

VICTORY IN JESUS

- A. Introduction: John 16:33—The night before Jesus went to the Cross, He told His followers that we can be of good cheer (encouraged, confident, unafraid) because He has overcome the world. We are considering what Jesus meant by His statement and how it affects our lives.
1. The Greek word that is translated overcome (*nikao*) means to conquer or prevail over. In the New Testament this word is applied a number of times to Christians, stating that we also overcome (I John 2:14; I John 4:4-5; Rev 12:11). We need a clear understanding of what it means to overcome.
 - a. Sadly, much of the popular teaching in Christian circles today bears little resemblance to New Testament Christianity, in part because it has incorporated twentieth century principles of success.
 1. Such teaching leads sincere Christians to mistakenly believe that overcoming means living a life of success with little or no problems. And, if we do encounter troubles, they end quickly.
 2. Consequently, when hardships come into people's lives and don't quickly go away, they are left wondering: What's wrong with me? What did I do wrong? God must not love me!
 - b. Overcoming doesn't mean guaranteed success with no problems. Overcoming is a view of reality that is based on what Jesus did through His death and resurrection. This perspective gives us hope and peace of mind in the midst of life's many and unavoidable challenges. II Cor 4:17-18
 2. Rom 8:35-37—In the context of things that can kill us (persecution, famine, danger, sword), Paul the apostle wrote that we are more than conquerors in the midst of them (*huperniko*, overwhelming victors). These things can kill you but they can't overcome you. They can't conquer or defeat you.
 - a. We are more than conquerors because nothing can separate us from God's love which brought us into His family and has given us a future and a hope that will carry us through and outlast this life.
 - b. As sons and daughters of God we are overcomers who look forward to unending life on this earth, once it is made new, and life is restored to what God created and intended it to be. Rev 21-22
 1. Through His death and resurrection Jesus deprived the world of its power to permanently harm us. Every problem, pain, injustice, and loss is temporary and subject to change by God's power either in this life or the life to come.
 2. In this world we will have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration (John 16:33, Amp)—but not in the life after this life, because Jesus has overcome the world: I have won the battle for the world (John 16:33, NIrV); I have deprived it of the power to harm (John 16:33Amp).
 - c. Because of Jesus' resurrection victory, nothing can *permanently* harm us. That's our victory.
- B. To appreciate what it means for us that Jesus has overcome the world, we must first consider His statement in context—who He was talking to and why when He made His statement.
1. Jesus spoke these words at the Last Supper, the night before He was crucified. Much of what Jesus said was aimed at preparing His apostles for the fact that He was about to die and that through His death, He would conquer sin and death and break the power of the devil over all who acknowledge Him as Savior.
 - a. Death is not part of God's plan for man. Death is in the world because of sin. Adam's sin unleashed a curse of corruption and death in the world—in both the human race and the earth itself. Gen 2:17; Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12; Rom 8:20; etc.
 - b. Life's hardships are expressions of death because every pain and problem in the world is ultimately a consequence of sin—not necessarily your own personal sin, but Adam's sin. Rom 6:23
 1. Jesus, through His resurrection victory, demonstrated that He is greater than every effect of sin and its resulting death. As believers in Him, we share in what He has done. Eph 1:19-23
 2. Remember, Jesus died and rose again for us as us. His victory is our victory. We overcame sin, Satan, and death through our Substitute. Gal 2:20; Eph 2:4-6; Col 2:13-14; etc.
 2. When Jesus spoke to His apostles at the Last Supper, although they did not know it yet, He was about to

begin the process of reclaiming God’s creation from the curse of corruption and death to which it was subjected when Adam sinned and restore it to its pre-sin condition.

- a. The world the way it currently is—filled with pain, loss, heartache, sin, and death—is not the way it’s supposed to be, not the way God intended it to be.
 - b. Jesus did not come to earth to make this life the highlight of our existence by making the world a better place. He came to eradicate the root cause of corruption and death (man’s sin) and make it possible for God’s original plan for a family in a perfect world (on this earth) to be realized.
 1. This reclamation of God’s creation is a progressive process that began when Jesus died and rose from the dead and will culminate with His second coming.
 2. Jesus came to earth the first time to pay for sin and make it possible for sinners to be transformed into sons through faith in Him. He will come again to transform and restore the earth to a fit forever home for Himself and His family. John 1:12-13; Rev 11:15; Rev 21-22; etc.
 - c. Gal 1:4—Jesus died to deliver us from this present evil world: this present pernicious age (Wuest); evil world system (TPT); the present evil age (NIV); this present evil world order (Phillips).
 1. The Greek word translated world (*aion*) means a period of time. The emphasis is not on the actual length of that period, but rather on the spiritual or moral characteristics of that period.
 2. We are in the age when things are not the way they’re supposed to be, not as God created or intended them to be. I Cor 7:31—For this world in its present form is passing away (NIV).
3. The Greek word translated world in I Cor 7:31 (*kosmos*) refers to the present condition of human affairs in alienation from and opposition to God—this present world with its cares, temptations, and desires, both moral and physical (*Vine’s Dictionary of New Testament Words*).
 - a. This world in its present condition is not our home. Christians are referred to as sojourners who are passing through this life, this world as it is (I Pet 1:17; I Pet 2:11, strangers or alien residents). Just as Jesus is not part of this world system as it is neither are His followers of this world (John 15:19).
 1. When Adam sinned, not only did corruption and death enter creation, Satan became the god (prince, evil genius, ruler) of the world (II Cor 4:4, *aion*; John 12:31, *aion*; John 14:30, *kosmos*). He has dominion (authority) over all who are in rebellion against God, all who are guilty of sin.
 2. Just a few days before Jesus died for our sins, He made the statement that the prince of this world is cast out: John 12:31—From this moment on, everything in this world is about to change, for the ruler of this dark world will be overthrown (TPT).
 - b. When a person believes on and trusts Jesus as Savior and Lord, he or she is taken out of Satan’s kingdom, out from under his authority, and transferred into God’s kingdom.
 1. Col 1:13—[The Father] has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love (Amp).
 2. Through the new birth, the kingdom or reign of God comes into a person’s inner being. Every new birth is an extension of the kingdom of God in the hearts of men as He progressively reclaims His creation from sin, corruption, and death. Luke 17:20-21
 3. We are in the world, but not of this world. John 15:19—no longer one with it (Amp); do not belong to the world...I have chosen you out of it (J. B. Phillips). Thanks to Jesus’ victory, we are now in the kingdom of God and the kingdom is in us.
 4. Our identity has changed (we are now sons and daughters of God, born of Him), and our citizenship has changed. We are now citizens of Heaven (the unseen kingdom of God). A citizen is one who owes his allegiance to a government and is entitled to protection from it.
 - a. Phil 3:20-21—But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer everything, everywhere (NLT).

- b. Note this translation: But we are a colony of heaven on earth (Phil 3:20, Moffatt; TPT). We now live on foreign soil in hostile territory. We are not of this world just as Jesus is not.
 - 1. Because Jesus paid for our sin and rose up out of death, the devil has been defeated and his authority over us broken, we are free from what gave the devil and death dominion over us.
 - 2. However, the devil has not yet been subjugated (banished from all contact with the family and the family home). Nor has the curse of corruption and death been removed from the earth. Therefore, troubles abound in this fallen world.
 - 3. Even though we are more than conquerors because of what Jesus has done for us, we still live in hostile territory and encounter many challenges. We face constant struggles in the form of circumstances, emotions and thoughts, and the devil and his minions.
 - A. Things wear out and break. Our bodies are mortal and corruptible, so people get injured, sick, and die. Ungodly people make choices we don't agree with or approve of—yet we are affected by what they do. Life in a sin damaged world is hard.
 - B. The circumstances and pressures of life generate a range of unpleasant emotions and tormenting thoughts—anger, fear, worry, disappointment, grief, frustration, etc. And we face constant contrary input from the devil and his angels.
 - c. Nowhere does the Bible tell believers to beware the power of the devil—he has none over us. We defeated him through our Substitute, Jesus. We are instead instructed to beware of his mental strategies. Eph 6:11-12
 - 1. The devil uses deceit (lies) to undermine our confident in God and influence our behavior. We are more vulnerable when we are in the middle of a trial or hardship. Matt 13:19-21
 - 2. That's why it is so important to get accurate knowledge from the Bible and change your view of reality (your perspective) so that you see things the way they really are according to God. His Word (the Truth, the Bible) helps us recognize and resist lies. Eph 6:13-17
 - 3. We in enemy territory and must fight the fight of faith, the struggle to hold fast to what God says above every other source of information, despite what we see and feel. I Tim 6:12
- C. According to I Cor 15:57 God has given us the victory (*nikos*) through Jesus. Where is the victory in all of this (especially since I've just spent a considerable amount of time talking about life's troubles)?
- 1. First, what is meant by the victory? Back up to I Cor 15:54-55 so we can get the context. It begins: When this corruptible and mortal shall have put on incorruption and immortality. That's a reference to resurrection of the dead, when our bodies will be raised from the grave and made immortal and incorruptible (no longer subject to corruption or death).
 - a. Paul wrote that when resurrection of the dead happens, it will be fulfillment of prophesy recorded by Israel's great prophet Isaiah—God will swallow up death in victory. Isa 25:8
 - b. Let's look at what Isaiah wrote. Note the preceding verse (Isa 25:7). There is a covering or veil over the face of all men, but God will destroy it. Destroy (v7) and swallow up (v8) are the same Hebrew word. It means to swallow or engulf.
 - 1. At that time and in that culture, a covering was put over the face of those condemned to death. The whole human race is guilty of sin before a holy God and condemned to death.
 - 2. v7—On this mountain he (God) will remove the mourning veil covering all peoples, and the shroud enwrapping all nations; he will destroy Death forever (Jerusalem Bible).
 - 2. Apart from Jesus, all human beings are under the dominion of death because of Adam's sin. And, we have committed our own sin and become guilty before God, deserving of death. Jesus came to abolish (break the power of) death and bring eternal life (God's life) to all who put faith in Him. II Tim 1:9-10
 - a. I Cor 15:56—The sting of death is sin. Sting (in the Greek) means a goad or a dagger. Death is present in creation only because of sin. Death has power because men are guilty of sin and under

its dominion. No one escapes death. It's only a question of when and how we die.

- b. At the Cross, Jesus paid for our sin so that we could be released from the guilt and penalty of sin—death (in all its forms). When we put faith in Christ and His sacrifice we're freed from the dominion of sin and death. We have victory over it.

- 1. When a Christian dies, he (the inward man) is temporarily separated from his body and goes to be with the Lord. At the resurrection of the death (in connection with Jesus' return) we will be reunited with our body raised from the grave and made incorruptible and immortal (no longer subject to corruption and death).

- 2. When our bodies are raised from the grave and made alive with eternal life death, Isaiah's prophesy will be fulfilled. Let's get the full context of the victory that is ours through Jesus.

- A. Isa 25:6—(At that time) the Lord of Hosts will spread a wondrous feast for everyone around the world—a delicious feast of good food, with clear, well-aged wine and choice beef (TLB).

- B. Isa 25:8—At that time he will swallow up death forever. The Lord God will wipe away all tears...the Lord has spoken—he will surely do it (TLB).

- 3. Rev 12:11 is a well known verse about Christians who overcome. It is sometimes preached to mean that Christians can overcome life's trials because of the blood of the Lamb and because of their testimony.

- a. Although there is truth to that idea, to fully appreciate what the verse says we must read the entire verse in context. This verse refers to those killed through persecutions inspired by Satan.

- 1. Overcoming is tied to their death and not to victory over problems in this life. They overcame because they stayed faithful to Christ even in the face of death. That is the true victory.

- 2. In Rev 2:10 Jesus told believers to be faithful unto death. He made eight specific promises in the Book of Revelation to those who overcome. All those promises pertain, not to this life, but to the life to come. Consider two examples.

- A. In Rev 2:11 Jesus said that overcomers will not be hurt by the second death. The second death is a name given to the fate of all who refuse Christ as Savior and Lord. They will be eternally separated from God who is Life (Rev 21:8; Rev 20:6; lessons for another day).

- B. In Rev 21:7 Almighty God said: He who is victorious (or overcomes) shall inherit all these things, and I will be God to him and he shall be My son (Amp). "All these things", in context, is unending life with the Lord, in resurrected bodies, on this earth made new.

- b. When Rev 12:11 is quoted, the last portion of the verse is often overlooked: They loved not their lives their lives unto the death—they were willing to die (Norlie); they did not love and cling to life even when faced with death (Amp).

- 1. This statement does not mean that these people didn't love their lives. Everyone wants to live. It means that they had the proper perspective or view of reality. This life is not all there is. If we gain everything this world has to offer, but lose eternal life, it's all for naught. Matt 16:26

- 2. An overcomer is not a super spiritual Christian. Nor is he or she someone with no problems. An overcomer is someone who stays faithful to Jesus no matter what. That's the victory

D. Conclusion: We have more to say next week. Consider these thoughts as we close.

- 1. An overcomer knows who he or she is in relation to Almighty God—His holy, righteous son or daughter. An overcomer knows that nothing can separate him or her from God's love demonstrated through Jesus.
- 2. Overcoming is a view of reality that is based on what Jesus did through His death and resurrection. This perspective gives us hope and peace of mind in the midst of life's many and unavoidable challenges.
- 3. Because of what Jesus has done, nothing can stop God's ultimate plan for me. All loss and pain is temporary. The best is yet to come. Therefore I have peace and hope in the midst of life's hardships.