

Program 52 Teaser

We hear all the time about winners. Winners in sports, politics, business, science. And most of these winners in this world tell you how they got there: vision, dedication, hard work, practice and more practice, self-denial—and on and on. But most of these “winners” invest their lives in only what lasts, at the most, a lifetime. Then they die—gone with the wind. But then there comes a call from beyond time—from Jesus Christ and eternity—to any who want to follow Him and live the life of a winner, both in time and eternity. And what’s this? Jesus is calling those the world might see as “foolish”, “weak”, “nobodies”?! This is something worth you and me checking out. “The Life of a Winner”. Today on More Than Talk.

PROGRAM 52 PAGE 1

THE LIFE OF A WINNER

PAGE 1 LOOK WHO'S ON YOUR SIDE

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Romans 8:37

Though we touched on this scripture yesterday, it deserves a fuller exploration. As in verse 31, we see again the words "these things" and then the statement "we are more than conquerors." But what are the things that cause us to "gain a surpassing victory through Him who loved us"? (Amplified) They are the greatest trials, struggles and wars that we go through - "suffering and affliction and tribulation...calamity and dis- tress...persecution, hunger, destitution, peril, sword" (v 35 Amplified). Doesn't that sound like all-out warfare? In fact, it seems to describe our losing the war - not winning it. How then do we end up more than conquerors?

First of all, if we are doing God's will, He is ordering the battle. Nothing touches us that He does not sanction. In fact, we are fighting a war that our Sovereign God knows is already won. But our war is not against flesh and blood but against invisible powers bent on taking invisible souls to a Christless eternity. In human warfare, a conqueror is one who stands alone on top of his dead enemy. The object is to turn live men into dead ones. In spiritual warfare, God uses everything we go through to make us more effective in reaching broken lives all around us. His object is to use us to turn enemies of God into His friends and to stand together in praise of God. It takes more than a conqueror to turn dead men into lives ones - and that's our call!

Many of this world's great soldiers looked like winners on the battlefields and yet ended up losers at the end of life. On the other hand, God's soldiers often look like they are losing as they are assaulted by great trials, tests and tribulations, and yet end up "more than conquerors." So whatever pain, pressure problems you are passing through, you can be certain that God only uses them to polish and perfect you. He never said it would be easy. Warfare never is!

My prayer: "Father, I praise You for every test that You allow to come my way to make me rely more on You. You are the One who loves me and can make me more than a conqueror. Help me to pay the cost of true discipleship."

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PAGE 2 A SUPERNATURAL FRAGRANCE

"Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place." 2 Corinthians 2:14

Little Zachary is only five years old. When his mother gave him permission to play with my granddaughter, Kelsey, Zach said, "Mom, I have to put on some cologne, but not too much, or I'll be too stunning." Seems that wee fellow has learned the power of fragrance at an early age. Paul spoke of a stunning fragrance, too; not anything human but the fragrance of a Jesus-filled life. But that fragrance had a double effect on all who came in contact with it - attracting some, repelling others.

Look at our verse and its context. First, God has made you someone very special in calling you His own: "But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph - as trophies of Christ's victory..." (Amplified) Just as you died in Christ, so now you live in Him. Nothing can defeat Him - or you in Him. Second, you are now His walking advertisement as to God's reality as Christ "through us spreads and makes evident the fragrance of the knowledge of God everywhere." Our presence, speech and actions are to bring out the fragrance of Christ. And as He is seen and heard through us, we become to others a reminder of "the sweet fragrance of Christ...discernible alike among those who are being saved and those who are perishing." (v 15 Amplified) To the rejecter, our life of dependence upon God - a life that shines forth in integrity and purity - is "a fatal odor, the smell of doom", while to the one whose heart is receptive to the gospel, we are like "an aroma from life to life - a vital fragrance, living and fresh" (v 16 Amplified). This is serious indeed. With eternity at stake, others are to receive from us only the true fragrance of Jesus - never the false scent of self.

My prayer: "I want to live in such vital union with You, Lord Jesus, that my life and words will spell You out clearly to others and leave no one the excuse that they never met a real Christian."

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PAGE 3 YES YOU CAN!

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

Today's truth is an incredible declaration. Saul of Tarsus had once lived only to do all things contrary to Yeshua - to destroy Christ's name by destroying His followers. But now, having repented before the risen Messiah of Israel, Paul proclaims: "I have strength for all things in Christ who empowers me - I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses inner strength into me, (that is, I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency.)"
(v 13 Amplified)

Like the apostle, you, too, can meet and pass any test through Jesus who claims you as His own. Nothing shakes Him. Nothing breaks Him. He has all power in heaven and on earth - and in you! Remember the story of Jesus and the disciples when a terrible storm turned the Sea of Galilee into a raging tempest? Jesus was asleep in the stern of the little boat. Asleep! In the worst part of a boat - the rear - during a storm! Why not? He made the sea - and could calm it with a word! Shalom! "And there was a great calm."

Now His Spirit dwells in you. You can do all things through Christ. Yes, you can conquer that harmful habit by asking Jesus to give you His strength. Yes, you can face that temptation that is trying to suck you under and conquer it through the power of Jesus. Yes, you can be true to the Lord, true to your wife and true in your life through the limitless power of the True One who lives in you. Yes, you can think, act and witness like Christ wants you to - because He will give you the power. Memorize this verse. Speak it during every test and in any need. Believe that He is infusing you with His own invisible, indomitable, incredible power. Then stop saying "I can't" and start confessing "I can!"
Because - you can!

My prayer: "Father, this shall be my motto until I move from earth to heaven: 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'"

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PAGE 4 WHEN THE WAR IS MOST INTENSE

“And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”
Colossians 2:10

Do you love God and yet find yourself going through times of terrible, paralyzing doubt. One young man - a beautiful example of a tender heart that has chosen Jesus over the pull of this world - is there right now. Dark doubts - "What if you're deceived and there is no God?" - "What if the Bible is a carefully woven fairy tale?" - "What if I'm really not saved?" - spin around his frantic mind like a spider's web. I know what he's going through. I also know that God will bring him through those racing doubts to a firm faith in the Bible. Steve is having to wrestle out the words of "intellectuals" vs. Jesus Christ, and the lives of the "learned lost" versus the life of Christ.

Have you found yourself in similar tormenting doubts? I offer you my own lesson in life. Don't let Satan get you out of the Bible. Read it daily - even when doubts scream, "What if it's not true!" It is true - and everything that contradicts it is false. That's why the war in you is so intense. But the Lord won't leave you to your doubting self. He's there. He cares. He wants to make you so strong that "no one carries you off as spoil or makes you captive by his so-called philosophy and intellectual-ism, and vain deceit (idle fancies and plain nonsense) following human traditions - men's ideas of the material rather than the spiritual world - just crude notions...and disregarding the teachings of Christ." (Colossians 2:8 Amplified)

And He wants to make your faith unshakeable in solid fact: that in Jesus you have the "whole fullness of Deity, (the Godhead)...And you are in Him, made full and have come to fullness of life - in Christ you too are filled with the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and reach full spiritual stature..." (vv 9,10 Amplified). So trust the One who is the Head of all rule and authority. Jesus will take you through your darkest doubts, your most anguished shouts, and your most intense bouts with the devil into a revelation of your completeness in Him. It's worth the struggle!

My prayer: "Oh my Father, I thank You that You did not keep Yourself hidden. Nor did You just send another prophet to represent You. You sent Your eternal Son, and in seeing Jesus, I see You. Open my eyes to who He is within me"

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PAGE 5 A TIME TO SHOUT!

“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.” I John 4:4

Because some Christians who stress the super-natural are viewed as extremists, many of us minimize the power and reality of the unseen world. Yet, I remember how alive my spiritual senses became immediately after being born again. I knew there were spirits trying to influence me - some coming directly from the devil whose presence was real and some coming as teachings from people trying to trip me up and destroy my faith.

I John 4:1-4 became precious when I was only weeks old in the Lord. I was so simple and so in love with Jesus that testing spirits or anything that came to my mind was easy: if Jesus loomed larger and my love for Him greater, those impressions or teachings were from God. If the spirits cast doubts on Christ being God and coming in the flesh to pay the price for my sins, my peace disappeared and I sometimes shouted for the devil to beat it.

That's why verse four is so incredible. It calls you and me His "little children" and even uses the past tense to tell us that because we "are of God" (belong to Him) we have "overcome them" (every spirit of the world, the flesh and the devil) because of the Unconquerable One. Jesus is greater than all powers in hell and on earth and He resides in you. The victory has been won. But that triumph only becomes real in your life and mine as we dare to believe these glorious facts and walk by faith in putting God's Word into practice and the devil to flight. Then we will grow in discerning the difference between "the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (v 6) and walk as overcomers rather than cringe and cower before a defeated foe who knows his own end is near!

My prayer: "Help me to so grow up in Your Word, my precious Father, that I will know the Spirit of God from all competing spirits and walk as an overcomer who pleases You rather than a spiritual baby that never grows up."

