

Building on Biblical Foundations

“The Power to Overcome”

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We are here! The stone has been rolled away, the grave is empty and Jesus is alive! This is the miraculous moment Jesus spoke of, the disciples hoped for and the world would not accept. This is the cornerstone of our faith. Without the resurrection there can be no Christianity. But Christianity is not a religion. Let's be clear about what it is that binds us together here this morning. It is certainly not religion. It is not binding rules, or dogmatic regulations. Oh no – this morning we celebrate the one thing that can be found NO WHERE else on earth. Victory over ALL.

Let's review briefly what we know thus far:

What the Cross accomplished:

- Atonement for the sins of all mankind – Jesus was the spotless lamb sacrificed for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2) “And he is the propitiation for
- Healing of body, mind and spirit – by Jesus' stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53: 4-6 “4Surely He took on our infirmities and carried our sorrows; yet we considered Him stricken by God, struck down and afflicted. 5But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. 6We all like sheep have gone astray, each one has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.” Berean Standard Bible

What the Resurrection Accomplished:

- Victory over death, sin and Satan
- Reconciliation with the Father in Heaven
- The gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
- The invitation to abide in Christ, and have Christ abide in us
- Authority over Satan and all of his dominion
- Family of believers made one in the Spirit
- ***The power to overcome all earthly challenges***
- Eternal life with God for all who believe

When Jesus rose from the grave he conquered death. He defeated Satan – the enemy of our God and every person. And he restored us to the relationship Adam and Eve lost in the garden – by paying the sin price.

All that was lost in the garden has been regained.

As the one man, Adam, through his one act of disobedience brought sin and the resulting estrangement from God, Jesus' obedience brought victory over sin, restoration with the Father and life eternal.

As I prayed about what I was to share this morning – and there were so many wonderful, encouraging messages I could have prepared to celebrate this mostly holy day – the one that rose to the top was the POWER TO OVERCOME.

Jesus accomplished so many victories on the cross and rising up from the dead, and one of those victories was the Power for Us – his followers – to overcome.

John 16:33

Jesus said: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Matthew 16:18

Jesus said, “. . . on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not overcome it.

A few questions to ponder:

- What does it mean to overcome?
- What do we need to overcome?
- What are we able overcome?
- Why does this matter?

Overcome Defined:

1. To get the better of: Surmount
2. To overwhelm
3. To gain superiority: Win

To Overcome is to surmount, to overwhelm, to win.

What do we need to overcome?

- Death – Oh . . . death where is your sting?
- The stranglehold of sin in our lives
- Mental Struggles: Fear / Doubt / Confusion / Deception
- The actual attacks of Satan here on earth
- Struggles with others: Strife, adversity, hatred, dis-chord, disunity,
- Worldly pursuits, fleshly temptations and carnal passions
- Our own sin nature – the old man within us who seeks to exert his will – pulling us back into familiar destructive habits and patterns of thinking

These struggles are nothing new. We have been wrestling against the sin nature, against Satan's deceptions since way back in the Garden of Eden.

The world has always been a dangerous place. From the days of Noah, to the days of Rome, to this very day.

However, the ability to overcome has always been the secret weapon of God's people. Faith is indeed a superpower. Not faith in itself, but faith (or trusting) in the living God.

Examples of Christians who have overcome:

Corrie Ten Boom:

Corrie Ten Boom with her two sisters and father were sent to the Nazi concentration camp, Ravensbruck. During this time she would hold secret Bible services for other prisoners. Later, Corrie was released on a clerical error when all women of her age group were sentenced to death, including her sister Betsie. Corrie eventually met one of the guards during a sermon and forgave him for his transgressions.

Nicky Cruz

Nicky Cruz was a criminal in New York and with a gang since he was a young boy until preacher David Wilkerson changed his life. Cruz was high on drugs and violence and spit on Wilkerson, but the pastor told Cruz that he would still love him if he cut him into a thousand pieces. The gang would attend one of the Wilkerson's events and were saved. Cruz currently shares his testimony all over the globe.

Bethany Hamilton

Surfer Bethany Hamilton lost her arm in a shark attack at 13. Bethany and her mother prayed that God would use the accident for the glory of God. One month later she was back on the board determined to overcome her adversity. She would win first place in the NSSA National Championships two years later, have a film about her experience made, and share a message of hope to the world.

<https://www.beliefnet.com/inspiration/galleries/how-these-believers-overcame-adversity.aspx>

Watchman Nee

Watchman Nee became a Christian in mainland China in 1920 at the age of seventeen and began writing in the same year. Throughout the nearly thirty years of his ministry, Watchman Nee was clearly manifested as a unique gift from the Lord to His Body for His move in this age. In 1952 he was imprisoned for his faith; he remained in prison until his death in 1972. His words remain an abundant source of spiritual revelation and supply to Christians throughout the world through the many books he authored.

“Living in the Spirit means that I trust the Holy Spirit to do in me what I cannot do myself. This is completely different from the life I would naturally live of myself. Each time I am faced with a new demand from the Lord, I look to him to do in me what he requires of me. It is not a case of trying but of trusting; not of struggling but of resting in him.”

Joni Erickson Tada

“I swam out to this raft; the athlete that I was, I didn’t even touch bottom. Hoisted myself onto it, then took this really stupid dive into what ended up being extremely shallow water. I snapped my head back when I hit rock bottom. And it crunched my fourth cervical vertebra, severed my spinal cord. There I was lying first down in the water, desperately hoping that my sister Kathy would please notice that I had not resurfaced from my dive,” she recalled painfully. The accident left her quadriplegic – without feeling or movement from her shoulders down at age 17.

She is known today as a painter, musician, writer, and disability activist. She testifies of how God has turned the impossible into possible. She said: “God is more concerned with conforming me to the likeness of His Son than leaving me in my comfort zones. God is more interested in inward qualities than outward circumstances – things like refining my faith, humbling my heart, cleaning up my thought life and strengthening my character.”

George Foreman

Overcame a troubled childhood, won a gold medal in heavyweight division in the 1968 summer Olympics, retired, had what he called a religious epiphany, became an ordained Christian minister and then in an unusual twist of events became the oldest person to ever win the world heavyweight boxing championship. . . Foreman has been inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame and International Boxing Hall of Fame. The International Boxing Research Organization rates Foreman as the eighth-greatest heavyweight of all time.

Paul - The epitome of an overcomer!

Paul started more than a dozen churches, and he’s traditionally considered the author of 13 books of the Bible—more than any other biblical writer. For this reason, Saint Paul is often considered one of the most influential people in history. He overcame much to finish his race. . .

Throughout the Bible there are countless examples of people who overcame adversity by the power of God:

Noah, Ruth, David, Job, Gideon, Elijah, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednigo, Mary and Joseph, John the Baptist, the disciples of Jesus (minus Judas Iscariot), and so many more. . .

As our world is plunged deeper into darkness we need not fear. Why? Because the power to overcome all of it has been given to us by Jesus when he rose from the dead.

Jesus said, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me, and now I give it to you. All authority. Authority over what? Over our government? No. Over our spouse? No. Over our neighbor? No. Authority over Satan and his demons, authority to overcome the World and authority in the spiritual realm.

Luke 10:18-20

¹⁸ He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

I John 5:4-5

“ . . . for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”

This is more than positive thinking. It is true that as a man thinks, so he acts, as he acts so becomes the course of his life. And this is why it is so vitally important that we put on the mind of Christ. But we cannot put on the mind of Christ without first coming to him in full surrender.

We must acknowledge his sacrifice on the cross, his victory from the grave and his divine authority over all – including ourselves.

Once we have come to that place, the power to overcome everything is given to us – as we abide in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is important to remember that we must abide in the vine (which is Jesus) - apart from him (his rule in our lives) we can do nothing.

The Power to Overcome. The Strength to endure. The faith to persevere. We have been given all we need to not only face, but rise above all the challenges this world brings.

However, before we run out of here thinking we are wonderwoman or superman, it is important to understand this power has firm parameters.

First: It is given to those who belong to Christ as I just explained.

Second: It is given to do the Will of the Father. How do we know what that is? Read your Bible – it’s in there.

Third: Only as we submit to the authority of Jesus and do the Father’s Will are we able to overcome every challenge that we encounter.

There is a day coming when we too will be robed in that eternal garment of incorruptible flesh – donning our own resurrected bodies. Whether we take our last breath here or are caught with Jesus in the sky. . .

I encourage you just as the apostle Paul encouraged the church so many years ago:

1 Corinthians 15:50-57 NIV

50 I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

55 “Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?”

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Until The Day of the Lord arrives – we shall overcome to the glory of God and the Praise of Jesus our Lord and Savior.

And all God’s people said, AMEN.

Today’s message is not simply to celebrate the power of the cross and resurrection in abstract. It is meant to remind each of us that we who are in Christ have both an assignment and expectation from heaven – to live our lives as overcomers.

If you are feeling down trodden, overwhelmed, beat up and just plain ole weary – you are not alone. This world can be a harsh, inhospitable place. I invite you to come to the altar for prayer, come to Jesus for a recharge of your spiritual battery. Whether you desire to rededicate yourself to him wholly or to make that confession to be committed to him for the first time – He is here – today – in this place to meet your needs and welcome you into His arms.

Let’s pray together:

Heavenly father – thank you Lord that you have loved us with an everlasting love. From the early days in the Garden of Eden you had a plan to bring us back, to make a way for

us to be reconciled to you. Lord I admit that I am a sinner – without any means to enter into your holy place – without any hope of being restored. In this desperate state I acknowledge the sacrifice that Jesus made by taking my sins onto his flesh on the cross, and dying a death he did not deserve, to pay a price he did not owe. I receive this gift of reconciliation and ask you to forgive me of my sins.

I ask you to fill me with your Holy Spirit that I may walk though this life as an overcomer, and enjoy the gift of eternal life. Thank you, Lord for welcoming me into your everlasting kingdom. In Jesus' name – AMEN.

If you have prayed this prayer for the first time know that the bible says that all of heaven is right now rejoicing. I invite you to linger here and pray. If you need a bible we will get you one.

Go forth in the joy of the Lord and the power to overcome!