

# **St Martins C3 – April 16, 2023**

## **We Can Be Victors Too – The Victor**

### **Sermon Notes:**

The Bible gives us the confident promise that we get to share in Jesus' victory over all things.

**Read Romans 8:28, 31, 35, 37**

What amazing and empowering scriptures. What great treasures of truth, promises of power. Hope-filled, life-giving nuggets for followers of Christ.

Today, we affirm that we can be victors too. But we need to ask the question: what does victory in Christ look like?

If it was up to me it would mean that everything would go my way. And yet it is easy to only see the difficulties in front of us. Jesus may have won the victory over the devil and sin and death, but He ascended to Heaven, and we are on earth not feeling like much of a conqueror.

Scripture seems fully aware of these facts. It tells us that there is still a battle we are facing.

**Read 1 Peter 5:8; Romans 7:19; Hebrews 9:27**

Life is hard. We and all creation groan with exasperation and frustration about the suffering that we see.

**Read Romans 8:22-27**

Remarkably, the Spirit of God is also groaning. God does not stand apart from the pain of the world. He dwells in the middle of it through His Spirit.

So, whatever victory is, it is not an endless supply of easy days and good times.

### **Read Romans 8:28-30**

Firstly, being a conqueror looks like trusting in who God has made us to be. Jesus has made a way for us to come into His presence and see Him work well in our situation. He has welcomed us into His presence and we can come to Him anytime with our requests as dearly loved children.

### **Read Romans 8:31-39**

Secondly, we are victors when we rest in the fullness of God's love. We simply need to rest in Him.

You conquer when you know who you are and when you walk in His love. Then you see Him come through in all things, good and bad.

The truth is that we will not see complete victory. We are waiting in hope until the day that Jesus returns or takes us to be with Him before we will have complete victory. The testimony of scripture is that the more we press into Christ, the more we embrace His love, the more we do life His way, the more victory we will experience.

## **Thoughts and Questions for Connect Groups:**

*What is your favourite verse in Romans 8:22-38?*

*How connected do you feel to the victory Jesus won on the cross?*

*How come Paul talks about areas of victory alongside the intense difficulties of life?*

*What areas of difficulty are you facing right now?*

*What would victory look like in these areas?*

*What is the impact of knowing God has called us to be His children? How does it change the way you face suffering?*

*What difference does it make to know the love of God?*

*How do you personally experience the love of God?*

*What does it look like for you to rest in God's love?*

*Spend some time bringing your struggles, concerns and suffering to God and ask Him to meet you with His love. Have the group pray for each other.*

# **Monday Devotion: Victors Over the Devil**

***Read Ephesians 6:10-18***

Jesus beat the devil on the cross but there is still a battle to fight. We are chosen to live for God and to fight for Him.

Why is it such a battle? Because the gospel is about more than our personal salvation it is about bringing the whole world into a right relationship with Him. That is what we are fighting for.

We know that God's victory over evil forces is certain. We need to be aware of the devil but live without fear. Jesus has secured the victory and whilst there are difficulties, we must always approach them with a sense of victory and confident assurance in God our commander.

This armour is not just the armour of an ancient fighter, but it is God's armour. Paul is referencing a couple of passages in Isaiah that refer to the armour God wears (Isaiah 59:17; Isaiah 11:4-5). He is encouraging the people of Ephesus to be like God Almighty and the Messiah. We have been given His armour – we represent Him.

As we do this we can walk in victory over every force of evil in our world.

Pray and ask God to make you more like Him as you stand in confidence against all the works of the enemy in your life and the lives around you.

## **Tuesday Devotion: Victors Over Temptation**

***Read 1 Corinthians 10:13-14***

Temptation is more often sneaky than sordid. It is like the con man dressed up in nice clothes who comes to you with a brilliant-sounding idea that seems to require very little of you. But things are never as they seem and once you let temptation in it can be hard to get it to leave.

The more you give temptation the more it asks of you, the more you say “yes” to it, the harder it is to say “no”.

The people of Corinth were in a culture surrounded by all kinds of temptations. Paul tells them that God is fully aware of the areas that might trip them up. But in the very moment they are tempted He has provided a way out for them.

Every time you are tempted by that sin or to continue that habit make yourself aware of the presence of God. He has given you the internal tools to overcome temptation, He has given you other Christians to support you and He has given you His Spirit to give you the strength to say no.

Bring to God today everything that you are struggling with. The fact you are struggling is good because it means you haven't given in. It won't always be easy but you can have victory over the sins that easily entrap you.

## **Wednesday Devotion: Victors in His Work**

***Read 2 Corinthians 10:4-5***

Have you ever had the moment when you speak with someone about your faith but find them to be dismissive of what you believe? These conversations often turn into arguments where no one is convinced by the other. Or you win the argument but lose the person.

Paul says to the people of Corinth this is not the way to have that kind of a conversation. He does not use the weapons of the world but He uses the weapons of God to demolish every stronghold. These weapons include a heart full of faith and obedience to Christ.

I remember once talking to a teenager about why she didn't believe in God. After I answered her objections she said "I see what you're saying, I guess I just don't want to believe in a God because He would require me to live differently."

Often when we are talking to others the arguments they are presenting are not really the main barrier to their belief. We need to look deeper.

Pray today for the people in your life that God would reveal to you the reason they are resistant to faith. Ask Him to demolish every stronghold in their life so that they would see the truth of who He is and the difference He can make in their life.

## **Thursday Devotion: Victors over Death**

***Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-57***

I went to a funeral recently and whilst the person who had died was a Christian many of the family members were not. They were happy to talk about the person's life, but when it came to their death there was an awkward silence. It seemed they did not know how to talk about death because it was an area of fear and hopelessness.

In comparison, I went to another funeral this week where the person was equally as well celebrated. People were able to talk about what the person meant, there were tears and there was grief. But there was also hope and a large amount of joy as they celebrated the way the person was now in God's presence.

Death will meet us all one day. However, if we have faith in Jesus we can meet death without fear, instead, we can meet death as the doorkeeper to a new world and a new reality. There will be no sting to death's touch, there will be no battle, instead, we will be able to walk with it as it leads us to God.

Does death scare you? That is perfectly natural, however, for the Christian, the fear should be tempered by faith and hope. Faith that God will not abandon you to the grave and hope that anticipates the fulfilment of the age to come. Spend some time thanking God for all that He will do and planting seeds of hope in your heart.

## **Friday Devotion: Victors Forever ... and Now!**

***Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18***

Yesterday we explored Jesus' victory over death and what it means for us in the age to come. These verses powerfully pick up on this idea. In them, Paul reminds the people of Corinth that this life is not all there is. There is a world to come where there will be no pain or sorrow, and where we will have a full relationship with each other and with God.

If you could compare the difficulties of now to the eternal glory Christians will experience it would be like putting a speck of dust on a set of scales and weighing it against a mountain. There is no comparison.

Scripture teaches that we should keep that reality firmly in our minds as we go about our day-to-day life because it makes a difference. The result of this way of thinking is that God's followers stand with strength – they don't lose heart.

Are others' expectations weighing you down? Don't lose heart!

Is the sin you struggle with making you feel like a failure? Don't lose heart!

Are you sick of mental health issues? Don't lose heart!

Spend time with the Spirit asking for his daily renewal and for the life of Heaven to be with you now.