

Victory Through Christ

I Cor. 15:57-58

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the **victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58
Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye **stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord**, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Introduction

A. You can hardly think of the **thrill of victory** without thinking of the agony of defeat, especially if you are an older person and remember the ABC television program entitled "**Wide World of Sports.**"

1. The program was introduced by a film clip that graphically pictured athletes celebrating their victories.
2. The **agony of defeat** was pictured by a skier coming down one of those long ski ramps, losing his balance, and crashing over the side of the ramp.

B. No country in history has enjoyed as much victory as Israel.

1. But they went through cycles of victory and defeat.
2. When they were faithful to God they experienced victory, but when they rebelled God's judgment fell upon them.
 - a. Then the people would cry out to God and repent.
 - b. When there was repentance there would be renewal -- God would hear their cry and raise up a leader to help them overcome their enemies.
3. We read in Judges 6 how the Midianite armies had invaded Israel.
 - a. They had so oppressed Israel that when the crops they planted were ready to harvest the Midianites would come in and destroy it.
 - b. The retribution from God was so great the people of Israel resorted to living in caves and dens, hiding from the enemy.
 - c. The promised land given to them had been overrun by the enemy.
 - 1) Whether we are a nation or an individual it remains truth that "**Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.**"
 - 2) National Israel sowed to the flesh and reaped corruption.

3) But the true Israel, the N.T. Church, the bride of Christ, is still experiencing victory.

C. Every Human being delights in victory.

1. It is a natural desire to want to win.
2. We always like for our school team to win.
3. In **war time** when there was a threat to our country, soldiers and civilians alike worked long hours, sacrificed much, and submitted unselfishly and uncomplainingly to strict rationing, because they were anxiously **desiring a victory**.

D. Some notable quotes that pertain to victory:

“The will to conquer is the first condition of victory.” **Ferdinand Foch**

“You will find peace not by trying to escape your problems, but by confronting them courageously. You will find peace not in denial, but in victory.” **J. Donald Walters**

“If there be no enemy there's no fight. If no fight, no victory and if no victory there is no crown.” **Thomas Carlyle**

“The first step on the way to victory is to recognize the enemy.”
Corrie Ten Boom

“It is impossible to win the race unless you venture to run, impossible to win the victory unless you dare to battle.” **Richard M. DeVos**

“If you seek truth, you will not seek victory by dishonorable means, and if you find truth you will become invincible.” **Epictetus**

“Victory is won not in miles but in inches. Win a little now, hold your ground, and later, win a little more.” **Louis L'Amour**

“In reading the lives of great men, I found that the first victory they won was over themselves...self-discipline with all of them came first.” **Harry Truman**

“Regardless of how you feel inside, always try to look like a winner. Even if you are behind, a sustained look of control and confidence can give you a mental edge that results in victory.” **Authur Ashe**

“Strength is Happiness. Strength is itself victory. In weakness and cowardice there is no happiness. When you wage a struggle, you might win or you might lose. But regardless of the short-term outcome, the very fact of your continuing to struggle is proof of your victory as a human being.” **Daisaku Ikeda**

Someone once asked general **Douglas MacArthur** what is the most important lesson a soldier fighting a war needs to learn? And he replied, “**He must learn quickly that there is no substitute for victory.**”

No statement ever uttered has been truer about the Christian life than that one. If you try to substitute anything for victory as you live for Jesus, you're going to pull the plug of joy right out of your Christian life. Too many Christians are trying to sail to heaven on the old gospel ship waving the white flag of defeat instead of the red flag of victory.

E. Our text promises us **victory**.

1. *"Through our Lord Jesus Christ."*
2. Over and over Paul expressed this confidence.

Rom. 8:31 - *"What shall we then say to these things? If God [be] for us, who [can be] against us?"*

37 *"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."*

Eph. 3:20 *"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,"*

Phil. 4:13 *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."*

F. In Christ we can have....

Body

I. **Victory Over Sin.** Particularly...

A. Over the guilt of sin.

Rom. 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"*

1. Christ offers the only absolute remedy for sin.
2. Men have tried various ways to absolve themselves of sin.
 - a. Men have tried to believe that they could reform themselves out of sin.
 - b. Men have tried to overcome sin by denying the reality of sin.
3. Judaism could not take away sin.

Heb. 10:4 *"For [it is] not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."*

4. Hence it was God's plan that through the death of Christ man's redemption would be accomplished.

1 Pet. 1:18-20 *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were **not** redeemed with corruptable things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the **precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,*

[Through Christ we can have victory over sin, particularly...]

- B. Over the power of sin-temptation.

1 Cor. 10:13 *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it]."*

2 Pet. 2:9 *"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:"*

Through Christ we can have....

II. Victory Over Life's Trials.

- A. Over sorrow.

1. Sorrow is an indisputable fact of human experience.
 - a. Job. 14:1 - *Man is who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.*
 - b. Every man is born of woman, hence every man is destined for a certain amount of trouble and sorrow.
2. Paul regarded the Lord as the source of consolation and felt that the comfort which He imparted was more than sufficient to overbalance all the sorrows that he would have to suffer.

Passages.....

2 Cor. 1:3-5 *"Blessed [be] God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."*

1 Thess. 4:13 *"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."*

[Through Christ we can have Victory over life's trials]

B. Over difficulties.

1. Hard, uphill roads may rise before you and your eyes may not be able to penetrate the gloom to discern the dangers and to discover the course of safety: but Christ who has unlimited power and love has promised to be with us.

Matt. 28:20 *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you **always**, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen."*

Heb. 13:5 *[Let your] conversation [be] without covetousness; [and be] content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

Ps. 46:1 - *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

50:15 - *"Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."*

[Through Christ...Victory over life's trials]

C. Over fear.

1. Our age is one in which there are fears upon every hand.
 - a. Men are wondering, "Will some ruthless dictator take over the country and maybe the world?" "Will there be atomic war and we all die?"
 - b. But Christians believe in the indestructibility of the kingdom of God.

Dan. 2:44 - *"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." (Matt. 16:18)*

Heb. 12:28 *"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:"*

[Through Christ...Victory over life's trials]

D. Over the world.

I John 5:4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, [even] our faith.*

1. Christians are in the world, but they are not of the world. Passages....

John 15:18,19 *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before [it hated] you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

John 17:14-16 *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not*

that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Rom. 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

I John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

2. Jesus overcame the world.

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

But how?

- a. He grappled with the powers of evil and overcame them.
- b. He met every assault of the devil with the Word.

Matt. 4: 1-11 - Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

3. If the world is not being overcome by us, then we are being overcome by the world.

4. How do we overcome the world?

- a. By hearing the word, obeying it, keeping it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

Ps. 119:11 - *Your word I have hidden in my heart, that might not sin against You.*

Through Christ we can have...

III. Victory Over Death

- A. This victory is on the last battlefield.
- B. Throughout the ages men asked the question of Job.

Job. 14:14 - *If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes."*

1. Through Christ we are assured victory over death.

I Cor. 15:20-22 *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man [came] death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."*

55-57 *"O death, where [is] thy sting? O grave, where [is] thy victory? The sting of death [is] sin; and the strength of sin [is] the law. But thanks [be] to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

I Thess. 4:13,14 *"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."*

2. Scoffers sneer at the idea that Christians will be resurrected.
 - a. But if the eye surgeon can transplant the cornea taken from a dead body into the eye of a living blind man and thus, give sight,

cannot the Lord of **limitless power** open our eyes, though they be closed in death?

- b. God cannot lie and He has the power to do as He has promised, so there is **NO** reason for unbelief.

IV. Paul's Conclusion and Challenge. Vs. 58

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Let's take a closer look at this passage:

A. **"Therefore"**

- 1. In view of the great and glorious truths that have been revealed concerning the resurrection.

B. **"My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast unmovable."**

- 1. Be not shaken or agitated by temptation or by the cares of the world.
- 2. Be firm, fixed and unshaken in the faith.

C. **"Always abounding in the work of the Lord".**

- 1. What is the chief work of the Lord?
 - a. The preaching of the gospel is the chief mission of the Lord's church. (Mark 16: 15,16)

Eph. 3:10,11 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly [places] might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

- b. If we abound in this work then we shall have the guarantee that our . . .

D. **"Labor is not in vain in the Lord."**

- 1. Our labor shall eventually be rewarded.

2. And the reward will be **adequate, complete, glorious and eternal.**

V. It is Essential that we Seek to Experience Victory God's way.

A. Scriptures:

1. 2 Tim 2:4 **No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.**
2. 1 Cor. 9:24-27 (GNB) **An athlete who runs in a race cannot win the prize unless he obeys the rules. 24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be **disqualified.****

B. Many desire victory but they must learn that they must follow the rules – “**strive lawfully**” or “**be disqualified.**”

C. One of the most detrimental teachings to victory in Christ is the idea that once one is saved, he will always be saved.

1. Those who teach this are false prophets because their teaching is refuted by hundreds of clear passages throughout the Bible.

- 1) Jesus said, (Matt 7:15) **“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”**
- 2) 2 Pet. 3:17 **Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.**

2. To keep saved one must “**walk in the light**”.

- a. 1 John 1:7 **“For IF we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us of all sin.”**

- b. After listing several things that are referred to as “the Christian Graces, Peter said, 2 Pet. 1:10 **Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.**”
- c. If you want to obtain victory through Christ, you are going to have to DO these things: 1) “**walk in the light**” and 2) **give diligence** to DO those things that Peter says will assure us we will not fall.

Conclusion

- I. 2 Cor. 2:14 *Now thanks [be] unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.*
- II. Life is just one constant victory after another **in Christ Jesus, but remember that this victory in life, in death and in eternity is only “through our Lord Jesus Christ”.**

III. Let’s quickly review what we have discussed:

- A. In the Introduction we looked at some notable quotes that help us to understand and attain victory.
- B. Summary of the main points of the lesson:
 - 1. Victory over Sin
 - 2. Victory over life’s trials
 - 3. Victory over the world
 - 4. Victory over death
 - 5. Paul’s challenge and conclusion that if we are **unmovable, always abound in the work of the Lord** our **labor is not in vain.**
 - 6. We emphasized that it is **essential** to seek victory **God’s** way.
- C. Invitation

We read in Acts 2, where Peter preached Christ to the Jews...on the day of Pentecost. They were pricked in heart and asked, “men and brethren, what shall we do?” They were told to “repent and be baptized for the remission of sins”. Three thousand obeyed the command and the Lord added them to the

church (verse 36, 41, 47). The answer to the question asked is the same today and the Lord will add you to the number of the saved if you obey.

Developed from a sermon by Melvin J. Wise and other sources