

Overcomers not just Survivors

By Joy Ringnald

****dear sisters, Although I do focus on addressing the wives and mothers, I hope that each of you will apply the main heart of my burden according to the calling wherein God has placed you right now. If you desire more teaching/exhortation for your particular calling please feel free to seek me out or other godly older in the Lord women for it .*****

by Joy Ringnald

Dear faithful sisters, followers of the Lamb,

Oh hear the call, my sisters, to take up thy cross afresh and follow Jesus Christ, your King, with all of your heart – away with our foolish ways of carnality and lukewarmness. Let us be ablaze, as women of God, for our glorious LORD! Put aside your excuses of the cares of this life that choke out the Word of God in your lives. Our call is not to murmur and excuse ourselves but to overcome by the power of our great God! It is His Hand that has put each one of us in the sovereignly planned and wisely decreed circumstances that we daily face. The difficulties we find in our way upon the narrow path are not to destroy us but to strengthen our faith in God and to weaken all confidence in this wretched flesh which must be crucified daily by faith. The Lord calls us to deny ourselves, pick up our cross and to follow Him.

Are you doing this, sister?

Are you laying hold upon that cross, cleaving unto it, and letting it purge away the disgusting dross of your own flesh as you obey the orders of your Blessed Master and do His will, even when it is agonizingly painful and you feel you will not survive apart from His keeping power?

Are you making earnest, fervent supplications unto God for the grace that you desperately need to walk with God in your calling, whether it be the calling of a wife, mother, or single woman?

Or are you satisfied with mere survival? With getting through a day by the skin of your teeth, and falling into bed exhausted and glad that you made it through all the chaos of dealing with the flesh of rebellious children and stressful circumstances?

Are you rising above the norm of American motherhood and walking in the ways of Biblical womanhood? Or are you content to know that in culture's eyes you would be accepted as a 'good mother'? Is there really any difference between you and the typical homeschool mother of young children? *Do you have the power of God with you in your motherhood? In your wifeness, widowhood, singlehood, etc?*

Are you the wife that is the secret, hidden strength of her husband? The faithful helpmeet that is walking in a manner pleasing unto the God who called her to help this man? Is your heart utterly and joyfully submitted unto your husband as unto Jesus Christ? Are you reverencing your husband from the depths of your soul? Or are you just settling down with the form of a good wife, but denying the power thereof? Is there hidden resentment in your heart to the rule of your husband? Do you secretly meditate upon ways that you esteem yourself more wise than him?

Sisters, in light of your Christianity right now, the way that you are following Jesus Christ right now, will you survive the greater fires of persecution? Oh do not foolishly fancy that you will stand strong against all the world trying to destroy you when you are not presently overcoming your own flesh. If your love for Jesus Christ is not

burning brightly now, don't expect it to burn brightly when the fires of persecution arise and our flesh starts to feel to the utmost the cost of following Jesus Christ. Rest assured, if you love your life at all, it will be impossible to endure great persecution. They who love their lives will quickly forsake Jesus Christ when their lives start to be touched by fire. Faithfulness to God must be now. Now is the time to live by the power of God and walk worthy of Him.

I ask you to consider the lives of these godly women who arose above circumstances that were already difficult. They didn't just reach the level of surviving but overcame and were godly women who glorified their King with their lives. I spent some time thinking about what the lives of these women must have been like, and marveled over their constancy to the cause of Christ and loyalty to their husbands in circumstances and times of even dire necessity. Dear sisters who are wives, will you be found the faithful wife and helpmeet of your husband in the worst hour of trial when all men forsake you and all seems hopeless? The Lord is seeking to teach us vital lessons right now so that we will not fail him in the greater fires to come, and they are coming, no doubt.

I know some of these accounts are lengthy, but I believe you will find them profitable and edifying if carefully read in the Spirit and with an eye towards my burden of being a victorious overcoming Christian woman.

Isabel Brown, Wife of John Brown of Priesthill

It was about the year, 1680, that Priesthill [John Brown] got acquainted with Isabel Weir, in the parish of Sorn; she was a very superior woman, though her disposition was the very reverse of his; she was lively and jocular, and could cheer up his grave countenance till he was as animated as herself. She saw him often; for he had frequently business to transact with her father, when he passed to and from Ayr. They often talked of Zion's trouble; **and what was remarkable, when he sought her in marriage, he told her he felt a foreboding in his mind that he would one day be called to seal the Church's testimony with his blood.**

After this, the Indulged ministers had gone so far in the course of defection, that the more conscientious sufferers had none they could hear, after the death of Cameron and Cargill. They resolved to form themselves into societies, to meet quarterly, of members delegated from their weekly prayer-meetings. The second of these quarterly meetings took place at Priesthill, February, 1682, when they made a contribution to send a young man to Holland, to be licensed as preacher to them. The fruits of this brought forward Mr. Renwick, of glorious memory.

About two months after this, Priesthill was married by Mr. Peden, who happened to be in Kyle baptizing children. The marriage took place in a glen near the house. When Isabel and her company arrived at the spot, they were surprised at the assembly gathered. Mr. Peden welcomed her and said: --"These are to be witnesses of your vows; they are all friends, and have come at the risk of their lives to hear God's word, and to countenance his ordinance of marriage." **After the marriage, he said to the bride, Isabel, "You have got a good man to be your husband, but you will not enjoy him long; prize his company, and keep linen by you to be his winding sheet, for you will need it when ye are not looking for it, and it will be a bloody one."** This sadly came to pass in the beginning of May, 1685.

John had, by a former wife, a little girl about five years of age, who, on the morning after his marriage, lifted the latch of the spence-door, and finding Isabel alone said, while she covered her face shily with her arm, "They say ye are my mother!" "What if I should be your mother?" replied Isabel. "Naething, but if I thought ye were my mother, I would like to come in aside you a wee," said Jennie, with artless simplicity. "I hope I will be your mother, my bairn, and that God will give me grace to do so, and that you will be a comfort to me and your father." And she proved so.

When but a child she was a help and pleasure to them. She would watch her father's return, and as soon as she saw his pack-horse in the distance, coming along the bent, she would announce the joyful tidings. Then the gudewife hastened, and made ready his milk porridge, and them dished, covered with a clean cloth, and warm water to wash his weary feet, a blazing fire, and a clean hearth; and she and Janet would go out and welcome him home, and help him off with his horse's load.

The domestic peace and comfort of Priesthill are talked of even to this day. Many anecdotes are told, and one among the rest that illustrates the precept of hospitality to strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. The second year after his marriage, one night in the beginning of winter, John had gone to a neighbor's house; the family at home were preparing the wool of their flocks for hoddens-gray cloth, to sell at Lawrie's fair in Hamilton. The shepherd carded the black and white wool together for the women to spin; Janet and the herd boy were teasing for the carder; the gudewife sat nursing her first-born son at one side of the fire, when the dog, which lay at full length at the other, started up and ran to the door, barking at the approach of a stranger. Isabel thought it would be her husband returned, and was about to rise to meet him. Janet and the herd were almost as soon at the door as the dog, and calling to him, "Whisht, Collie, wisht, you mu'na speak to the unco man." The herd caught the dog in his arms and returned with him into the house, while Janet followed, leading a stranger, first looking to her mother for encouragement, and then to her guest. She led him to her father's chair with a courtesy that seemed to give rise to strong emotions in his heart.

The stranger was young in years, of a little stature and fine fair countenance; but he was pale with fatigue and sickness. His shoes were worn out; a shepherd's plaid hung round him, seemingly for disguise; for by his dress and speech he seemed of a superior rank. While the servants gazed on him, the gudewife did not know whether she should welcome him as a sufferer, or consider him as a spy; so she left Janet to perform the kind offices which the stranger required, while she lulled her boy to sleep, by singing a verse of an old song.

While the gudewife sang, the stranger's face brightened up, and he more cheerfully accepted the child's endearing attentions, who placed him in the warmest corner, helped him off with his dripping plaid, imitating all the kind offices she had seen her mother perform to her father, to the no small amusement of the rest of the family. On the stranger it had a different effect. He burst into tears, and cried, "May the blessing of him that is ready to perish rest upon you, my dear bairn! Surely God has heard my cry, and provided me a place to rest my head for a night. O that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people and go from them; for they be an assembly of treacherous men."

Just as he had finished, Priesthill entered. He gazed on him, and with great deference bade him welcome to his house. "Do you know me?" said the stranger. "I think I do," said John. "It was in this house that the Societies met that contributed to send you to Holland, and now I fear they have not received you—at least some of them—as they ought." "Their reproach has not broken my heart," said Mr. Renwick, --for it was he, though he was not named before the family,--"But the excessive traveling, night-wanderings, unseasonable sleep, frequent preaching in all weathers, especially in the night, has so debilitated me, that I am unfit often for my work."

Everyone in the family now strove to do him some kindness. The shepherd brought him clean hose and hoes; the herd his new night-cap; the lasses left their wheels and washed his feet; the gudewife prepared him a warm supper, while little Janet, worn out, was fast asleep at his side.

In those days, hospitality was with many in reality what it ought to be, purely exercised for God's glory, and without display of grandeur. The motives were like silver tried; it was at the risk of all, even life. Hence the joy of such pure intercourse was sweet beyond description. As iron sharpeneth iron, so do the face of man his friend. Renwick and Priesthill talked of the sufferings of the Church, her testimony, her covenanted cause, and her ultimate triumph. Yes, they had more comfort in the faith that Christ would one day be Head over all things, King of kings, and Lord or

lords, than the wicked have, when corn and wine do most abound.

Soon after Mr. Renwick left Priesthill, and his followers and he published their Apologetic Declaration. Mr. Renwick was at first averse to the measure, but at least agreed.

The society that met at Priesthill was soon broken up. John Wilson and John Smith of Lesmahagow, were shot by colonel Buchan and the laird of Lee, in February, 1685. John Brown of Blackwood, in the same parish was shot in the beginning of March following, by lieutenant Murray, after the promise of quarter.

After this, Priesthill could not continue his business of carrier, though he had no hand in the Apologetic Declaration. His opinion—and his conduct was consistent with it—was, that he ought to live as in an enemy's country, and *without sin*. Yet he was often obliged to betake to the highlands of Kyle, and of Lanarkshire, and to bear the chilling cold of March and April winds, with the more bitter blast of persecution.

On one of those days, when driven from his home, he fled for refuge to a deep ravine, or moss-hag, that had been formed by the current of a water-spout, carrying shrubs, soil, moss, and all before it, to the dale land beneath, leaving a frightful chasm, amidst a vast field of heath. Its deep mossy sides made it inaccessible to strangers; only the neighbouring husbandmen knew where the brackens hid the rocks, whose shelvy sides conducted to the bottom. In the sides of this natural alley were dens and caves, sufficient to hide a large company. In one of these Priesthill intended to spend the day in prayer, and had begun to pour out his soul in the words of Lamentations iii. 40, and downward, when a sweet sound reached his ear, that seemed to proceed from another part of the moss-hag.

“It is the hallowed sound of praising God, and by some fellow-sufferers;” said John, as he rose from his knees to search them out; and to his no small joy found out David and William Steel, his neighbors, and Joseph Wilson, from Lesmahagow, in the cleft of a rock that jutted halfway into the ravine. David Steel had a narrow escape the day before this. When just about to begin the morning worship, one cried out, “There is the enemy coming!” He arose with the Bible under his arm, and, without knowing what he was about, went into the barn, and laid himself down in an empty cow-stall, putting the Bible on his breast. His wife, equally unconscious, turned over him a heap of bedding, just as the soldiers entered the place. They stabbed the straw where he lay, but the Bible received the point of the sword, and they left the house without finding their victim. William Steel's house was near at hand, and also searched. His wife had locked him in her clothes-press. After they searched every place without success, and had left the house, a soldier returned, and said to the gudewife “Mistress, next time you hide, hide better; part of your husband's coat is locked without your press;” and with these words he left her, to join his company. After he was gone, to her amazement she found it as the soldier had said.

William Steel, who escaped death from the persecutors, and lived many years after the Revolution, said often, if ever there was a time in his life that he would wish to enjoy over again, it was that in which he suffered persecution; especially the day and night he spent in the moss-hag.

Among the last of the needy adventurers of Charles II's reign, who could swim through the blood of their more conscientious countrymen to favour and emolument, was Graham of Claverhouse [well known for his dissolute manners and cruelty]...

Charles now being dead, James, duke of York, required such instruments to compel submission to his system of cruelty. Having now thrown off the mask, the suspicion of the Reformers, that Prelacy was to be handmaid to the introduction of Popery in Scotland, was verified. For that purpose he enlarged the commission of Claverhouse, and created him viscount of Dundee.

“The measure of fixing garrisons of soldiers through the south and west counties, as if Scotland had been invaded by

a foreign enemy, was the beginning of many cold-blooded murders in the field. One of these garrisons was fixed at Lesmahagow." Claverhouse came unexpectedly there, late on the last night of April, 1685, and having heard of John's piety and non-conformity, by six o'clock next morning he was at Priesthill,--a proof how he thirsted for the blood of such men.

The Death of John Brown

As usual, John had risen with the dawn, and had offered up the morning sacrifice. After worship, the good man went to the hill to prepare some peat-ground; the servants were also out, but at some distance, when Claverhouse surrounded the helpless man with three troops of dragoons, and brought him down to his own house. He left his implements of industry with great composure, and walked down before them more resembling a leader than a captive.

Meanwhile Janet had alarmed her mother by telling her that a great many horsemen were coming down the hill with her father. "**The thing that I feared is come upon me; O give me grace for this hour!**" said her mother, hastily taking up her boy, and wrapping him in her plaid, and taking Janet by the hand, she went on to meet her foes, praying in secret as she went.

The leisurely way of examining persons by law, in which there was some semblance of justice, was now departed from. Claverhouse simply asked him why he did not attend the curate, and if he would pray for king James? He said he acknowledged only Christ as supreme Head of the Church, and could not attend the curate, because they were placed there contrary to His law.

Upon hearing this, Claverhouse said: "Go to your prayers, for you shall immediately die," which he did in such a manner as filled the troops with amazement. On his family it had a different effect. His wife, who was great with child, with another in her arms, and Janet at her side, stood while he prayed "that every covenanted blessing might be poured upon her and her children, born and unborn, as one refreshed by the influence of the Holy Spirit, when he comes down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers upon the earth."

When Claverhouse could bear his prayers no longer, and had succeeded after interrupting him twice with the most blasphemous language, to raise him from his knees, **John said to his wife: --"Isabel, this is the day I told you of before we were married;" and added, with his usual kindness, "you see me summoned to appear in a few minutes before the court of heaven, as a witness of our Redeemer's cause, against the ruler of Scotland. Are you willing that I should part from you?" "Heartily willing," said she, in a voice that spoke her regard for her husband, and her submission to the Lord, even when he called her to bow before His terrible things.** "That is all I wait for; O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where will be thy victory?" said John, while he tenderly laid his arms around her, kissed her and her little boy, and lastly Janet, saying to her: --"My sweet bairn, give your hand to God as your guide, and be your mother's comfort!" He could add no more; a tide of tenderness overflowed his heart. At last he uttered these words, "Blessed be thou, O Holy Spirit, that speaketh more comfort to my heart than the voice of my oppressors can speak terror to my ears!" Thus, when the Lord brought his witness to be tried, he discovered such a magnanimity, that, as he fell, he conquered his persecutors.

If in the Christian's life, there is a light that discovers the spots of the wicked; so, in the martyr's heroic grappling with death, there was a heat that scorched past enduring. It was doubtless under this feeling that Claverhouse ordered six of his dragoons to shoot him, ere the last words were out of his mouth; but his prayers and conduct had disarmed them from performing such a savage action. They stood motionless. Fearing for their mutiny, Claverhouse snatched a pistol from his own belt, and shot him through the head.

And while his troops slunk from the awful scene, he, like a beast of prey that tramples and howls over a fallen

victim, insulted the tender-hearted wife, while she gathered up the shattered head, by taunting jeers; “What thinkest thou of thy husband now, woman?” “I ever thought much good of him,” said she, “and now more than ever.” He, seeing her courage, said, “It were but justice to lay thee beside him.” She replied, “If ye were permitted, I doubt not your cruelty could go that length; but how will ye answer for this morning’s work?” With a countenance that belied his words, he answered, “To men I can be answerable, and as for God I will take him in my own hands.” Thus saying, he hastily put spurs to his horse, and left her with the corpse. She tied up his head with her napkin, composed his body, covering it with her plaid, and, when she had nothing further to do or contend with, sat down on the ground, drew her children to her, and wept over her mangled husband.

The mourners of Priesthill did not long want friends. The report of the foul deed circulated rapidly, creating dismay and abhorrence. Who now could think themselves safe, when John Brown was thus treated, who was not otherwise obnoxious to government than in not attending a curate several miles distant? The first who arrived on the spot was David Steel’s wife, one well fitted to comfort in the most trying dispensation. She ran up to the group, and throwing her arms around them, saluted Isabel thus, “Wow, woman! And has your master been taken from your head this day; and has God taken you and your children under his own care, saying, ‘I will be a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless?’ No wonder [worry] though ye were overcome and astonished at his doings.” This salutation aroused and strengthened the widow. She remembered the words of Mr. Peden, and she arose from the ground to search out the linen he had warned her to prepare. About this time David Steel, and William Steel with his wife, arrived, and assisted Isabel to bring in and wrap up the precious dust. All was done, while the silence of death reigned over the household.

As was said of the proto-martyr Stephen, devout men carried him to his burial. In like manner was John Brown carried forth and laid in his grave, on the very spot where he fell.

The poor widow of Priesthill and her children did inherit the earth, and had a name long after that of her oppressors was not.—About fifty years ago a gentleman, riding to Edinburgh, fell into conversation with a respectable-looking countrywoman on the road, and hearing that she was a grand-daughter of John Brown, he on that account made her ride behind him into the city. So much was the memory of the Christian Carrier respected. And what was a proof of the harmony of his family, she could not tell whether she was of the first or second wife’s children. None of them now reside at Priesthill; but their house stands, and the broad flat stone that covers the Martyr’s grave, is shown, with this inscription.--

In death’s cold bed, the dusty part here lies

Of one who did the earth as dust despise:

Here in this place from earth he took his departure;

Now he has got the garland of the martyr.

Buther’d by Clavers and his bloody band,

Raging most rav’nously o’er all the land,

Only for owning Christ’s supremacy,

Wickedly wrong’d by encroaching tyranny.

Nothing how near so ever he to good

Esteem'd, nor dear for any truth his blood.

James Guthrie's Letter to His Wife on the Day of His Martyrdom

' My heart, --being within a few hours to lay down my life for the testimony of Jesus Christ, I do send these few lines as the last obedience of unfeigned and spotless affection which I bear to you, not only as one flesh, but as a member with me of that blessed mystical body of the Lord; for I trust you are, and that God who hath begun His good work in you, will also perfect it and bring it to an end, and give you life and salvation. Whatever may be your infirmities and weakness, yet the grace of God shall be sufficient for you, and His strength shall be perfected in your weakness.

To me you have been a very kind and faithful yoke fellow, and not a hinderer but a helper in the work of the Lord. I do bear you this testimony as all the recompense I can now leave you with.-- In all the trials I have met with in the work of the ministry, these twenty years past, which have not been few, and that from aggressors of many sorts, upon the right hand and upon the left, you were never a tempter of me to depart away from the living God, and from the way of my duty, to comply with an evil course, or to hearken to the counsels of flesh and blood, for avoiding the cross and for gaining the profit and preferment of a present world. You have wrought much with your hands for furnishing bread to me and to my children, and was always willing that I should show hospitality, especially to those that bore the image of God.

These things I mention not to puff you up, but to encourage you under your present affliction and distress, being persuaded that God will have regard unto you and unto the children of my body which I leave to your care, that they may be bred up in the knowledge of the Lord. Let not your wants and weaknesses discourage you; there is power, riches, and abundance with God, both as to the things of the body and things of the soul; and he will supply all your wants, and carry you through. it is like to be a most trying time, but cleave you to God and keep His way, without casting away your confidence; fear not to be drowned in the depths of the troubles that may attend this land; God will hide you under His shadow, and keep you in the hollow of His hand.

Be sober and of a meek spirit; strive not with providence, but be subject to Him who is father of Spirits. Decline not the cross, but embrace it as your own. Love all that love the Lord, and delight in their fellowship. Give yourself unto prayer, and be diligent in reading the holy Scriptures. Wait on the ordinances, and have them in great esteem as the appointed means, of God, for you salvation. Join the exercise of piety and repentance together, and manifest your faith in the fruits of sincere obedience and of a gospel conversation. Value your conscience above your skin. be not solicitous, although you know not where with to clothe you and your children, or wherewith to dine; God's providences and promises are a true, rich, and never failing portion.

Jesus Christ be all your salvation and all your desire! You, I recommend unto Him, and Him unto you: My heart! I recommend you to the eternal love of Jesus Christ - I am helped of God, and hope I shall be helped to the end. Pray for me while I am here, and praise with me hereafter. God be with you - I am yours.

-James Guthrie

Edinburgh, Tolbooth, June 1st, 1661

Adriana Pratt de Weyden Rogers

“It was on a Monday morning in the year of our Lord fifteen hundred and fifty-five on February fourth in the town of Smithfield, England that a man was led to the stake. The crowd, including his own children, assisted him and comforted him in *such a manner that it seemed as if he was being led to a wedding rather than an execution.*” When the sheriff asked him to recant he replied, *“That which I have preached with my lips I will seal with my blood.”* Then the sheriff replied, *“Thou art an heretic.”* he replied *“That shall be known at the Day of Judgment.”* The sheriff added, *“I will never pray for thee.”* To which the martyr responded *“But I will pray for you.”*

I was born in Brabant, Antwerp, Belgium in the year fifteen hundred and eleven. In fifteen hundred and thirty-six I was married to my husband, who was a former Roman Catholic priest from England who had resigned his priesthood and left his country dissatisfied with the Roman Catholic Church. He came to Christ through the ministry of William Tyndale. Nine months later William Tyndale was led to the stake, leaving behind a precious manuscript with my husband. Using this manuscript and the works of Coverdale and other Reformers my husband compiled what became the first officially authorized version of the Bible in the English language. The Thomas Matthews Bible. It was authorized by King Henry VIII.

When Edward VI became king we returned to England and my husband was given a high position in the Protestant Church. When Roman Catholic Queen Mary ascended to the throne of England my husband gave a stirring message to his congregation at St. Pauls to remain loyal to the Reformation principles they had been taught. When a Catholic was appointed to speak at my husband’s church the crowd rioted and as a result my husband and others were arrested.

My husband spent over a year in prison, going through many questionings by Queen Mary’s Catholic bishops. When he was sentenced to death by burning he pleaded to have a few words with me, his wife of eighteen years. But he was refused on the grounds that we were not legally married because he had once been a priest.

And so on the day of his execution I and my ten children, the youngest but a babe in my arms who had never met it’s father, joined the crowd in observing my husband walk to his death even as a bridegroom goes to his bride at the wedding altar. As the officials condemned him to death, the people in the crowd rejoiced and praised God for this man’s constancy and unswerving loyalty to the Word of God.

My husband was but the first of many martyrs under the reign of Bloody Queen Mary. He later became known as the father of the Reformation in England.

My husband was true to what he said *“That which I have preached with my lips I will seal with my blood.”* Are we also willing to follow Jesus Christ with the passion that he and so many others did?

Wife of Dr. Taylor, Reformer and Martyr in England in 1500’s

“Then turning to his wife he said, *“My dear wife continue steadfast in the faith, fear, and love of God. Keep yourself undefiled by popish idolatries and superstition. I have been unto you a faithful yoke fellow and so have you been unto me for the which I pray God to reward you and doubt not, my dear, but God will reward you. Now the time is come that I shall be taken from you and you discharged of the wedlock bond towards me; therefore I will give you*

my counsel that I think most expedient for you. You are yet a child bearing woman and therefore it will be most convenient for you to marry for doubtless you will not of yourself be able to support our dear children nor be out of trouble till you be married. Therefore as soon as Providence shall point out some pious honest man who you think will support the poor children be sure to marry him and live in the fear of God but by all means avoid idolatry and superstition." -Dr. Taylor, martyr during bloody queen Mary's reign

The Life of Mr. ANDREW DUNCAN

(This story shows the reality of the hardships that these families faced during persecution, and of the great trial of faith it was for the wives. I put it here as a testimony of the faithfulness of God to his people)

Mr. Duncan was settled minister at Crail, in the shire of Fyfe, and was afterwards summoned before the high commission court at St. Andrews, in the year 1619. on account of his faithfulness in opposing the five articles of Perth. At the first time of his compearance, he declined their authority; and at the second, he adhered to his former declinature, upon which the high commission court passed the sentence of deposition against him, and ordained him to enter himself in ward at Dundee. After the sentence was pronounced, he gave in a protestation, which was as follows, "Now, seeing I have done nothing of this business, whereof I have been accused by you, but have been serving Jesus Christ my master in rebuking vice, in simplicity and righteousness of heart. I protest (seeing ye have done me wrong) for a remedy at God's hand, the righteous Judge, and summon you before his dreadful judgment-seat, to be censured and punished for such unrighteous dealings, at such a time as his majesty shall think expedient, and, in the mean time decline this your judgment simpliciter now as before, and appeal to the ordinary assembly of the church, for reasons before produced in write. Pity yourselves for the Lord's sake; lose not your own dear souls, I beseech you for Esau's pottage: Remember Balaam, who was cast away by the deceit of the wages of unrighteousness; forget not how miserable Judas was, who lost himself for a trifle of money, that never did him good. Better be pined to death by hunger, than for a little pittance of the earth, to perish for ever, and never be recovered, so long as the days of heaven shall last, and the years of eternity shall endure. Why should ye distress your own brethren, sons and servants of the Lord Jesus; this is not the doing of the shepherds of the flock of Christ: if ye will not regard your souls nor consciences, look I beseech you, to your fame, why will ye be miserable both in this life and in the life to come."

When the bishop of St. Andrews had read some few lines of this admonition, he cast it from him, the bishop of Dumblane took it up, and reading it, said he, calls them Esau's, Balaams and Judases "Not so, said Mr. Duncan, read again, beware that ye be not like them." In the space of a month after, he was deposed for non-conformity.

In the month of July 1621, he presented a large supplication, in name of himself, and some of his faithful brethren, who had been excluded the general assembly, to Sir George Hay clerk register, on which account he was in a few days after, apprehended by the captain of the guards, and brought before the council, who accused him for breaking ward, after he was suspended and confined to Dundee, because he had preached the week before at Crail. Mr. Duncan denied that he had been put to the horn; and as for breaking ward, he said, That, for the sake of obedience, he staid at Dundee, separated from a wife and six children for a half a year, and the winter approaching forced him to go home. In the end, he requested them not to imprison him on his own charges, but the sentence had been resolved on before he compeared. He was conveyed to Dumbarton castle next day (some say to Blackness castle); here he remained until the month of October thereafter, when he was again brought before the council, and by them was confined to Kilrinnie, upon his own charges; This was a parish neighbouring to his own.

Upon another occasion, of the same nature with this just now narrated, this worthy man was banished out of the kingdom, and went to settle at Berwick, but having several children, and his wife big with another, they

were reduced to great hardships, being obliged to part with their servant, they had scarcely subsistence sufficient for themselves. One night in particular, the children asking for bread, and there being none to give them, they cried very sore; the mother was likewise much depressed in spirit, for Mr. Duncan had resource sometimes to prayer, and in the intervals endeavoured to cherish his wife's hope, and please the children, and at last got them to bed, but she continued to mourn heavily. He exhorted her to wait patiently upon God, who was now trying them, but would undoubtedly provide for them, and added, that if the Lord should rain down bread from heaven, they should not want. This confidence was the more remarkable, because they had neither friend nor acquaintance in that place to whom they could make their case known. And yet before morning, a man brought them a sackful of provision, and went off without telling them from whence it came, though entreated to do it. When Mr. Duncan opened the sack, he found in it a bag with twenty pounds Scots, two loaves of bread, a bag of flour, another of barley and such-like provisions; and having brought the whole to his wife, he said, [See what a good master I serve.] After this she hired a servant again, but was soon reduced to a new extremity; the pains of child-bearing came upon her, before she could make any provision for her delivery, but providence interposed on their behalf at this time also: While she travailed in the night-season, and the good man knew not where to apply for a midwife, a gentlewoman came early in the morning riding to the door, and having sent her servant back with the horse, with orders when to return. She went in, and asked the maid of the house, How her mistress was, and desired access to her, which she obtained; she first ordered a good fire to be made, and ordered Mrs. Duncan to rise, and without any other assistance than the house afforded, she delivered her, and afterwards accommodated Mrs. Duncan and the child with abundance of very fine linen, which she had brought along with her. She gave her likewise a box, containing some necessary cordials and five pieces of gold, bidding them both be of good comfort, for they should not want. After which, she went away on the horse, which was by this time returned for her, but would not tell her name, nor from whence she came.

Thus did God take his own servant under his immediate care and providence, when men had wrongfully excluded him from enjoying his worldly comforts. He continued zealous and stedfast in the such, and, to the end of his life, his conduct was uniform with the circumstances of this narrative.

In the last few days it has become more of a pressing burden upon my heart that all of us sisters would rise above our circumstances and overcome and walk as godly spiritual women who are a testimony of the power of the grace of God to live godly in this present evil world. This has been birthed out of conviction that I have not been rising above my own circumstances to walk in a particular word from God given to me nearly a year ago. In my eyes it has been too impossible, something that I am too weak and unable to do. The daily burdens press me sore as it is...how could it be possible to do what the Lord is speaking unto me? It is the sin of Moses who faltered to obey the Lord because of his own inadequacy. It is a subtle pride in thinking that I need to be strong and in control of circumstances to be used of God...forgetting that He uses the base, the weak, the poor that He might confound the mighty.

Of a truth, there is only one way, wholehearted faith and trust in Jesus Christ and His keeping and delivering power as you fight against all sin and flesh through steadfast obedience and fervent, effectual supplications unto the throne

of Grace, with the faith of the Syrophenecian woman who would not be denied.

Consider her faith:

“Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; **my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.** But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.” Matthew 15:21-28

Have you ever pondered upon the agony that this woman went through having a daughter grievously vexed by a devil? Do not we mothers know of some of the agony of training our children when they are being grievously vexed by their own depraved flesh that stirs up strong rebellion as they go on from iniquity to iniquity? Her life was a grief unto her because of this affliction of her child. It drove her to Jesus Christ.

What of the sorrows and trials that grievously vex your own soul every day? Does it drive you to Jesus Christ? Or are you moaning in a self-pitying way over your sad lot, meditating upon how hard your life is, and wondering when deliverance will come?

Sisters, the cross is supposed to hurt our flesh! It's supposed to kill our flesh and drive us to Jesus Christ. You're not supposed to be able to make it on your own. You need the help of your Saviour! But, the only way you're going to find help is by going unto the throne of grace with importunate, faith-filled prayer that will not be denied. Like this Gentile woman did. You can murmur about your crosses, and the God ordained, sovereignly and perfectly orchestrated purpose of saving you through it will be defeated, or you can bend low at His pierced feet and sob, cry and weep for help to overcome, to deny yourself, to carry your cross and follow your Lord.

This Canaanite woman was outside of the promises of God unto Israel. She had no legitimate right to go to Jesus for help. But she was so desperate that nothing kept her back. She went to his disciples and besought them for help with so much insistency that they begged Jesus to send her away! His response was discouraging, but she drew nigh! She didn't turn away offended, thinking that she had done all she could. No, she wasn't going away without help being given. The words of Jesus here were cutting to the flesh and humiliating to her, but she responded with worship towards this King who had power over devils. She was content to be a dog under the banqueting table of the children of Israel if she could only have a crumb from the hand of the Messiah King.

This was the faith that our Lord marveled at and was pleased with. He sent her home with the promise that her daughter had been made whole.

Sisters, how much more should we be storming the Throne of Grace with our pleas and supplications for help and grace in our time of need? We are **not** outside of the promises! They are ours. We are adopted children, having the highest privilege of sitting with Him in the heavenlies. The cry of “Abba Father!” is a cry that God, the Almighty, Sovereign LORD, receives and is pleased to hear come from our lips. He will listen to us. He has promised to hear our prayers if we are not regarding iniquity in our hearts. Our rights as the blood purchased Bride of Jesus Christ surpass the rights of all those godly men and women of the Holy Scriptures who have gone before us in the Old Testament.

For those who faltered over the soul-searching words at the beginning of this document and were tempted to think

that the way is too narrow, that it is truly impossible. This is our answer: we must lay hold of grace to walk the narrow way by faith-filled, importunate prayer. We must, every day, fight the good fight of faith and lay hold of eternal life. God will help us, sisters. He will help us to become the godly women that we have yet to be as a whole in this church. He will help us become a great strength unto the brethren, and not a grief and sorrow as has sadly been the case far too often in the past. He will help us rule over our children well that they will not prove a hindrance to the kingdom of heaven but will themselves be early brought in to be co-laborers with us in the Gospel! He will help us overcome temptations by teaching us how to take the promised way of escape. All of the mountains that we look at now will fall down before us as we with Caleb boldly say, "Give me this mountain", or with his daughter boldly ask for more inheritance, "Give me also springs of water"!

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matthew 21:21-22

When Caleb first entered the Promise Land along with the other eleven spies, he beheld with faith the power of God to take that mountain that God sent them unto at the first and to conquer the giants that they first beheld. When the hearts of ten of the spies failed and they took back a discouraging report, Caleb's heart was swelling with faith to take the land they had just seen.

"And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this *way* southward, and **go up into the mountain**: And see the land, what it *is*; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they *be* strong or weak, few or many; And what the land *is* that they dwell in, whether it *be* good or bad; and what cities *they be* that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds; And what the land *is*, whether it *be* fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time *was* the time of the firstripe grapes. So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath. And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the children of Anak, *were*. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)" Numbers 13:17-22

"**And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.** But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they *are* stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, *is* a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it *are* men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, *which come* of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." Numbers 13:30-33

Forty five years later, after Caleb had witnessed an entire generation of his people destroyed for their unbelief, he asked Joshua if he could return to that mountain and take it for his inheritance:

"Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old *was* I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him word again as *it was* in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of

the people melt: but **I wholly followed the LORD my God**. And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while *the children of Israel* wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I *am* this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I *am as* strong this day as *I was* in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength *was* then, even so *is* my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. **Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said.** And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh **Hebron** for an inheritance. **Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.** And the name of Hebron before *was* Kirjath-arba; *which Arba was* a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war." Joshua 14:6-15

He held fast to the promise of God that this mountain was his inheritance. For forty-five years he waited for the time to take the land. He gave himself wholeheartedly to do God's will and in the end he took his inheritance and conquered the sons of Anak! Oh for the steadfast faith of Caleb! And even his daughter was of the same bold faith and besought her father for more inheritance. She wasn't content with a little when she knew she could obtain more. Ah daughters of Zion, will you be content with mere survival when you can be overcoming and walking as godly, spiritual women?

"Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. And it came to pass, as she came *unto him*, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted off *her* ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou? Who answered, **Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs.**" Joshua 15:16-19

Who will join me and be the Achsahs of our generation? I promise you, it will be a fight, it will be hard, there will be times when you will be tempted to despair and wonder if you can make it, there will be times when you will be low in the dust, broken over your own sin and inability to do God's will in your strength, and all you can do is lift up the most pathetic cries for mercy and pleas for help. But, oh He is faithful to come when we call upon Him. Oh bless the Lord, the Rock of our Salvation, our Strong Tower and Sure Refuge from the enemy! He is faithful to all those who are faithful to Him!

The Lord has been taking me through a trial with Hadassah over the past six weeks in particular, though it has been a long on-going trial with varying intensity since we first commenced training Hadassah. Having a newborn to care for, along with my own home and the burdens my husband entrusts me with, it has been a great challenge, a well nigh impossibility, to deal with the continual temper tantrums of a toddler. Often my days have been filled with dealing with incessant, blatant rebellion; and at the end of the day my heart has failed within me as discouragement crept in over not seeing any breakthrough. But since I repented of not walking worthy of the Lord in my calling as a godly woman, I have been trying to fight with everything within me to do the Lord's will and to overcome. I have failed greatly on some days, given heed to unbelief and depression, but the Lord has helped me to get back up and keep fighting. He quickened to me the word about the Syrophynecian woman and the need to have importunate prayer, and I am learning to cry unto God more for help with my precious daughter. I am learning that it takes my whole heart, and a cleaving unto God to win any battle with my child, a steadfast resolve to believe God for grace to

be an authority in her life and to stand against her unashamed rebellion, it takes sobriety and carefulness to make sure my ways of dealing with her are in the Spirit and pleasing unto God, and not to rely on a form. It makes me cry out to God every time I chasten her that He would cause the chastening to touch her heart and not just her flesh. I am learning to fight, and God is helping me. I am seeing that this trial is a small scale of the overall fight of the Christian life, and I am thankful for it. After many, many days of feeling like no progress is being made, I am beginning to see small bits of fruit appear, but truly, it still takes a watchfulness and carefulness to maintain this fruit and not to see it all disappear by one act of unrighteous pampering or giving in.

Sisters, will you join me and fight with me to walk the narrow way and glorify our worthy Lord and Saviour? Will you set your face to strive to be a godly woman where God has put you right now? Will you begin to pray more and believe God for the grace that you so desperately need and so often have lacked?

I can guarantee you, my dear sisters, that if we all starting fighting with all our might (*and true, you may feel like it is very little might that you have, but let it just be all that you have*) to do God's will and start praying with faith and importunately, our lives will change, our church change, the world will change, God will be glorified.

If we don't do this, we too will turn back eventually and forsake our Lord as others have done. If there is anything in your heart less than wholehearted devotion to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, you won't be able to endure the great fight of afflictions of the Christian that only increase. If deep in your heart you want to have an easier lot and to be free of your cross, oh beware, God may give it to you and you will perish in the flames of fire with both of your hands, feet and eyes. Anything less than being wholehearted for God will not suffice for those who will overcome.

My dear sisters, if the Lord has pricked your heart and shown you any sin through this letter, I plead with you to repent, get your heart right with the Lord, flee from sin and run to obey the light HE is giving you.

I love you, my dearly beloved sisters.

For the glory of my great and blessed King and Lord,

Sister Joy Ringnald

Some Scriptures to meditate upon:

I John 5:4: For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Revelation of John 2:7: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Revelation of John 2:11: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Revelation of John 2:17: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Revelation of John 2:26: And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

Revelation of John 3:5: He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Revelation of John 3:12: Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Revelation of John 3:21: To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Revelation of John 21:7: He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Matthew 17:20: And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

Matthew 21:21: Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

Matthew 21:22: And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

I John 5:14: And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

I John 5:15: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Hebrews 4:14: Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.

Hebrews 4:15: For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin.

Hebrews 4:16: Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Luke 11:5: And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

Luke 11:6: For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

Luke 11:7: And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

Luke 11:8: I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

Luke 11:9: And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Luke 11:10: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be

opened.

Luke 11:11: If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

Luke 11:12: Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

Luke 11:13: If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?