

"The Successful Life"

8/17/52

M.H.

A.M.

Scripture Lesson: - II Timothy 4:1-11.

Text: -

Introduction: - The quest for the successful life is everywhere apparent. To whatever phase of life we turn we find people in quest of victory in life. This is particularly true in the material things of life.

"Success" and victory" are two of the watchwords of the human race. The world has its laurels for the victor, and thorns of censure for the defeated. There is a thrill in being identified with the winning side. The public is very fickle in this regard, and often ungair in turning to the winning side, even at the sacrifice of principle.

Both victory and defeat are contagious. "From glory to glory" is a Scriptural expression, and we are not violating this expression by saying, "from victory to victory", is the norm of the Christian life. Victory is accumulative at compound interest. Each victory won paves the way for other victories.

Defeat is also contagious, and runs on a descending scale. Defeatism will carry us down as rapidly as a slide will on a snowy hill. Defeat weakens the morale, and paves the way for other defeats. When it is reported that any business is slipping; the loss of patronage is multiplied by the report. Instead of a man's friends rallying around him when his business begins to slip, they are more likely to forsake him, like people would leave a sinking ship.

The quests for victory in the material world have brought many disappointments. Nations have risen to world power, only to crumble into obscurity. Ambitious men with strong personalities have captured the attention of the world on the stage of action for a brief day, and then the curtain dropped to hide them from view.

I.

There is one important thing which we overlook

in our quest for victory in material things. While pursuing the material we are seeking something more; something over and beyond. We thought we wanted wealth, fame, and honor, but in truth we wanted something more. When man reaches these material goals there still remains the restless urge in his heart for something over and beyond. The victory which the heart of man craves is the victory of the eternal Spirit which outlives the material. Mere things cannot satisfy man, because man is something more than a thing. Things are temporal and fleeting. Man is enduring, living unto all eternity.

II.

The building of a kingdom which endures for only a day can never satisfy a being who is to live through all eternity. The only kingdom that is enduring is the kingdom of God. This is the kingdom that knows no defeat. It outlives principalities and powers, even worlds. Man's only hope of victory is to be identified with this kingdom, which is eternal.

The door to this kingdom is revealed in the N. T. as Jesus Christ. He is spoken of by one of the prophets as, "The desire of all nations". This description of him expresses the universal heart cry of men for Christ. He is the desire of all nations, the object of the universal quest of men because he alone can bring universal victory.

He brings victory over sin, for he himself was without sin, and met every temptation known to man. He brings victory over deep-seated hatred and national prejudice, for he is the universal friend of all men. The entering of his kingdom involves universal friendship and good will. In him is to be found victory over death, for he conquered the grave. Jesus is the only one who has conquered death, and through him men have been able to say, "O death where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory?"

The nations have ignored the Prince of Peace. The many plans for peace which have been adopted have ignored the one and only plan by which peace can come; the realization of universal

brother brotherhood through the Prince of Peace.

When Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life", he gave to the world the only dependable and enduring platform for world peace. So long as men reject the Prince of Peace, wars will be fought, empires rise and fall, civilization will meet with its reverses, and have its periods of dark ages.

III.

The early Christians attracted the attention of the world because of their triumph over foes, both within and without, and over opposition of every conceivable kind. The secret of the victory in the lives of the early Christians may be attributed to their wholehearted devotion and unreserved consecration to Christ, their Lord and Savior.

They went forth into a wicked and sinful world as completely consecrated men and women. Their lives were all upon the altar. They had witnessed in their lives the transforming power of Christ. Pentecost brought a victory to the followers of Christ which they had never witnessed before.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven he gave command to his disciples that they tarry at Jerusalem, until they be endued with power from on high. It was in response to this command that his disciples laid everything, and gave attention to the one thing needed: tarrying in the upper room until the coming of the Holy Spirit in his cleansing and enduring power.

On that day victory was perched upon the banners of those hundred and twenty souls. No power on earth or hell could defeat them. This victory still remains for the church of God today. It is for every soul who will pay the price of the complete surrender and the entirely consecrated life. The victory is worth the price. If we pay the price we shall obtain the victory, and eventually we shall wear the crown.