the Syrians have said, "The LORD is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys," therefore I will deliver all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the LORD."*

The power of God in an up-the-mountain encounter, works in real life valleys – works in the challenges of life, in trouble, in every situation!

Our God is not just with us when life is like a hilltop experience, but also when we experience valleys.

Today I believe that God wants us to see that He is not just God of the hills, but He is God present with us in the valleys too. I believe that He wants us to change the way we see our seasons of difficulty or tribulation.

Here are 4 things God can do in the valley:

1. He can turn challenge into victory

1 Samuel 17:2,3: - *“And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and they encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array against the Philistines. The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them”.*

Elah is the valley where Goliath challenged David. We have all been there: in the valley of challenge, menaced by the giants of fear and intimidation.

Well, you know the outcome: this became the valley of one of David’s most powerful victories!

2. He can turn what seems like the valley of the shadow of death into a valley of blessing

2 Chronicles 20:1-4, 24-26 1 *It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2 Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi). 3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4 So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.*

24-26 - *So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped. 25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, and precious jewellery, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. 26 And on the fourth day they assembled in the **Valley of Berachah**, for there they blessed the Lord; therefore the name of that place was called **The Valley of Berachah** until this day.”*

Psalms 23:4 - *“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me”!*

3. He can turn the valley of weeping into pools of joy

Psalms 84:5-7 - *5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage. 6 As they pass through the Valley of Baca [weeping], they make it a*

spring; The rain also covers it with pools. 7 They go from strength to strength; Each one appears before God in Zion.

Psalms 30:11

*You have turned for me my **mourning into dancing**; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness.*

4. He can give us a door of hope in the valley of trouble.

Hosea 2:15 (see also 14)

*15 I will give her her vineyards from there, and the **Valley of Achor as a door of hope**; She shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.*

God can turn a place of trouble into a place of opportunity, and a place of hope. The Amplified Bible says, “to be a door of hope and expectation”

Isaiah 65:10 *Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, And the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, For My people who have sought Me.*

God can turn a valley of trouble into a door of hope and a place of rest. He removes anxiety and leads us to rest:

Isaiah 63:14 - *As a beast goes down into the valley, and the Spirit of the Lord causes him to rest, so You lead Your people, to make Yourself a glorious name.*

Conclusion

Deuteronomy 11:11-12 - *but the land which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, ¹² a land for which the Lord your God cares; the eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.*

What a beautiful picture of what belongs to us: not just the hilltops but also the valleys. God wants you to possess the valleys as well. He is not only God of the mountains but also God of the valleys!