

Shadows Of Christ & His Bride

Lesson #24

Called To Be An Overcomer In Christ

July 3, 2024

Gen. 1:26, 28 God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it;

- Satan usurped man's dominion over the earth through the fall of Adam and Eve.
- Man forfeited his mandate to rule and have dominion.

God's marvelous plan of redemption provides the way through Jesus Christ for man to be reconciled to God. He calls His children to be "conformed to the image of Jesus Christ" through the process of sanctification [via the power of Holy Spirit & Word of God].

At His 2nd coming, Jesus Christ will take back dominion of the world and set up His Kingdom on a restored Earth [like Garden of Eden].

God calls His church to be overcomers to rule & reign with Him in His Kingdom.

Belief: Our life on earth is the training, proving and testing ground for our future life.

Paul: Athlete in race; Soldier in battle; Farmer in field; Judgment Seat of Christ

D. L. Moody: "The Overcoming Life" "The Bible was not given to increase your knowledge, but to change your life. I have an idea that we are down here in training, that God is just polishing us for some higher service." [of His Kingdom> there will be no end!]

Question: Does Scripture exhort every believer to be an overcomer so he might have positions of authority in the coming kingdom of Jesus Christ?

Prov. 18:13 He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him.

Acts 17:11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to *find out* whether these things were so.

Satan's Greatest Weapon: Man's Ignorance of God's Word

Scripture exhorts every believer to become the overcomer he is in Christ. [positionally]

Webster's Dictionary: Overcomer: a person who overcomes something :

one who succeeds in dealing with or gaining control of some problem or difficulty

Missler: Overcomers are those victorious ones who have learned how to master the flesh, prevail over the world and conquer the devil only through Christ's Life in them.

Wiersbe: Principle of Conflict: The Christian life is not a playground; it is a battleground.

The believer realizes that apart from the Lord, he faces an enemy much stronger than himself, and he must be on guard at all times. [The Bumps Are What You Climb On]

The term "overcomer" comes from the Greek nikao, "to conquer, prevail, triumph, overcome; to gain victory over something." Strong's #3528 - Verb- 28 times in 24 NT verses.

It occurs almost 15x in Revelation and means "to have victory over hostile powers."
It calls attention to the presence of war, contests, battles, and conflicts in man's struggle with evil. The New Testament clearly teaches we are in a conflict, a holy war, with specific adversaries. After salvation, the conflict still rages in our lives.

The Adversaries To Overcome Defined

The world, a system and arrangement of the affairs of men and government under the control of the evil one and opposed to God and His purposes for man. man:

John 16:33; 1 John 5:4; Eph. 2:2

Indwelling sin or the flesh and all its corrupting power and life dominating patterns.

Rom. 7:15; 8:4-8, 13; Gal. 5:16-26.

Satan, our chief adversary, the devil: I Pet. 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Eph. 6:12; John 16:11; Col. 2:15; I John 2:13-14

"The forces of the world-system of evil, the flesh (totally depraved nature), the devil, and the pernicious age-system with which the saint is surrounded, are all engaged in a battle against the saint, carrying on an incessant warfare, the purpose of which is to ruin his Christian life and testimony."

A key passage illustrates the nature of our conflict with evil:

Eph. 6:10-12 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. The spiritual battles we engage in are not easy. They carry with them the idea of struggle. They will require tremendous strength, far more than we have within our frail human faculties. It requires us to use the Lord's strength as we put on His armor.

Paul uses 3 different words: "strong," "mighty," and "power" to give muscle to the verse.

Wiersbe: We should come to church with the smell of battle on us.

When it comes to preparing to overcome your enemy, the apostle Paul instructs you to begin by "[girding] your waist with truth" [Eph. 6:14]. God does not leave us defenseless.

Ephesians 6:11-17 describes the armor of the Lord available to all believers.

Scattered throughout this narrative is the admonition to "stand firm."

Overcoming is often equated with enduring. [conquer, prevail, triumph, gain victory]

Truth: It is God's will for every justified believer to be an overcomer.

➤ Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; Rev. 3:5,12,21; Rev. 21:7

Truth: We are not to be overcome with evil but overcome evil with good. Rom. 12:21

Truth: God wants every believer to be sanctified, a partaker of His Life. I Thess. 4:3

Overcoming:

- Freedom from the world: our circumstances and other's responses Gal. 1:4
- Freedom from our flesh: our natural thoughts and emotions; old nature
- Freedom from our enemy: Satan and all his hordes Rev. 12:11

A disciple of Christ is one who endures through trials by the power of the Holy Spirit. An overcomer clings to Christ, no matter how high the cost of discipleship.

Heb. 3:14 For we are made partakers of Christ,
if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

The Ministry of the Spirit in New Birth & Indwelling. Compare the following verses:

I John 4:4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them;
because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world

I John 5:4a For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world:

Note the emphasis here. It does not say "he," but "everything or whatever is born of God."

- Overcoming is specifically non-personalized to stress a point:

It is never the man that overcomes, but his birth from God and what that brings into man's life.

- This is what overcomes or gives capacity to overcome the world.

The Christian is "born of God." This means he has the divine nature within him, and it is impossible for this divine nature to disobey God.

- If the old nature is in control of us, we disobey God,
but if the new nature is in control, we obey God.

Truth: 1. ALL born-again children of God are overcomers in Christ > POSITIONALLY.

2. At our justification, our new birth, God gives us the power and the ability to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.

3. Many believers are not overcomers in their daily experience or condition in life.
Daily overcoming the world, flesh and devil is often very foreign to us.

Do you feel like you are an overcomer or like the world has "overcome" you? If the latter describes you, then you are not living in God's provision of power and freedom of the new birth.

Understand your identity as a born one of God and exercise your faith to overcome the world. It's not automatic. We must remain vigilant against the world, the flesh and the devil. Don't be like Demas who bailed on Paul in II Timothy 4:10:

- "Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me."

The Provision of Victory - THE MEANS

The Person and Work of Jesus Christ: Christ is *the Overcomer*, the ultimate source and means of victory. This is the great message of Scripture and evident in all its pages.

⁵Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.

- Believes = to commit and trust; to place reliance in; present tense; to keep believing
More than intellectual assent or emotional excitement; it must involve the will.

Consider: People say, "you just have to have faith?" Faith itself without an object is empty.

Key Point: Truths about Jesus to which we must commit >

1. Jesus is the Savior.
2. Jesus is the Christ. This is the word "Messiah" which refers to Jesus being the Anointed One, the Savior of the world. Jesus is the Son of God.

Overcomes: 2x in the present tense; it is an ongoing action [I John 5:4-5]

Overcome: 1x in the past tense; the victory has already been won as Jesus stated in: John 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace.

In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world Col. 2:14-15 having canceled the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

¹⁵ When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them by the cross.

Rom. 8:37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

II Cor. 2:14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ,

Rev. 5:5 and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.

Rev. 17:14 These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings,

and those who are with Him {are the} called and chosen and faithful.

Rev. 3:21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Method to appropriate victory is FAITH I John 5:4; II Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:20; 5:5; Eph. 3:17

I John 5:4 "This is the victory that overcomes the world—our faith."

- The source of victory is the new birth and the new life that it brings.
- The object of faith must be Jesus Christ because He is the real victor.

Since victory was accomplished by Christ and not by what we have done, >

Victory Always Comes By Faith In The Work Of God Through Christ.

Truth: Our victory is not a victory to be won, but one to be claimed by faith.

To grow in faith, there is always a fight involved, for we are in an unseen battle...all the time.

The Christian life is not easy. Too many of us settle for surviving, when we're called to be thriving. We're overwhelmed, not overcoming. Don't just try harder; the only way to overcome is by trusting in the victory that Jesus has already won.

II Cor. 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Instead of always being overwhelmed, God wants us to be overcomers. We are overcomers because of what Jesus has already done. We don't work for victory; we have the victory.

Faith is not the means to the goal of victory; faith is the victory because our faith is centered in Jesus, who is the Victor!

For centuries there were never lacking men like Polycarp and Ignatius, who were ready to die, rather than to deny Christ. Fines, and prisons, and torture, and fire, and sword failed to crush the spirit of the noble army of martyrs. The whole power of imperial Rome, with her legions, proved unable to stamp out the religion which began with a few fishermen and publicans in Palestine. They overcame by FAITH.

Key: The ability to overcome is not automatic. Not all believers choose to lay our lives down so He can overcome through us. A personal choice is always involved. We must choose to lay our lives down and let Christ live His life out through us by the power of His Holy Spirit.

Life is full of conflicts, challenges and obstacles that we must learn to overcome in Christ.

Key: Faith is the bridge between God's promises and our overcoming.

The Filling of the Spirit: Appropriating the Manifold Ministries of the Holy Spirit
John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

I John 4:2-4; Eph. 3:16; I Cor. 12:12-13; Rom. 8:1f; Gal. 5:16

Though saved and identified with Christ in His life and death, all believers would be helpless to overcome without the Holy Spirit who is God's provision for strength and victory.

Divine Genius:

1. You are saved from the futility of self-effort.
2. You are relieved of the burden of trying to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps.
3. You will begin to live a supernatural life in the very energy and power of God Himself.

You can quit struggling to become what you already are: Overcomer in Christ

The Judgment [Bema] Seat of Christ is God's gateway to Christ's Millennial Reign.

II Tim. 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom;

I Pet. 4:17a For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God:

II Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

II Tim. 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us:

- Christ will evaluate us by our fruits, our faithfulness and our obedience.
- This judgment determines each believer's position in Christ's coming Kingdom.

Key: Those who are deemed "worthy" will inherit blessings and privileges.

Worthy: 2 Greek words

Strong's #2661 = kataxioo = To Be Counted Worthy; To Be Deemed Entirely Deserving

We are counted worthy because of what Christ has already done for us on the Cross.

He is the One who is really counted worthy. [used only 4x in Scripture]

Strong's #514 = axios = To Be Worthy Of; On The Grounds Of Being Fit, Meet, Prepared, Suitable [41x in Scripture]

Axios can mean to bring up the other beam of the scales to indicate equivalence or balance.

- Walk is on one side of the scales and calling on the other side of the scales.

Col. 3:24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance:
for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Good works: Those done by the power of His Spirit, through His Love and by His wisdom.
Works that bring glory to His name.

Key: Those who are found not worthy will suffer loss. [I Cor. 3:13-15]

- Those: castaway, disqualified; carnal Christian; shipwrecked their faith
- Loss = loss of rewards, positions of responsibility and privileges.
- To forfeit something that is already in one's possession

Paul Benware: The Believer's Payday: We can be sure that at the Judgment Seat of Christ there will be a marked difference between the Christian who has lived his life before the Lord, clearly discerning what was for His glory, and a nominal Christian. We may be sure the consequences of our character will survive the grave and that we shall face those consequences at the Judgment Seat of Christ. There will be varying degrees of glory between the nominal Christian and the mature, spiritual Christian.

II Tim. 2:20-21 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver,
but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor.
Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor,
sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

Inheritance: 2 kinds of inheritance

1. Sonship Inheritance belongs to every justified believer as a son of God.

Gal. 4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son;
and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

2. Inheritance from the Lord is conditioned upon the life that the justified believer lives on the earth. This inheritance is earned by merit and the recipient will receive a reward or joint heirship in Christ's kingdom. This inheritance is in addition to salvation and is conditioned upon obedience in this life. Col. 3:24 - see verse at top of page

Difference between entering and inheriting? Determined at Judgment Seat of Christ

2 kinds of inheritance for believers

1. We enter [Strong's #1525; to come into] the kingdom because of our new birth and we now are sealed with the Holy Spirit.
2. We inherit [Strong's #2816; obtain, receive or possess it] as a reward for an obedient and faithful life on earth.

Rom. 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;
if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Inheriting the Kingdom: Those faithful and obedient Christians who have learned how to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil by the authority and power of Christ will inherit the Millennial Kingdom and rule and reign with Jesus Christ.

Result of Judgment Seat: Those who enter the kingdom but do not inherit

- Justified believers; those who are overtaken; Sonship inheritance
- Those who failed the tests; whose fleshly works were burned
- Those who lost the race and the prize

Result of Judgment Seat: Those who inherit the kingdom

- Sanctified believers who are transformed and prepared
- Those who partake of the life of Christ
- Those who withstood the tests
- Those who overcome; are fruitful; obedient; faithful; abide in Christ; deny self
- Those who won the race and the prize

Consider: Will I enter His Millennial Kingdom but not receive an inheritance from the Lord?

Will I receive an inheritance from the Lord - position of authority and responsibility?

Key: The outcome will be based on my faithfulness, sanctification and obedience.

II Cor. 5:11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

- Terror = 5401 phobos = fear, alarm, reverence, respect

Heb. 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Key: We should have reverence, respect and awe toward God in everything we do, knowing He is watching, knowing He is taking notes and knowing we will stand before Him.

Charles Stanley: Some believers will be entrusted with certain privileges; others will not.

Some will reign with Christ; others will not. Some will be rich in His kingdom; others will not.

Some will be given heavenly treasures of their own; others will not. [Luke 16:12]

Some will reign and rule with Christ; others will not. [Rev. 3:21]

Some believers will receive:

- Matt. 25:10 Entrance to the Wedding Ceremony
- I Pet. 1:7 Praise from Christ
- Mark 10:40 Place of honor
- Matt. 25:23 Positions of stewardship
- Rev. 2:26 Spheres of influence
- Luke 19:17 Positions of authority
- I Cor. 9:25 Different crowns James 1:12

Key: Privilege in the kingdom is determined by one's faithfulness in this life. Sobering Reality

Question: Is living the Christian life hard?

Living a true Christian life is very hard due to our unredeemed human nature [the flesh], the world, and the devil. Our sinful nature wants to dominate within us with all its greed, pride, and lust. The world around us focuses on consumerism, and me-mentality. Our enemy, the devil, wants to bring us down with him. We must daily battle these three for the rest of our lives. Without the grace of God, following Jesus would be impossible [Matt. 19:25-26].

Jesus commands total surrender and complete submission.

Question: Is living the Christian life hard?

1. Have you been born again and regenerated by the Holy Spirit of the living God?
2. Have you surrendered to the Holy Spirit?

Eph. 5:18 Be filled with the Holy Spirit. [aorist tense= be continually filled]

3. Do not harbor sin and cater to your flesh - your old man.

Result: The Christian life becomes easy.

Matt. 11:28-29 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart:
and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Consider: The problem Christians have living the Christian life is they are not yoked up with Jesus.

Truth: We are a blessed people who already have the victory.

Surrender to the Captain, the Lord of Hosts. We are an overcomer in Christ.

What is the "Hope of our Calling?"

Eph. 1:17-18 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,

may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him:

¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is

the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

I Thess. 2:12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you

into His own kingdom and glory.

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Hope Realized: Understanding and embracing the purpose of our calling here and now and allowing it to determine our actions. That hope then becomes a "tree of life." [Prov. 13:12]

Overcomer In Christ

- Someone who faces the challenges in his life with one attitude >
 - God will be faithful no matter what.
- He will possess the "peace that passes all understanding."
- Even though he doesn't understand all that God allows, he chooses to rely on God, knowing He will be faithful to His Word and will perform His promises in His way and His timing.

Learning to be an overcomer is essential to our sanctification.

I Thess. 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

One purpose of our sanctification is to prepare us for positions of authority in Christ's coming kingdom.

- Sanctification > we become clean open vessels for God's use
- This leads us to partaking and experiencing Christ's life in and through us.
- Partaking leads us to overcoming.
- Overcoming leads us to inheriting, ruling and reigning, with Christ.