

# CHRIST'S VICTORY OURS

By

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“And this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith” (I John 5:4).

On the face of things it would appear that Christians are not winning many victories. Christian victory, to modern man, can be conceived only as the “good life,” a life of material success in a world of peace and plenty. Instead, he gropes in a sea of misery, ugliness, poverty and violence.

Millions who profess Christ no longer think of Him as a victorious King of Kings and themselves as victors and “more than conquerors” but have accepted the Jewish doctrine of Futurism and Utopianism — the idea that Messiah will come to give physical and material victory to his people by carnal warfare, and then we can enjoy the fruit of faith and delight in the glory of victory. In the meantime it is worry, frustration and fear. It is defeat and anxiety and helplessness in the face of the enemy. The French playwright Eugene Ionesco summed up the fear and pessimism of the age: “I have no other images of the world except those of evanescence and brutality, vanity and rage, nothingness or hideousness, unless hatred. Everything I have since experienced has merely confirmed what I had seen and understood in my childhood; vain and sordid fury, cries suddenly stifled by silence, shadows engulfed forever in the night” (Quoted by Duncan Williams in “Trousersed Apes”, Pg. 75).

Ionesco's image of the world is nothing new. These conditions prevailed in the time of Christ when the world was in “gross darkness.” Paul's description of the evils of his generation also fits our own (Rom. 1). Everyone who is in touch with people is aware of these ugly and miserable conditions. The general diagnosis of the world may be summed up in three words, “man is sick.” His sickness is spiritual, his nature is diseased and his morals erupt in evil. Many abandon any hope for victory in this life and become practical pessimists.

**BASIS OF DEFEAT.** The basis for defeat and anxiety lies deep within man's being, in his subconscious knowledge of failure. The anxiety is not diminished by achievements in the world; it is found among the most “successful” as well as the down-trodden, for it comes from a failure to attain God's purpose, to be a man in God's image, holy and righteous as God is.

The sense of defeat is compounded by the humanistic philosophy that man is steadily progressing upward along the evolution chain, and that by social progress and scientific advancement he will eventually overcome all obstacles to happiness. Thinking this to be the case men look forward to every new discovery as a possible break-through to victory, only to find that the old fears and anxieties are still there. Man's discoveries and increased knowledge only make him a smarter sinner, and increase his awareness of alienation from God. The greater his abilities the heavier the burden of his failure!

**GOOD NEWS>** The Good News is this: the righteousness of God is now available through Jesus Christ. “Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (II Cor. 5:21). When Christ died for believers He took the full penalty for sin — the wages of sin is death! God's justice

was satisfied by the execution of Jesus in our stead, and God accounts the believer as a righteous person. The Christian will continue to fail as far as his living a perfect life, but his faith is in the promise of God that he has righteousness through Christ, and the victory over sin, fear and anxiety is in that faith.

Victory for the Christian is not gained by carnal warfare, nor by superior spiritual powers, but by faith and that which faith produces, obedience to Christ. The battle for victory is not won by chasing down each sin or each enemy and destroying it, but by fixing our faith and our lives firmly in Christ and remaining in Him by faith. Still, it is a faith that “works by love” (Gal. 5:6) for “Faith without works is dead in itself” (James 2:17). Keeping the commandments is the product of faith. Jesus said, “If any man would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Such a denial begins in faith. One must abandon his Adamic nature of doubting God and devising his own will; he must give up his own egocentric will to trust God’s will and only then can he replace his self-expression with obedience to God. Obedience to Christ does not require special skills, superior intelligence or great power of will. Rather it requires faith. One must deny self and come to Christ submissively, ready to act upon faith, rather than upon his own inadequate sight. “We walk by faith and not by sight.”

The victory is won by Christ and not by our own actions. It is Christ who defeated Satan so that he cannot deceive the saints. When we face Satan we face him in the victory that Christ has already won for us. It is Christ who was crucified to meet the penalty for our sin, thus winner the victory over death and the grave. Death holds no threat to the Christian. It is Christ who paid the penalty for our sins. Judgment has already been rendered upon Christ for the saint, thus the judgment holds no terror to the Christian. It is Christ who was raised and glorified, who sits in the seat of heavenly power, and to whom all authority is given. By faith we have been raised up “to sit with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6). It is Christ who now intercedes for us and it is Christ who will return to call forth the dead and give his own immortality and a portion in the new earth wherein dwells righteousness (II Pet. 3:13).

Victory is not ours because of our achievements, our perfection, our hard work and great activity. All our works are to glorify Him because He has won the victory!

**COMPLETE VICTORY.** The victory is ours by faith! Do you believe that all your sin is forgiven and that you remain free of its guilt daily because of Christ’s death and resurrection? (I John 1:7–9). Then this is your victory, even your faith. But if you struggle with the thought that perhaps some sin is too much for Christ to bear on the cross, that maybe His death didn’t cover it all, then you fail to believe the gospel, and you will strive in vain for the peace and joy of victory.

Unless we understand the connection between sin, judgment and the cross, we may have difficulty believing the complete victory Christ won. Since the ultimate penalty for sin is death, and Christ sustained that death on our behalf, there can be no further condemnation (Rom. 6:7, 8:1). He took the full penalty, for the judgment of sin is not perpetual torture as the Roman Catholic Church would have us think, but the destruction of both body and soul in the fire of Gehenna (Matt. 10:28, Luke 12:4–5). It was not continuous torture that Christ suffered to meet our penalty — else He must still be suffering — but death in the common sense, the death of the cross, a common method of executing criminals. The payment for sin is made in full, there is nothing more to be

extracted from the guilty. Do you believe this? Then your victory over death and the grave is won by Christ and assured by faith.

This is “justification by faith”; it is “imputed righteousness”, that for which Paul said he was willing to give up all, that he “might be found in him, not having a righteousness of (his) own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, “THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS FROM GOD BY FAITH” (Phil. 3:9).

INCREASING OUR FAITH. To realize this victory daily and rise above the defeatism and pessimism of the world we would do well to increase our faith. A few suggestions are in order.

1) “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17). Satan’s power is in deception while our weapon is truth. Christ overcame the severe temptations of the devil by using the truth — “It is written...” He said. The more we feed upon the word of God the more firmly are we attached to Him by faith, and the more we realize the victory.

2) The victory is personal. Do not expect those around you always to recognize the victory you are winning and applaud you for it. Christ won a great victory in the garden when He prayed, “Not my will, but thine be done,” but to his friends and enemies alike it seemed that He was going down in defeat. Job appeared to be a failure, even to his wife, but he was winning the battle all along. Martyrs have died in flames while rejoicing in the victory being won. Some Christians think that they must be bubbling and radiating light-hearted cheer without ceasing, and when they cannot muster up this glow, they feel defeated. But Paul was often in tears and deep sorrow, yet confident of victory at every step. He said that he made a pitiful picture to the world, but he rejoiced in the victory that was his in Christ. Seeming defeats are used by God for our benefit: “and we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

3) Although the victory is personal, you are not alone. Elijah thought he was the only one of faith left in the land, but God still had y,000 faithful. There are Christians all over the world, each holding fast the faith in spite of sufferings and tribulation, and Christ is with each one.

4) The object of the faith is that we may be found righteous in Christ when He comes. Don’t waste effort trying to gain victories in the world that have no significance with God.

5) Keep looking to the Victor, and not to self, and failures. Man has a natural tendency to imitate, so it is written that “we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory...” (II Cor. 3:18). Look to Christ, read His word, meditate on His life and teaching and the Victory He has won.

6). Remember that Christ is indeed Sovereign, the King of the universe, the One who has all authority in all creation. To the world it seems otherwise. Many false prophets are spreading fear, saying that Satan is really in command, that antichrist will take over and that our only hope is a sudden snatching out of the world by a secret rapture! Nonsense! Christ has not abdicated the throne. David prophesied that he would “rule in the midst of (his) enemies”, and so He does (Psa. 110:2). It is true that before the judgment all the dead will be raised and all saints will be taken from the earth before it is

destroyed (I Thess. 4:16, II Pet. 3:7), but until that time Christ rules and Satan has no power except that allowed by the Sovereign King, Jesus.

Christ always allowed offenses, tribulations and trials “for the proof of your faith” (I Pet. 1:7). Satan is now highly successful in deceiving men as they reject the truth and readily believe his lies. But Christ assures His sheep that no one, not even Satan, can snatch them from His hand (John 10:27–29).

Faith is to believe that Christ won our victory and now has “all power in heaven and on earth,” as He said. Dr. James S. Stewart once wrote, “We have allowed the magnitude of our problems to blind us to the majesty of our Master” (Quoted from Myron Taylor). Problems continue to multiply, but the basic problem has been solved in Christ. He has been victorious over sin, Satan and death. Every true believer shares in His victory. “And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.”

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