

Our Mighty Leader

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We have heard many people tell how hard they found it to do right; their Christian life was most unsatisfactory to them, being marked only by failure, and they were tempted to give up in discouragement. No wonder they get discouraged; continual failure is enough to discourage anybody. The bravest soldier in the world would become fainthearted if he had been defeated in every battle.

Sometimes these persons will mournfully tell that they have about lost confidence in themselves. But if they would only lose confidence in themselves entirely, and would put their whole trust in the One who is mighty to save, they would have a different story to tell. They would then

Romans 5

¹¹ ...joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Says the apostle,

Philippians 4

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.

The man who doesn't rejoice in God, even though tempted and afflicted, is not fighting the good fight of faith. He is fighting the poor fight of self-confidence and defeat.

All the promises of final happiness are to the overcomer:

Revelation 3

²¹ To him that overcomes will I give to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.

Revelation 21

⁷ He that overcomes shall inherit all things.

An overcomer is one who gains victories. The inheriting is not the overcoming; that is only the reward for overcoming. The overcoming is now; the victories to be gained are victories over the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the

pride of life—victories over self and selfish indulgences.

The man who fights and sees the foe give way, may rejoice; nobody can keep him from rejoicing, for joy comes spontaneously as the result of seeing the enemy give way.

Some folks look with dread upon the thought of having to wage a continual warfare with self and worldly lusts. That is because they do not as yet know anything about the joy of victory; they have experienced only defeat.

But it isn't so doleful a thing to battle constantly, when there is continual victory. The old veteran of a hundred battles, who has been victorious in every fight, longs to be at the scene of conflict. Alexander's soldiers, who under his command never knew defeat, were always impatient to be led into the fray. Each victory increased their strength, which was born only of courage, and correspondingly diminished that of the vanquished foe.

Now how may we gain continual victories in our spiritual warfare? Listen to the beloved disciple:

1 John 5

⁴ For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

Read again the words of the apostle Paul:

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

Here is the secret of strength. It is Christ, the Son of God, the One to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, who does the work.

If He lives in the heart to do the work, is it boasting to say that continual victories may be gained? Yes, it is boasting; but it is boasting in the Lord, and that is allowable. Says the Psalmist:

Psalm 34

² My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.

And Paul says,

Galatians 6

¹⁴ God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

The soldiers of Alexander were reckoned invincible. Why? Was it because they were naturally stronger and more courageous than all their enemies? No, but because they were led by Alexander. Their strength was in his leadership. Under another leader they would often have been defeated.

When the Union army was fleeing, panic-stricken, before the enemy at Winchester, the presence of Sheridan turned their defeat into victory. Without him the men were a quaking mob; with him at their head they were an invincible army. If you had listened to the remarks, after the battle, of the soldiers who served under those and similar leaders, you would have heard the praises of their general mingled with all their rejoicing. They were strong because he was; they were inspired by the same spirit that he had.

Well, our Captain is the Lord of hosts. He has met the chiefest foe of all and has vanquished him single-handed. Those who follow Him invariably go forth conquering and to conquer.

Oh, that those who profess to be His followers would put their trust in Him, and then, by the repeated victories that they would gain, they would show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light!

John says that he that is born of God overcomes the world, through faith. Faith lays hold of the arm of God, and His mighty power does the work.

How the power of God can work in a man, accomplishing that which he could not possible do for himself, no one can

tell. It would be as easy to tell how God can give life to the dead. Says Jesus:

John 3

⁸ The wind blows where it lists, and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell from where it comes, and where it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

How the Spirit works in a man to subdue his passions, and to make him victorious over pride, envy, and selfishness, is known only to the Spirit. It is sufficient for us to know that it is done, and will be done in everyone who wants that work wrought in him, above all things else, and who trusts God for the performance of it.

We cannot tell how Peter was enabled to walk on the water, when the waves were rolling about him; but we know that at the command of the Lord he did it. So long as he kept his eye fixed on the Master, Divine Power enabled him to walk as easily as though it were solid rock underneath.

But when he looked at the waves, possibly with a feeling of pride in what he was doing, as though he himself was doing it, fear very naturally took possession of him, and he began to sink. Faith enabled him to walk on the waves; fear made him sink beneath them.

Says the apostle,

Hebrews 11

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days.

Why was that written? For our learning,

Romans 15

⁴ ...that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Why, is there any prospect that we shall ever be called upon to fight armed hosts, and to take fortified cities? No,

Ephesians 6

¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the dark-

ness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

But the victories which have been gained by faith in God over visible foes in the flesh, are placed on record to show us that faith will accomplish in our conflict with the rulers of the darkness of this world. The grace of God, in answer to faith, is as powerful in these battles as in those; for says the apostle:

2 Corinthians 10

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh;

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;

⁵ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

It was not physical foes alone that faith enabled the ancient worthies to conquer. We read of them that they not only “subdued kingdoms,” but “wrought righteousness, obtained promises,” and, most wonderful and most encouraging of all, “out of weakness were made strong.” (*Hebrews* 11:33-34). Their very weakness became strength to them through faith, because the strength of Christ is made perfect in weakness.

Romans 8

³³ Who, then, shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies.

And,

Ephesians 2

¹⁰ We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Romans 8

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

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