



Lesson 12

RG and OUR VICTORY

KEY PASSAGE(S)

³⁶ “Just as it is written, ‘FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.’ ³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us” (Rom. 8:36, 37).

THE BIG PICTURE – THE Story

God’s *Story* ends in victory. The cross is a victory bathed in blood and wrapped in resurrection. What happens between His resurrection and the great unveiling is not a limp along, try as you might struggle. How we define victory will color our understanding of the moment. Christ won, so thus have His people. His victory is our victory. This lesson explores why this is true and what this looks like.

INITIAL TRUTHS TO REMEMBER

Here we wish to take the truth of Lesson 4 and “stuff” it into our present experience.

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Where do we go from here? If what we have studied is true, then everything changes. The implications of positional truth are far reaching. It is the truth that makes us free (John 8:31-32). The Word of God is the active agent that Christ uses in delivering us from our bondage to whatever enslaves us (John 8:36). This is the mission of Christ (Gal. 5:1).

“and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31).

“So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (Gal 5:1).

BASIC IDEAS:

1. Because JESUS is victorious, those in Him rest in His victory.
2. The Christian life is not gained, but received.
3. There is nothing more to do that JESUS has not already done. Now His people are to rest in His finished work.

Almost without exception, everyone has heard of the theology of living the victorious Christian life. The idea paints a picture of those who enter into some kind of spiritual maturity where struggle, fatigue, and defeat are past. The victorious Christian is one who has learned to enter into His rest, whose life is marked by victory, not defeat. The idea, however, has a consequence that is wrong because of its ability to place the believer in a state of bondage and despair.

Tragically, this error is depicted as a “break-through” truth. The Church of God, without discernment, is swallowing such an ideology “hook, line, and sinker.” Regrettably, this falsehood is widely embraced within Evangelical circles. It is an error whose seed, when planted in the hearts of God’s people, will rob them of “the freedom that Christ set us free” (Gal. 5:1).

Yet, what is the victorious Christian life? The difference between what the Scripture teaches and what this common definition of the victorious Christian is proposing is not only in the outcome, but also in the journey. Though there is much good, the “error” is strong enough to lead the undiscerning back into the bondage of a performance-based acceptance, a merited love, a conditional forgiveness, and an unstable fellowship.

Such error makes a sharp distinction between what He is and who we are. Yet as understood from the Scripture, such a dichotomy is not to exist. In this study, we desire to note how **His Victory is Our Victory**.

TODAY’S LESSON

I. Jesus Christ is Victorious.

“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Notice the context of this verse.

- The devil enters into Judas (John 13:1-4)
- The disciples are going to betray Him (John 13:21-27)
- Peter’s denial is announced (John 13:36-38)

The tone is ominous. He reiterates this darkness in 16:32 and then gives us verse 33.

Notice where our peace is to be found? It is found **in Him**. He promises us conflict, heartache, failure, tribulation, and depression, but then He adds, BUT. The “but” says, “Though all this is true, TAKE COURAGE! Despite the enormity of the burden you are confronted with, BE OF GOOD CHEER!” In every one of its occurrences the backdrop against which this exhortation is laid is dark and foreboding (Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; 10:49; Luke 8:48; John 16:33; Acts 23:11).

But why are we to take courage and be of good cheer in the midst of our crushing circumstances? Friend, the exhortation to take heart is not based on how we feel, but on who He is for us and who we are in Him. TAKE COURAGE. Why? BECAUSE WE HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD! CHRIST IS VICTORIOUS! Overcome is a perfect active indicative. The perfect speaks of an action that is completed, but the results of it continue to this day. All that needs to be done has been done. He is reigning. He is victorious. The expression of that reign in time will be fuller, but not the quality of it.

Q1 – What does the victory of Jesus look like for Him?

Q2 – Is the victorious Christian life something we “physically” enter into where all of our problems and troubles are resolved?

II. By our union with Him all that He is, is ours by right.

This is perhaps one of the hardest truths to embrace and realize.

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20).

³**“For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory” (Col. 3:3, 4).**

The believer does not have two lives: His life is our life. This is not an arrogant statement. It is a true statement. We make no boast in ourselves of being able to secure all that is now ours. We did not do it; He did. We simply believe that what He has done and is doing is enough. Now, because this is true His victory is our victory.

Q3 – How might we wrap our minds around the idea that His life is our life?

III. Thus, His victory is our victory.

There is no victory apart from His victory. **Herein is the tragic misunderstanding as to what constitutes victory. What we are wanting is an experience that appears to be different than the one we have.** Yet we should see our experience as His victory.

“By the resurrection, God proclaimed His Son Victor over the whole realm of darkness, and the ground Christ won He has given to us.... For our part we need not struggle to occupy ground that is already ours. In Christ we are conquerors. In Him, therefore we stand. Thus today we do not fight for victory; we fight from victory. **We do not fight in order to win but because in Christ we have already won. Overcomers are those who rest in the victory already given to them by their God.”¹**

“But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us” (Rom. 8:37).

Consider the context of Romans 8:37. The chapter is one of tremendous victory. For the agitated, it soothes. Notice verse 37. Now notice verses 35 and 36.

- ³⁵ “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written, ‘FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED’” (Rom. 8:35, 36).

What is the tone? After reading verses 35 and 36 how does verse 37 begin? “DESPITE” these things WE OVERWHELMINGLY CONQUER. How? “Through Him who loved us.”

The word “overwhelmingly conquer” means, “To vanquish beyond, to gain a decisive victory, to be more than a conqueror.” Verses 38 and 39 tell us how we can “be” this despite our emotional fallout and circumstantial hell-hole. We conquer by knowing this, “NO MATTER WHAT, JESUS LOVES US THIS WE KNOW.” And no matter how bad we blow it, nothing can change His opinion of us and dealings with us. He loves us, not because of our performance, but because of our position. Glory, Hallelujah!

Despite our circumstances, situation, experiences, feelings, and emotions, we are victorious in His victory.

It is interesting that God's Word never tells us to live any kind of “Christian life.” If you asked Christians to describe a “victorious” Christian, would their list look like 2 Corinthians 11:25-28? How about “despairing even of life?” (2 Cor. 1:8, 9) Would that make the top ten things victorious Christians do?

How about 2 Corinthians 4:8-10, “hard pressed, perplexed, persecuted, struck down?” Would those make the list of top ten things victorious Christians do? So God's victory must look very different from what we think it looks like, because He tells us He never is “losing a battle,” not even for a moment. He is leading us in triumph while we are despairing, perplexed, crushed...

We have victory because Jesus Christ **IS** our life. He will have the victory. So the issue in living the victorious Christian life is whether or not we will embrace the idea that Jesus Christ is doing exactly what He means to do in and through my life at every moment.

Conclusion

Let us conclude with several thoughts. As we continue to meet with people, we are always drawn back to the following eleven bedrock truths.

First, God is in control of the details (Isaiah 6:1ff).

Know God is in control. This forms the ultimate bedrock truth on which all of life revolves. The “problem” we are currently facing is part of God’s eternal purpose for our life. We must see God above all things. **Think of Isaiah 6.** It was in the year that King Uzziah died that Isaiah

saw the Lord “high and lifted up.” Never forget God is the author of the *Story*. We cannot always change our circumstances, but we can have rest and peace. Learn to focus on Him.

Second, there is a purpose behind all the details that make up an individual life (Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28).

Because God is in control, the events of our life are part of His eternal purpose (Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28). Never think somehow the events of our life and the choices we make are isolated or unconnected. Life is a continuous chain from start to finish and the various events within it are the individual links.

Third, life is problematic (Rom. 3:23; 6:23).

Sin has made every breath we take problematic.

¹⁶ “to the woman He said, ‘I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’ ¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life’” (Gen. 3:16,17).

When we read the above description, it becomes apparent that we will not make it out of this life unscathed. Job, in light of his sufferings, “cursed the day of his birth” (Job 3:1). Jeremiah felt the same way in light of his circumstances (Jer. 20:14, 15). As long as we are abiding in our flesh, we will have woe. Failure, however, is not fatal. Do not focus on what appears to be the problem. Chances are what we think is the problem is a fruit and not the root.

Fourth, God never makes a mistake or has an accident (Rom. 8:28).

We are not a mistake. We are not an accident. Our choices have consequences that can be immediate and far-reaching, yet somehow God is working all things out for His glory and our good (Rom. 8:28). What we might deem as a “waste,” God is using to manifest His glory and grace in us and through us to those around us.

Fifth, there is a dimension to suffering that is irreplaceable (Job 5:17, 18, 23:10; 1 Pet. 1:6-9; Ps. 66:10; James 1:12).

There appears to be a consistent thread weaving various passages together strongly suggesting a divine providence in our present circumstances (Job 5:17, 18, 23:10; 1 Pet. 1:6-9; Ps. 66:10; James 1:12).

⁶ “In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷ so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ⁸ and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet. 1:6-9).

Such truth teaches that nothing in life is being wasted. The difficulty we encounter is not part of His permissive will, but that of His perfect will. It is for this reason we have Genesis 50:20, Job 1:21, 13:15, and Romans 8:28. We often view life as either good or bad. In so doing we seek to determine what is considered successful and what would be termed failure. Yet, if our presuppositions are correct, then God is performing his perfect will.

Sixth, perspective is everything (Heb. 12:1, 2).

If we focus on our problem, we miss it by the proverbial mile. If we see God as being in control and if we keep our eyes on Jesus, then our problems become an opportunity for grace to be seen (Heb. 12:1, 2). It is only as we focus on Him that we can have contentment in the midst of our most grueling trial. Often in life we want something other than what we have, yet what we have is what God wants us to have. What we want is not something we will have this side of heaven. Again, it is a matter of perspective. How do you view the problem?

Listen to the following observation by Michael Wells in his work, *Sidetracked in the Wilderness*:

The enemy would never have us fighting the battle where the front lines actually exist; he will always bring something to our attention that has nothing to do with the real issue.²

Seventh, God's grace is always sufficient (2 Cor. 12:9), and He will always provide a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13).

- "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

Do not ever think what you are facing is the end. Our lives and its circumstances are points in a line leading us to God.

Eighth, declare your dependency on Him through prayer (Matt. 26:39, 42).

- "Let this cup pass before me."

Prayer is not an act of discipline as much as a declaration of dependency on Him. Prayer says, "God I need you." God has chosen to work through prayer in the accomplishing of His will. Lean heavily on Him through this channel of grace.

Ninth, read His Word (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:23).

God's mind and perspective are clearly stated in and through His Word. God gives wisdom freely, but we have to read His Word in order to hear His voice.

Tenth, be thankful for who He is, for what He has done, for what you have, for who you are, and for where you are (Eph. 5:20; 1 Thess. 5:18).

Ephesians 5:20 and 1 Thessalonians 5:18 reveal to us and through us the fruit of gratitude. If we choose not to be thankful, we will become bitter, angry, and critical.

Finally, there is always hope, healing, and wholeness in the finished work of Jesus Christ (John 16:33; 1 John 4:4; 5:4).

Never believe the devil's lie that all hope is lost. There is always an end to every trial encountered.

Application

Do not view these truths as a "magic formula" or a kind of "good luck charm." They are simple truths God wants us to know. Learn to rest in what is known to be true. Let us not allow our experiences to shape our theology. We must interpret our circumstances by our theology. We must see ourselves in Him and claim His victory. Rest knowing His will is our life.

When we give Him all we are, which is nothing, He gives us all He is – everything. That is called the exchanged life. He paid a debt He did not owe, for us who owed a debt we could not pay.³

Remember, Jesus Christ is enough.

Q4 - What is changing in your thinking?

Q5 - What does that freedom look like in our daily experiences?

Q6 - What is the victorious Christian life?

NEXT LESSON – RG and the Bema

¹ Watchman Nee, *Sit, Walk, Stand*, pp. 40-42

² Michael Wells, *Sidetracked in the Wilderness*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 179.

³ George, *Faith that Pleases God*, 214.

