

10/4/59
7.111.
"The Victory of Faith"

Scripture Lesson:- I John 5: 1 - 9.

Text:- 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!"

Introduction:- The victory of faith which overcomes the world, spoken of in the Scriptures, is not the escape from calamity for yourself or your dear ones.

Religion is not a magic cloak which we may throw about ourselves and our loved ones, and thereby escape all suffering and disappointment. If religion could be used as a magic cloak, men would adopt it, not out of love for God, but rather as an insurance policy, in which case our religion would lose its nature, and faith would lose its character.

The victory of faith does not deliver us from the risks of life. The man of faith must take the the risks of life that others take. In war, in travel, in sickness, he faces the same possibilities of calamity that others face. Men who have a strong and abiding faith in God are in automobile accidents every day. They are confronted with the same dangers on the battlefield as the men who make no profession of faith. *Qu. 1*

I.

There are those who will reply to these assertions: "If then, the man of faith encounters the same risks of accidents, disease, and calamities in war, what is the advantage of such a faith?"

The victory of faith is a much higher victory than the mere escape from these things. It is a victory that can handle the thorns of life is greater than a victory of escape..

God has not promised that we shall escape the bitter waters, but he has promised to be with us when we pass through them. The righteous must pass through the valley of the shadow of death

just the same as the wicked, but the righteous have this promise, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

The victories of faith are not to be measured in the same terms in which the world evaluates success. God is able to turn temporary defeat into final victory through channels of faith. Faith can turn the low tides of defeat into high tides of victory.

One of the great lessons of faith is to learn that those things which we call calamities and disasters may contribute as much, finally, and even more, than the things which we long and pray for, such as success, health, deliverance from bereavement, sufferings and poverty.

II.

The Apostle Paul had learned this lesson of faith to a degree that enabled him to say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

We are not to understand that this victory of faith extends a welcome to evil. Every legitimate means should be used to ward off evil of every kind. The Apostle Paul did not yield to the physical affliction of a thorn in the flesh without a heroic struggle for its removal. He prayed earnestly for its removal, and no doubt used every natural means that was known in his day for the cure of his disease.

But after he had used every honorable means for evading this affliction, he received the guarantee of the sufficiency of God's grace to sustain him, and give him victory, even in his affliction. Instead of having the thorn removed, Paul received a sufficiency of God's grace to handle the thorn, which was a greater victory than its removal. It

takes a greater victory to triumph in the presence of a thorn than it does to triumph in its absence.

III.

Faith does not dissociate us from the heart-breaking sorrows around us. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were intimate friends of Jesus, but death struck in that home just as it struck in other homes. However there was a difference in the home of Mary and Martha when death struck, claiming their brother, Lazarus, than in a pagan home. It was the friendship of Jesus in the home of Mary and Martha that made the difference.

It was more important for Mary and Martha, that in their sorrow, they had Christ with them, than the fact that he raised their brother from the dead. If Jesus had not raised their brother from the dead, Mary and Martha would have had the victory which came through Christ's comforting ministry, after their brother's death.

There is a difference between Christian faith and pagan optimism. Pagan optimism may be boastful, self-sufficient, and proud. Pagan optimism may know all the psychological tricks of mental pumping or producing tricks of mental "pump-priming" and self-sufficiency. But Christian faith wins its victories upon an entirely different basis. Christian faith wins its greatest victories, when man is ready to acknowledge, that he cannot alone reach his goal.

Conclusion:- Christian faith is not dependent for its victories upon some fond utopia of which men dream. Christian faith sets as a goal the utopia of "peace on earth, good will toward men." The path that leads to this utopia, however, is strewn with thorns. But there may be victory upon this thorn-paved path. The victory of the early church was in an unfriendly world. The early disciples were more than conquerors over principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places, through faith. The victories obtained in the catacombs, at the

martyr's stake, and in the lions den, are still available in a confused, sophisticated modern world.

We have the modern world on one hand, and the victory of Christian faith on the other. Which shall it be? Many a minister has weighed the thing in the balances, and has found that the victory which he may have in a utopian plan, is not as satisfying as the victory through faith, yet it comes easier, and makes little difference with the world.

Which way shall I take? Which way shall you take?

I know which way I shall take. I will take the way the Lord's despised few have taken through the ages. I will take the way of Christian faith that has a repentance to offer to a needy world, and a satisfying answer to a penitent soul.

"Take the world, but give me Jesus;

All its joys are but a name.

Today is Young Peoples Sun. & I want to pay tribute to many fine young people of our church. In these crisis days of fear & uncertainty, many young people are confused & frustrated saying what hope have we for the future. what lies ahead for us, what's the use lets go with the crowd & do as they all do.

I want to talk today about a young person who stood alone with God & changed the destiny of an entire nation.