

What Lies Ahead Pt. 3
Discussion Notes- January 18, 2025

1. What's something you wanted to be *really good* at that took longer than you expected?

This past week's sermon challenged us to rethink success by showing that lasting victory comes through small, faithful actions repeated over time. Using the Israelites' journey and God's promise to drive out their enemies little by little, we learn that what we obtain must also be maintained. True growth does not happen through quick wins or emotional highs but through consistent habits and systems rooted in dependence on God. Scripture reminds us that who God is shaping us to become matters more than what we accomplish. In the end, success in God's kingdom is not one big moment, but a life of steady obedience, discipline, and trust, little by little.

Read Proverbs 4:25-27

"Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil."

The imagery of fixing our eyes forward and carefully watching our steps emphasizes direction over speed. Success is not about sudden leaps but about consistent movement in the right direction. Victory is maintained through habits and systems rather than emotional highs or one-time decisions. The warning not to swerve reflects the need to guard what God has already given, reinforcing that progress can be lost if it is not protected. Lasting success comes little by little through disciplined obedience and trust in God's guidance.

2. How do these verses help explain why quick victories often fail without long-term discipline?

Read Exodus 23:28-30

"And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites from before you. I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and possess the land."

God promises to drive out Israel's enemies, but intentionally not all at once. His concern is not His power, but Israel's readiness. If victory came too quickly, the land would become uninhabited and dangerous, and the people would not be able to sustain what they were given. God's plan required growth alongside blessing, teaching Israel to trust Him over time and steward the land responsibly. This passage reveals God who is deeply involved in both the outcome and the process. Victory, in God's design, comes little by little so His people can maintain what they receive.

3. What does God's "little by little" approach reveal about His care for our long-term growth?

Read Joshua 1:7-8

"Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

God's pattern throughout Scripture shows that lasting victory requires more than a moment of breakthrough; it requires a life shaped by faithfulness. God makes it clear that what He gives must be maintained, pursued intentionally, measured over time, and protected carefully. Israel's gradual possession of the land reveals a God who cares about sustainability, not just success. This theme continues in Joshua 1:7–8, where God tells Joshua that success will come not through strength or speed, but through careful obedience and continual attention to His Word.

4. How do remembering God's past faithfulness and practicing daily obedience work together in spiritual growth?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:58

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

God's pattern of victory is not a one-time event but a process of steady, faithful growth. He calls us to maintain what we gain, act intentionally, track progress, and guard our lives against drifting away. This is true in both spiritual growth and daily living: God wants to shape us into people who can sustain the blessings and responsibilities He entrusts. Success in His kingdom is not measured by speed or dramatic breakthroughs, but by the small, faithful choices we make each day. As we close, we are invited to reflect on how God is asking us to take those next faithful steps, little by little, in the areas of life He is shaping.

5. What is one area of your life where God is asking you to take small, faithful steps today to live ready for the success He wants to give you?

Prayer/Closing:

- Pray for faithfulness in the small, daily steps God is calling you to take.
- Pray for wisdom and discipline to guard and maintain what God has entrusted to you.
- Pray for trust in God's timing and guidance, even when progress feels slow.

Deeper Dive: Lessons from the Israelites

The story of the Israelites' journey from Egypt to the Promised Land is one of God's guidance, provision, and discipline. Though God delivered them miraculously from slavery, their journey was long and filled with challenges, tests of obedience, and moments of doubt. The wilderness experience shows the tension between immediate freedom and long-term growth: God desired not only to deliver His people but also to shape them into a people who could sustain the blessings He gave. Their story models the sermon's main theme that lasting success and victory are earned and maintained "little by little" through faithfulness, obedience, and discipline.

Read Exodus 14:13-18, 21-22, 30

"And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent." The Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."... when Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left... Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore."

This passage shows God delivering Israel miraculously while simultaneously testing their trust. Moses encourages them to stand firm and wait on God, showing that victory often begins with faithful obedience, even when circumstances seem impossible. The miracle of the Red Sea emphasizes that God fights for His people but also calls for active participation and trust. Just as the sermon teaches, God initiates victory, but His people must move forward step by step, trusting His timing, the first "little by little" step toward success.

Read Numbers 13:1-3, 17-20, 27-30

The Lord said to Moses, "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel. From each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a chief among them." So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran, according to the command of the Lord. All of them were heads of the people of Israel... Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan and said to them, "Go up into the Negeb and go up into the hill country, and see the land, what it is, and whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, few or many, and what the land is, whether good or bad, and what cities are in it, whether camps or strongholds. And be courageous, and bring some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes... And they told him, "We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Nevertheless, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there.

The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan.”

Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.” But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.”

Here, Israel faces a setback born from fear and lack of faith. Despite God's previous victories, they focus on limitations rather than on God's power. This connects to the sermon's point about spelling it out specifically and trusting God's past faithfulness. Caleb demonstrates faith in God's provision, showing that readiness to succeed requires seeing challenges through God's perspective, not human limitations. This is a lesson in how obedience and trust sustain progress “little by little,” even in the face of overwhelming obstacles.

Read Deuteronomy 8:2-6, 16-17

“And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you. So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him... who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’”

This passage emphasizes sustained growth through dependence and discipline. The Israelites' time in the wilderness was formative; they learned that victory and provision come through obedience and reliance on God. This aligns with the sermon's points: maintain it, track it, guard it, and live intentionally. God's testing wasn't punitive; it was to prepare His people for lasting success. Spiritual growth and readiness to succeed are processes that require faithful habits and daily dependence, not instant results.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do the Israelites' fears, complaints, and setbacks show the importance of relying on God rather than personal perception?
2. In what ways do these passages illustrate the sermon's “little by little” principle in practical terms?
3. How can understanding the Israelites' journey help us see our own spiritual growth as a process rather than a single event?