

Two Victories in Christ

Part 2

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[00:00:01] On the past evening, we consider a little God's victory in Christ. In relation to the great enemy of our souls, the devil.

In relation to death, and in relation to the world.

And we ended with the glimpse of a new heaven and a new earth, wherein righteousness dwells, God surrounding himself with the multitude of the redeemed, and all that hath rest. Now tonight we continue with the Christian's victory in Christ.

Now one feels increasingly that this brings the whole matter of these meetings very much nearer to our hearts. [00:01:11] You see, we are born in sin, shaped in iniquity.

As children of Adam's race, we drink up iniquity like water. We are really found in the very pit of sin.

Secondly, we are also subject to death.

Every one of us.

Appointed unto man wants to die.

There is no escape from that appointment. But in addition, we are also citizens, denizens if you like, of a world that is frightening for judgment. [00:02:04] So here we are embedded in a situation that can be met only by God himself.

But what is our meditation and consideration tonight, is that God gives us victory in Christ. We shall again approach it like we did last night, under the three heads of sin and death and the world, and we'll see the issue. But it is necessary to say right at the commencement that there is a difference, an important difference. A difference that we have to take account of right at the beginning of the meeting. A difference between what is potentially possible and what is actually brought into experience in the history of our lives.

[00:03:10] A very big difference. What's potential? What's possible? Through God's grace, wonderfully possible. But on the other hand, sadly, not always the experience of ourselves.

So let us consider a little the three subjects that we have hinted at. First of all, our victory in relation to

sin.

Well, there are several catalogues, you know, in the Bible as to our position in nature.

[00:04:07] None righteous, no not one.

None that do a good, no not one.

And none that understand, none that seek after God.

Pretty desperate, isn't it? Or we can think of another catalogue, you remember in Titus we read, We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, deceived.

Living in malice, envy.

Serving divers lusts and pleasures. Hateful, hating one another. It's not a very pretty picture, is it?
[00:05:03] Or take Ephesians 2.

What we were, dead in trespasses and sins.

Where we were?

Walking in this world.

What we were doing? The pleasures of the flesh and the mind.

Not very pretty, is it? And that was our position, every one of us. And if we take up the position of the Jew and the Gentile, most of us here, Gentiles I suppose, dogs of the Gentiles. My dear friends, our position was hopeless indeed. And we do well at times, just to have a good, sober, long look, [00:06:02] as to what we were by nature. Now however, could we contemplate deliverance from a situation like this? And then we come to promises, exceeding great in promises. Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered? Yes! And that's what we're going to talk about for a short time tonight. There is a victory, and that victory is in Christ. He is the sinner's only saviour.

And if this were a gospel meeting tonight, of course, we'd spend a lot of time quoting scriptures. They all say, worthy of all acceptance, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He did no sin, you know sin, in Him was no sin. He was nailed to a cross of wood, we hear Him say, it is finished.
[00:07:05] Yes! He's able to reach you and me in the situation which we're found. Listen to the words of Jesus.

Man, thy sins be forgiven thee. Woman, thy sin is forgiven.

It's music, you know, to the sinner's ear. If there should be someone here who's still in nature's darkness, perhaps this would work for you. But that isn't all the story. It isn't God's thought only to have our sins forgiven, and leave us to find our way through this well till we come to glory. No, no!

God has got far greater thoughts than this. He proposes that He transfers you and me from Adam to Christ.

[00:08:02] Adam, marked by disobedience, by sin, by guilt, and by death.

And God, as it were, takes you out of Adam and puts you into Christ, where we come to obedience, and justification, and righteousness, and life.

This is the great subject of Romans 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Here we find that the subject of sin is taken up, the matter of the law is taken up, the matter of ourselves is taken up, and God sets us free.

Our guilt taken care of, chapter 3, the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, [00:09:02] but our deliverance taken up in these wonderful chapters in Romans. And of course we would need a separate series of readings to handle this matter. But all I'm going to do tonight is to give you a simple illustration that what is so clearly delineated in doctrine in the Roman epistle is also clearly demonstrated in the Gospels. And I would remind you for a moment of the maniac of Gadara. There was a man who got the gain of this teaching.

Have a look at him. He had an unclean spirit.

He was bound with fetters. Neither could any man tame him. [00:10:04] He dwelt among the tombs.

And we read that he'd wear no clothes. You know, in scripture, if you wear no clothes, it's a picture of exposure to judgment. But this man came into contact with Jesus. What have I to do with thee, thou son of God? And every man has to do with him. Well, he had to do with him in grace. And we find at the end of the story that this maniac is sitting at the feet of Jesus, seated and clothed and in his right mind.

Now, you're going to say to me, and it's perfectly justifiable, you've only told me part of the story. [00:11:02] Well, that's true.

Because what God has in mind is not only setting us free from the guilt of our sins and not only giving us deliverance from the power of indwelling sin, but we find in the further consideration of Paul's teaching that he's going to bring you into something infinitely blessed and positive.

And what's more, what Paul teaches us in doctrine exemplifies in his own experience.

And in Philippians, we learn something of practical Christianity. His earnest expectation and his hope that in nothing he should be ashamed. But now, as always, Christ may be magnified in my body, whether in life or in death. [00:12:03] For to me, to live is Christ.

Now, here we come to a real victory.

The triumph of God is the continuation of the life of Jesus and his people.

Lord Jesus is seen in the saints.

He's going to be admired in the coming day in the saints. But the victory of God is that the Lord Jesus is seen in the saints now, personally, in the household, in the business sphere, in the assembly line.

What's coming to light? It's the life of Jesus in the saints.

And we can't see the full picture of deliverance until we see it in this wonderful way, [00:13:04] exemplified in the apostle, but seen also in the saints. Now, these things are not only found in the Bible, thank God. I suppose all of us in our history have met Christians like that. I was thinking about this, and I expect you may meditate on it. I have found a few who exemplify this teaching. I can think of one at this moment. I'll call him D.D.

A man about 20 stones strong, in his unconverted days, when he had the beer in him, it needed three policemen to hold him down. But when he got converted, October 1962, [00:14:04] the one who was a raving maniac of God, was found sitting at the feet of Jesus. He had about 50 or 60 prison convictions.

And of course now, he's a lively witness in the prisons. I could tell you a lot of stories about a man like that. I expect you've met them too. The triumph of God in the changed life of a Christian. But I want to tell you another too, and he lived to nearly a hundred. If you were to knock on the door in Barnstable, in a previous century, you'd say, and how are you today, Mr. Chaplain? Oh, I'm satisfied with faith.

Fool, Latin fool.

[00:15:01] Now there's a man, who is exhibiting what Paul speaks of, for me, today.

Well, let's move on to the second section. The Christian victory in relation to death. Very practical matter.

We looked at it last evening. The wages of sin is death.

Pointed under, man wants to die after this, the judgment.

Serious matter.

The earliest book that was written, Job, you read about death, you read about death, chapter 18. King of terrors, still is.

[00:16:02] Read again of the time of Jacob's trouble, Jeremiah 30.

All faces gather pale on us. I remember we had in our house, a year or two back, a postgraduate student, who was doing some work in Birmingham University, come from Turkey, and he used to come regularly to us on the Lord's Day for lunch. And I remember I asked him once, what it was like to live through an earthquake, I hadn't had that experience, and his English wasn't too good, his wife helped him out, she said, you know, suddenly everybody's face goes pale.

That's what it's like to be in an earthquake. Another story, bear with me.

[00:17:01] James Butler Stoney.

You've heard that name perhaps, Mr. Stoney.

He was a student in Dublin, and there was an outbreak of cholera, in Dublin.

And he said to his servant, don't know what his name was, Patrick I suppose, he said, Patrick, I'm gonna die.

And the Irish servant said to him, Master, I think you'll die.

And that really wakened up James Butler Stoney, and a man who had been somewhat indifferent in regard to eternal matters, faced up to the fact that he would surely die. And if God says you'll die, you'll surely die, you certainly will die.

[00:18:03] I won't multiply the stories, we could all do that.

But the only answer to death is to turn your eyes to the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why I read to you, from 2nd Timothy, chapter 1, verse 10, he has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to life through the gospel. The Lord Jesus was made in death, but he's out of it, and now he has the keys of death and of Hades. Death, the greatest power over men's bodies, Hades, the greatest power over men's souls, where are the keys found? They're found in the hand of Jesus. For as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, that's human nature, [00:19:02] he himself likewise has taken part of the same, notice how his perfect manhood is gone.

That through death, he himself went into death, he might deliver them who were all their lifetimes subject to bondage.

He is the one and the only one who can really come along to your fearful soul and say, fear not.

And that's why I read to you in 1st Corinthians, chapter 15.

It's a very interesting fact for you who know your Bibles well, that in 1st Thessalonians 4, [00:20:02] there was a problem in regard to Christians who had died.

In 1st Corinthians 15, the problem was in regard to Christians who were still alive.

In regard to those who died, God will bring them with him. In regard to those who are alive, we shall be changed in a moment, the twinkling of an eye.

We shall all be changed.

That doesn't tell us how.

And you know, we ought to be thankful sometimes for the silence of Scripture. We just couldn't take it in. The idea of you and me suddenly being changed, given a body of glory, it wouldn't be comprehensible if God were to begin to explain, [00:21:03] thanks be to God, we accepted by faith. And I want to underline for you tonight what the Scripture says, thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. It does not say, thanks be unto God who will give us the victory, but thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now when faith really lays hold upon this, death assumes quite a different character.

All things are yours, says the apostle to the Corinthians, death is one of them. Death comes as a servant to take us into the glory of God. You find in that chapter, [00:22:01] we so often quote it at funerals, don't we? It is so appalling.

And we put our loved ones into the earth. Corruption in the light of incorruption. Dishonor in the light of glory.

Weakness in the light of power.

A natural body in the light of a spiritual body. And if on the past evening we consider the prophecy in Hosea, you remember almost a thousand years before Jesus was born, oh death, I will be thy plagues. Oh brave, I will be thy destruction. Before ever Jesus came into the world, you are moved forward in your minds to a day when a great redeemed company will say, [00:23:03] oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy betrayal? Now this is the scripture that says, thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice, giveth us the victory. It's not God's victory only, but he gives you and me the victory. And if we're to talk tonight about the subject of victory, the scripture supposes that we can enter into victory now.

Of course, when you turn to the scriptures for examples of this, there are plenty of them. The apostle, he had a desire to depart. He couldn't get there quick enough. Have a look at Stephen.

He looked up steadfastly into the glory of God and saw the glory in heaven, [00:24:01] saw the glory of God in Jesus. Death wasn't any problem with Stephen. The stones might hit him, but he died like his master.

Lay not this sin to their charge.

And we don't need to only look at the scriptures, you know, for examples of this. If ever you're finding you're getting a bit jaded and down in your soul, just have a wee reread of the lives of the martyrs. Tertullian said, you know, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. And as you see the triumph with which these men went to the stake, women too, as you saw the afflictions of the Christian company, doesn't it make us ashamed sometimes [00:25:01] for the immediate response from our own hearts.

I remember hearing about a hypothetical conversation in heaven.

They were all around the Lord and somebody who had slipped in, as we might say, he was speaking to his companion, said, how did you get here? Well, he said, I was one of those who was a burning torch for Nero.

So the enquirer was reduced to his right side.

And how did you get here? Well, I gave my life on the mission field.

Left his bones there. How did you get here? Oh, they burnt me at the stake. And after we looked round a little bit [00:26:03] at the sufferings of the church of God, doesn't it raise us up, you know, as to how far we've entered into scriptures like this. Thanks be unto God, for giving us the victory for our Lord Jesus Christ. I must tell you one story, if I may be permitted. Of course, in my work, I met a lot of

people who were facing death. In a brief summary, I'd say to you that those who feared death the most lived life the shortest. And those that feared death the least lived lives the longest. That was the brief summary. And I remember one patient, she came from a very interesting household, paralysed she was, from middle to downwards, she was kept at home. They kept her at home, kept her at home. [00:27:02] But presently her sister, who looked after her, active Christian, she went off to a conference, and they had to put this dear soul into the geriatric hospital. And of course, the patient had been on her feet, put to bed, promptly developed bed sores, and she never got up again. But she knew the Lord. And she was such a bright witness for the Lord, they didn't move her into the geriatric wards, they kept her in the admission bay. She did everybody so much good that they kept her just at the doors of entrance. And her witness was very simple. How are you today, Miss R?

Oh, she said, I'm under the blood. That was her simple answer. [00:28:01] She was always under the blood. And what can you tell us today? He is precious.

These were the two notes of her witness. She was under the blood. And he is precious. And she left such a mark on the hospital that after she went, they struck a little ball.

He is precious.

That was a testimony that she left as she went out of this world. Dead. Conquered. Now when we come to the third of our sections, that is the Christian in relation to the world, again I just want to remind you of one or two scriptures. We had a pretty close look on the past evening as to the real character of the world. [00:29:03] It's not a very pretty picture. Cain, you remember, went out from the presence of the Lord and proceeded to build up a world, his back on God, comfortable. And every advance in civilization we noticed was marked by a declension in moral. Now I read to you that scripture in Revelation 11 to show you something of the features of this world, the city, which spiritually is Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. This world as a system antagonistic to God and under his judgment [00:30:02] needs many pictures in the scripture to show its awfulness.

Sometimes as Egypt, the places of sin for a Caesar, sometimes as Sodom to show you the depths of depravity into which men can sink. Sometimes as Tyre, the business world. Sometimes as Athens, the educated world.

Sometimes as Babylon, the religious world. Many pictures to bring before us what God thinks about this world. And you know there are solemn warnings given to us in regard to the world, the adulterers and adulteresses. Know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity against God? [00:31:04] Serious matters. You remember in the early chapters of Proverbs, you get a little talk about the wise son and the corrupt woman. And you remember that corrupt woman in the seventh chapter, it says very briefly that many strong men have been slain by her.

Powerful scripture that, isn't it? In 1 John 2, describing the young men, we are strong.

Word of God abides in you. You've overcome the wicked one. Love not the world. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life. These things are antagonistic to the love of the Father. [00:32:01] You can neither, you can't go on with both at the same time. It's either the love of the Father or the world. And the world in the scripture is delineated as a place to be feared. We were just talking today, some of us, about the attitude of Christians a century ago in regard to the

world. Kept as far away from it as possible. This naughty world. Would they go to the crystal palace? No. Unless they should be found wandering after the beast. Wandering after the beast. Oh, you laugh at that. Yes. Yes, but we don't laugh at their piety. Those men of God had a proper sense of what this world is. And they kept as far away from it as possible. [00:33:04] Now this leads me to this important passage in 1st John chapter 5 verses 4 and 5.

Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. It's the possibility of overcoming. Overcoming the world. And then the question is raised in the fifth verse. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.

And again, this is the victory that overcometh the world even your faith.

Now we came to the point last night that if God has set one world aside he has created a new world [00:34:03] and the Son of God as being the center of that world becomes the object of faith to the Christian. And when it says this is the victory that overcometh the world even your faith. The only ones in this world who successfully have overcome it are those who have had the Lord Jesus in their hearts.

Now in the scriptures again there are some wonderful examples of those who have overcome the world. I'll just give you one that's quoted in the 11th Hebrews Moses.

[00:35:01] An interesting case. He refused to be called the daughter of Moses the son of Pharaoh's daughter esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Now if you do a little bit of history study so we're told Pharaoh's daughter had a brother who was handicapped and he couldn't take up the throne.

So when Moses was taken into the house and educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians mighty in word and deed he was being prepared for the throne. [00:36:01] He could very well have had a pyramid in Egypt. But his parents father and mother had done their work well and that little chap Moses he'd been brought up to understand where true values lay.

And when he was of age he made a decision and he turned his back on Egypt but he threw in his lot with the despised people of God.

He had respect under the recompense of the Lord.

How about some more modern examples? Have you ever heard of any? Oh yes, I think we have. William Kelly he's buried quite near here, isn't he? Brilliant [00:37:01] fascist.

The fascist said to him William settle down here you'll make a fortune. William Kelly said for which world?

Give you another example back in the thirties before ever I was in the meetings or even took up medicine I went to Westminster Chapel and there was a young doctor there I think you may know him Martin Lloyd-Jones fifty years ago he'd just given up his position as assistant to Lord Corder he was a good doctor Harley Street you know tops of the profession and he was discoursing upon the third chapter of Philippians [00:38:01] the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Here was a man who had the Son of God before him here was a man who had faith and which testimony would

you like to leave in this world? A good doctor?

Or one who had served the Lord? I think that's the point really, isn't it?

For which world? How much have you got? The death can't touch. How far are you and I living in the victory?

So we come somewhat to the end of our section tonight victory in relation to sin [00:39:01] victory in relation to death victory in regard to this world and I thought it would be suitable if we were to finish tonight and finish this little series by having a little look at this verse in 2nd Corinthians chapter 2 Thanks be unto God which causeth us always to triumph in Christ. Maketh manifest the slavery of his knowledge by us in every place.

Now this is a scripture that has a background in the contemporary world, I mean the world in which the Bible was written. [00:40:03] The highest honour that was ever paid to a victorious general was a triumph.

The victorious general had to be either a dictator or a consul or a praetor or in the days of the empire the emperor himself. The battle hadn't to be a civil war but a major battle which brought glory to the kingdom or the empire.

And when a triumph was granted to the general all the expenses were paid it was conducted [00:41:01] in Rome.

The streets were daily decorated and there was a procession a procession to the capital.

It took this form that the senate in person went first and then there came the trumpeters and then all the beauty of war and all the crowns and decorations were given to the victorious general. And then the captives came. Some to die some to live.

And then the chariot in which the victor was found, notice it was drawn by white horses and the victor suitably clad [00:42:01] was there in all his glory. And at the rear came along the soldiers singing their song to triumph. Now says the apostle that's what I'm talking about.

Thanks be unto God which always causes us to triumph in Christ. He could see his pathway through this world as in a triumphant procession. He was connected with the king of kings, the lord of lords.

Forever that day dawns when he comes forth riding on a white horse suitably attired.

He sees himself as caught up in the triumph train.

The triumph train.

There are some who are appointed unto death. Who are they?

There are some who are appointed [00:43:01] unto life. Who are they? They are those who listen to the precious gospel that he was preaching. Christ died for our sins. He's the only answer to our sins. Turn your back on him, you'll certainly die. Christ was raised again. He has given us life and glory.

Accept him as your saviour, certainly you'll live. There are these captives, some appointed to life, some appointed to death. But at the back there are these soldiers who are enjoying the song to Christ. Who is sufficient for these things?

I think this is the word we've got to leave with one another at the close of these meetings. Who is sufficient for these things? Not that our sufficiency is of ourselves, our sufficiency [00:44:01] is of God.

And I ask you tonight as we come to a close of this meeting, isn't it fitting that we're found giving all glory to God?

On the past evening we saw that God is going to surround himself with the great company of the redeemed, all praising him. Tonight we see the possibility of being caught up in the triumphal train. Wouldn't we like to do it? Wouldn't we like to enter a little bit more into these things?

Well, let us cast our all upon God and ask him to work it out in a practical way in our lives.

May the Lord bless the world.