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2700-PLUS SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS (V-TOPICS)
Compiled and Arranged Topically by Duane V. Maxey

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VICTORY

- 2523 -- BURN THE BRIDGE!

It is said that during the Revolutionary War, General Washington came up to the Brandywine, near Philadelphia, with his army, and thy crossed over the bridge. Some soldiers went to him afterward and said: "General, what had we better do with the bridge, burn it or leave it there, lest the enemy may drive us back, and we shall want to retreat?" General Washington

thought a minute, raised his hands in the great majesty of his mighty generalship, and cried out, "Burn the bridge." It is victory or death. That was the idea. And so the Christian may go through this world burning all the bridges behind him, in no danger of being driven back or overcome by the enemy. -- Albert P. Graves

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VICTORY

2524 -- GOD'S BOLL WEEVILS

In the center of main street in Enterprise, Alabama, stands one of the strangest monuments in the world. It's a memorial to an insect! Handsomely carved in stone is the likeness of a boll weevil. Many believe that divine providence was involved in the circumstances that led to the erection of this unusual statue. In early plantation days almost everyone in the community raised cotton. But as the years rolled on, a serious pestilence infested the area in the form of a small beetle that punctured the boll of the plant. As a result, it became almost impossible to bring a season's growth to maturity. George Washington Carver, along with several other scientists, became deeply concerned about the situation and began intensive studies to see if any substitute crop could be grown in that part of the country. Raising peanuts was the answer, for they could be planted and harvested with very little loss. In time, cotton gins were forgotten in that region, and it became known as an outstanding peanut center of the world. Soon the farmers' profits far exceeded what they had earned from their best cotton yield. In the end, they realized that the destructive insect they had feared had actually triggered the research that brought them prosperity.

The Lord often allows trials to unsettle our lives for a blessed purpose. Perhaps we are trying to "grow cotton" when we should be "raising peanuts." If so, the delays and disappointments we experience are just the gracious "boll weevils" sent to redirect us so that we will plant the crop of God's choosing!

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VICTORY

2525 -- SAY NO TO THE DEVIL BECAUSE THE ENEMY IS DEFEATED

In his book *Forever Triumphant*, F. J. Huegel told a story that came out of World War II. After General Jonathan Wainwright was captured by the Japanese, he was held prisoner in a Manchurian concentration camp. Cruelly treated, he became "a broken, crushed, hopeless, starving man." Finally the Japanese surrendered and the war ended. A United States army colonel was sent to the camp to announce personally to the general that Japan had been defeated and that he was free and in command. After Wainwright heard the news, he returned to his quarters and was confronted by some guards who began to mistreat him as they had done in the past. Wainwright, however, with the news of the allied victory still fresh in his mind, declared with authority, "No, I am in command here! These are my orders." Huegel observed that from that moment on, General Wainwright was in control.

Huegel made this application: "Have you been informed of the victory of your Savior in the greatest conflict of the ages? Then rise up to assert your rights. Never again go under when the enemy comes to oppress. Claim the victory in Jesus' Name." Huegel observed, "We must learn to stand on resurrection ground, reckoning dead the old-creation life over which Satan has power, and living in the new creation over which Satan has no power whatever."

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VICTORY

2526 -- SONG OF FINAL TRIUMPH -- OH! COME! ANGEL BAND!

My latest sun is sinking fast,
My race is nearly run;
My strongest trials now are past,
My triumph is begun.

I've almost gained, my heavenly home,
My spirit loudly sings;
The holy ones, behold they come!
I hear the noise of wings.

O, come, angel band,
Come and around me stand,
O bear me away on your snowy wings
To my immortal home.

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VISION

2527 -- BLIND MULES

A man was driving through a mining region one Sunday when he noticed a large number of mules in an open field. When he inquired about this unusual sight, he was told that the work animals had been brought up from the dark passages below to preserve their eyesight. Unless they were regularly exposed to the sunlight, they would eventually go blind. The Christian needs similar experiences to keep him from losing his spiritual vision. The Lord's Day has been given to aid him in keeping his eyes focused clearly on the TRUE LIGHT!

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VISION

2528 -- DOMINATES LIFE

There was a study done of concentration camp survivors. What were the common characteristics of those who did not succumb to disease and starvation in the camps? Victor Frankl was a living answer to that question. He was a successful Viennese psychiatrist before the Nazis threw him into such a camp. "There is only one reason," he said in a speech, "why I am here today. What kept me alive was you. Others gave up hope. I dreamed. I dreamed that someday I would be here, telling you how I, Victor Frankl, had survived the Nazi concentration camps. I've never been here before, I've never seen any of you before, I've never given this speech before. But in my dreams, in my dreams, I have stood before you and said these words a thousand times."

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VISION

2529 -- HIS VISION FOR COCA COLA

Robert Woodruff, who was the President of Coca Cola, from 1923 to 1955, a 32-year span, cast the following vision for Coca Cola. Right after World War II, he said, "In my lifetime I want everyone in the world to have tasted Coke." What is your vision for your ministry? -- John Maxwell

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VISION -- HEAVENLY

2530 -- CAUSED TO SEE THE GREAT KING, AND HEAVEN

"In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and lifted up..." I know a little cottage which is surrounded by great and stately trees which are clothed with dense and massy foliage. In the summer days, and through all the sunny season, it just nestles in the circle of green, and has no vision of the world beyond. But the winter comes so cold and keen. It brings its sharp knife of frost, cuts off the leaves until they fall trembling to the ground. There is nothing left but the bare framework on which summer hung her beauteous growths.

Poor little cottage, with the foliage all gone! But is there no compensation? Yes, Yes. Standing in the cottage, in the winter time, and looking out of the window, you can see a mansion which has come into view through the openings left by the fallen leaves. The winter brought the vision of the mansion.

My brother, you were surrounded by the summer green of prosperity. It had become your king. There your vision ended. But the Lord wished to give your thought a further reach -- He wanted your soul to see the mansion which the Father has prepared for them that love Him. So He took away your little king. He sent the winter, and stripped your trees; and in the year that the little king died, you saw the Lord. -- J. H. Jowett

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VISION -- SPIRITUAL

2531 -- FIRST LOOK

From the Westminster Teacher I gleaned this story of an artist's daughter who lost her eyesight when she was a baby. After her mother died, the girl's father became her constant and affectionate companion. For years her blindness was considered incurable. Then a new type of surgery promised to restore her vision. Following the operation, as she lay in a darkened room with bandaged eyes, this one thought occupied her mind: Soon I shall see my dear father! When the days of waiting had passed, the dressings were removed, and at last she looked into the compassionate face she had so long desired to see. Trembling with excitement, she closed her eyes, and then opened them again to convince herself she was not dreaming. As the one she loved took her into his arms, she exclaimed, "I've had such a good-looking father all these years and didn't even know it!"

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VISION -- SPIRITUAL

2532 -- LET ME SEE YOU

Can the human spirit be "seen?"

In the book "The King of the Earth", Erich Sauer explains how this is possible: "A young man who devoted himself to ideological and moral problems... had been hoping to be further stimulated by meeting Socrates. But contact with this intellectual "giant" so overawed him that he scarcely dared to open his mouth to speak or to ask a question. So they walked side by side for a while without conversation. Then Socrates suddenly broke the silence and said kindly but briefly to his young companion, 'Speak, that I may "see" you.' In this short sentence lies the deep recognition of the connection between spirit and word. Speech is the instrument for the manifestation of the human spirit."

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VISION -- SPIRITUAL

2533 -- WHERE WE OFTEN GET SPIRITUAL VISION

Stars may be seen from the bottom of a deep well when they can not be discerned from the top of a mountain. So are many things learned in adversity which the prosperous man dreams not of. -- Spurgeon

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VOCABULARY

2534 -- ONE'S VOCABULARY NEED NOT BE LARGE TO BE EFFECTIVE!

A crook broke into a wealthy home and was filling his sacks with stolen goods when he heard a large growl. He looked down to see the biggest Doberman pinscher that he had ever seen on the floor beside him. But before he had a chance to do anything he heard a small voice say: "Who are you? Who are you?" He looked around but couldn't find anyone or anything that was saying it and then he moved and the dog just sat there. So he continued to rob the house until his bags were full and then as he was ready to leave the house he noticed a parrot in a cage. As he walked over to the cage the parrot said, "Who are you? Who are you?" The crook looked at him and said, "Is that all that you can say? 'Who are you? Who are you?'" And the parrot replied, "Sic em!"

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THE END