

This Way To Victory!

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It was a beautiful day. The winter months had come and gone, and now the promising signs of spring were appearing everywhere. Sun-warmed breezes carried the sounds and smells of a new season into the open windows of our car.

Suddenly we thought we heard music. It sounded like singing.

As we drove down the street, the melody grew stronger. Then as we turned the corner, we saw them. On the steps of the courthouse a little band of people were singing a song that has risen from millions of voices across this nation: "We Shall Overcome."

As melting snows were retreating up distant hillsides and flowers were blooming in neighboring yards, it seemed that the human spirit was joining all nature in proclaiming: "*The power of life and hope cannot be defeated!*"

People cannot stand unending oppression. We were made for victory, not defeat. Defeat demoralizes. Victory vitalizes!

Yet every day countless people struggle to overcome oppression and defeat--social, political, financial, physical, emotional oppression and defeat. These are important issues to human beings in this natural life. Still, these are not the issues that determine ultimate human defeat or victory. The real battle is spiritual. *There* is where a person's true defeat or victory lies!

Mankind's three main spiritual enemies are the world, the flesh and the devil. We read in 2 Peter 2:19, "By whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage." Every sinner is a loser--overcome, defeated, "sold under sin" (Romans 7:14).

But the Bible is the book of victory. Its gospel is the good news of the victorious Savior. Jesus Christ defeated the devil. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). He overcame the demands of the flesh. He "was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). He also said, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Christ's victory secures our victory. The Scriptures picture the believer as an overcomer, a conqueror, a winner. Victory is the norm for the Christian.

We overcome *because of the new birth*. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world" (1 John 5:4). "Born again" means born victorious. Defeat is incompatible with the "new man."

We overcome *by faith*. The above passage in 1 John goes on declare, "And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (verses 4, 5).

Faith not only brings the victory. Faith *is* the victory. The victory is ours the moment we commit ourselves in faith to the saving and keeping power of Jesus Christ. And it remains ours as we continue to trust Him.

So victory is in *trusting*, not just in *trying*. Believers are victorious not because we are struggling to live *for* Christ but because Christ lives *in us*. "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Christ Himself *is* our victory. "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57). "Now thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:14).

We are not only conquerors but also "more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37). The original Greek word means "super-conquerors." A conqueror fights the battle and wins. A "more than conqueror" receives a victory won for him by someone far stronger than himself. The victory is ours because it is His.

For example, in a football game the score is tied and time is running out. Suddenly the star quarterback throws a long pass. The pass receiver catches the ball and breaks through for the winning score. As the game ends, the jubilant fans chant, "We won!"

We? They had little or nothing to do with it. Still, it is *their* victory. Someone else won it for them.

We couldn't make any headway against Satan's team. His three-man rush--the world, the flesh, and the devil--threw us for a loss every time. But Jesus took our place and completely defeated Satan for us. Now the victory is ours because it is His.

Jesus is not a weak Savior. He is our all-conquering Lord! Dare to believe that for your own life.

We overcome *because God's word lives in us*. In 1 John 2:14 we read, "You are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one."

One of the ways we partake of Christ is through His word. For that reason, to remain overcomers we must not neglect our Bibles.

We overcome *evil with good* (Romans 12:21). Spiritual victory is the foundation for victory in all of life. Victory in trials, adversities, and disappointments; the grace to keep sweet when injured, reproached, and misunderstood; the ability to "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who

despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44)--all result from Christ reigning victoriously in our hearts by faith.

The whole armor of God is ours. Put it on. Take your stand (Ephesians 6:14).

The Book of Revelation contains many promises to the overcomer. The overcomer will "eat from the tree of life" (2:7); "shall not be hurt by the second death" (2:11); will "eat of the hidden manna", will have "a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it" (2:17); and will have "power over the nations" (2:27).

Jesus promised further that the overcomer "shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels" (3:5). He said that he shall be "a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name" (3:12). He shall "sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (3:21). The One who sat on the throne said that the overcomer "shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son" (21:7).

So be of good courage, Christian! You are on the winning team! The victory belongs to the Lamb and to all who follow Him. Death, sorrow, crying, pain shall be no more (Revelation 21:4). Yes, even death shall be destroyed, for "the last enemy that will be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26).

Total, final, eternal victory--*that* is what Jesus secured for us at the cross and by His resurrection.

And to the sinner and the backslider--to all who have been conquered and now live in defeat--Jesus offers His victory. Come to Him now, just as you are. Surrender to Him in faith and let Him bring His victory into your life.