

WHAT IS VICTORY? DOES IT MEAN NO MORE SUFFERING?

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In our End-Time Message today, there is great emphasis being placed on the idea that Victory, or the ideal spiritual life, is one that is above the trials, tribulations, distresses, infirmities, and perplexities that the Saints of old endured. The flesh man is thrilled at the prospect of reaching such a place, for he is directly opposed to any kind of suffering. The natural mind is quick to take hold of this human idea of what Victory is for it promises a life of unbroken joy, peace, and constant material prosperity. But in all honesty, and in all truth, we must stop and ask ourselves the question, "What is Victory?" The answer to this question is vitally important, because the wrong answer will turn our minds against God's way of dealing with our flesh, which He has set out to crucify! The right answer will give us the right attitude toward the trials of life which have been ordained to come our way.

And so we ask, "WHAT IS VICTORY?" At this point, we want to be very careful and not come against the teaching of some wonderful Brothers who have great faith, and who are teaching that we can overcome. With this we whole heartedly agree; our enemy has been placed beneath God's feet, and not only so, but beneath ours also! But our question is this, "Does this mean that our Creator does not still have a use for Satan?" We know his end when God has finished with him, but why has not the Lord already put him in the Lake of Fire? It can only be because God has not finished using him. We are told in Isa. 45:7 that God, "Makes peace and creates evil. I the Lord

do all these things." God uses evil to bring about good!

In studying carefully the life of Job, the man that God Himself testifies to being a perfect and upright man, and one who feared God and hated evil, we see that God had a work for Satan to do in Job's life. Though Job was perfect in his heart attitude toward God, his flesh needed to be crucified, even as does mine and yours. This is one main reason for the Devil not as yet being destroyed. But, though not destroyed, he is no longer a free moral agent, he sinned away his day of Grace and we know this is so because sentence has already been passed on him. His chances to repent and obey his Creator are past and gone. You and I are still free to choose, but not so with Satan. He threw away his last chance and was put out of Heaven. Now he is only a "tool" in the hands of his Creator. It must bring much distress to Satan's heart to know that this powerful revelation concerning himself is being revealed to the Bride. She knows he cannot do other than help our God instill a character in Her that will be fit to reign with Christ!

The fires of adversity are used of God to burn out the dross (self), and Satan, in the Hands of his Creator has his part to play! God's wisdom is such that it always turns evil into good. (Rom. 8:28)

The Bride knows that every circumstance of life, both good and bad, have been weighed in the

scales of God's Perfect Love before being allowed to touch their lives. She knows that the whole universe is under God's control and is being manipulated for the purpose of saving, and then training all who are to be His Bride. What then does this training program consist of? Does Father raise us to a place in faith where we can pray our way around all the trials and temptations of life? Or, does He do with us as He did with the Apostle Paul, and actually assign us a "Messenger of Satan" to buffet us blow after blow? (II Cor. 12:7) If it took this buffeting for Paul and for our own Prophet, Brother William Branham, as well as for every Saint in the Bible that was used of God, will it not take the same for His modern day Bride? Surely it will!

If then, victory is not a faith that can lift us above all tests and trials, what can we conclude that true victory is? The answer is very simple when seen in the light of the scriptures! The Bible does say, "This is the victory that *overcometh the world, even our faith,*" (I John 5:4) but please notice the word OVER-COMETH! Victorious faith is a faith that endures every trial and test that our Father sees fit to send our way. Not that our faith can skirt us around them, but that it holds us up during them, so that we become overcomers.

Before some misunderstand, let me say that we are by no means implying that we are not to resist the

evil one. We are not to be passive before the Devil things that come our way. One of the greatest paradoxes of the Bible is that our God sends the messengers of Satan to buffet us, then commands that we resist them through the power of His Name. (James 4:7)

But least we fall into the trap of some modern day theology concerning what true Bible victory is, we need to be warned that it is not, as some say, a life of unbroken peace, joy and happiness, where all problems are instantly solved, and every sickness is instantly healed by the prayer of faith. Faith can be in full exercise and the answer not yet given. Abraham's faith was in full force as he traveled toward the mountain where he had been commanded to kill his son. The ram that was to be found caught in the brush was not yet seen, yet Abraham traveled several days intent on obeying God. His faith was allowed to work for awhile before God sent the ram that would save his son.

QUOTE: POSSESSING THE ENEMY'S GATES, PAGES 6-7, "What about Abraham with Isaac, on the mountain, the one the promise was given, and by his loyalty and his knowing, and his faith in Jehovah, it's through that and that alone, that God looked down and said, **'His seed shall possess the gates. I've sworn by Myself that I will do these things.....'** Then if He let Abraham be tested to that final point (while his faith continued to work) He's got to test you and me to that final moment, that time of decision when everything's away from you. You have to stand alone there. Hallelujah! That's it." (End quote)

It is while our faith is holding that it is tested by our Father. How could He test a faith that was not there? A favorite lie of the enemy is, "If your faith was working, your

answer would have already come, therefore, you do not have faith." What a liar he is, how contrary to the God's Word he speaks. The Apostle Paul was a man of great faith. Who would like to stand and accuse him of being lacking? Yet, his life was one of constant troubles as far as the natural world was concerned. His great faith did not lift him above suffering. Let him testify.

II Cor. 11:23-28, **".....in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in (places) of death oft,in perils of waters in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness....in hunger and thirst....in cold and nakedness."**

Was Paul then a second class Christian, lacking in real faith? I think not! What a contrast Paul's life was compared to some modern day preaching that insists that the Christian life is a roller coaster ride, all down hill, a life of ease and a bed of roses. Scripture states that the Born-Again Christian must be nailed to his cross daily, and self must be crucified. Self does not die on its own, but must be buffeted blow after blow. There will be the bitterness of persecution, unavoidable weariness, toil, desperate days and dark nights of distress with pain.

Reginald Heber wrote:

The Son of God goes forth to war,
A Kingly crown to gain;
His blood red banner streams afar;
Who follows in His train?
Who best can drink his cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain,
Who patient bears His cross below,

He follows in His train.

Sister Amy Carmichael wrote the "Soldier's Prayer" as follows:

From prayer that asks that I may be
Sheltered from winds that beat on
Thee,

From fearing when I should aspire,
From faltering when I should climb
higher,

From silken self, O Captain free
Thy Soldier who would follow
Thee.

From subtle love of softening
things,

From easy choices, weakening,
Not thus are spirits fortified,
Not this way went the Crucified,
From all that dims Thy Calvary
O Lamb of God, deliver me.

Give me the love that leads the way,
The Faith that nothing can dismay,
The hope no disappointments tire,
The passion that will burn like fire,
Let me not sink to be a clod,
Make me Thy fuel, flame of God.

Our prophet, Brother William Branham, has taught that the Holy Ghost in the life of a Believer will lead him to sacrifice self, which life will result in suffering. The true believer will become wiling to suffer the tensions that God chooses to bring into his life, realizing that they are working together for his good.

II Cor. 4: 17-18, **"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."**

QUOTE: POSSESSING THE ENEMY'S GATES, PAGE 6, "God brings tensions in to the Church, **'For every son that cometh to**

God must be tried and proven, and tested.' He lets sickness strike you. He lets diseases come on you to test you and prove you, to show the world that you're truly the Seed of Abraham. He permits it by His own will. He permits disasters; He permits friends to turn against you. He permits all these things, and turns the Devil loose to tempt you, and he'll do all but take your life. He could throw you on a bed of affliction, he could turn your neighbors against you, he could turn the Church against you. He can do most anything. **AND IT'S GOD'S WILL FOR HIM TO DO IT. WE ARE TAUGHT THAT IT IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD TO US.**" (End quote)

Some teach that God does not use physical sickness to discipline a Saint gone wrong, or one who needs further child-training. But, this is contrary to Paul's teaching in I Cor. 11: 28-32. **"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the Body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. THAT IS WHY MANY OF YOU ARE WEAK AND SICK, AND A NUMBER OF YOU HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP. But if we judged ourselves we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world."** (NIV)

David said, **"Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept Thy Word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes."** (Ps. 119:67-71) Suffering for the Saints of God may well be the most misunderstood of all Bible doctrines. Rom. 5:3-5 says, **"We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces**

perseverance, perseverance character, and character hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His Love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given to us." (NIV)

In our natural way of thinking, suffering is no doubt the last thing that we would consider needful in our Christian life. Our natural way of thinking is that our God has no part in our suffering, and that when we are overtaken by it we have been overcome by the enemy. I say this is the natural man's thinking, but the man who knows and believes the scripture thinks differently. He knows suffering is not an accident, nor something that the Devil planned for him, but rather that it is a **GIFT TO BE CHERISHED**, for it is the very thing that attends to the building of our God-like character.

I Thes. 3:3-4. **"But of course you know that such troubles are a part of God's plan for us Christians. Even while we were still with you we warned you ahead of time that suffering would soon come....and it did."** (LB)

In this Satan's Eden suffering is a daily thing, it is universal. Both the Saint and the unsaved sinner suffer, there is no permanent escape from it. God has not seen fit to lift His Bride above it, not yet, but it will happen at body-changing time! We in the End-Time Message have understood many mysteries that our Prophet revealed, but have we understood the mystery of **"SUFFERING SAINTS?"** We have had a revelation that God is love, and this being true, we have a problem in understanding why He stands by and watches us suffer. We know He is Sovereign, and that nothing happens that is beyond His control, so why doesn't He stop it?

He permits it because He knows that it is the only thing that will

work for us **"An Eternal Weight of Glory."** (II Cor. 4:17) When suffering is looked at in the proper light, it is the pathway to Glory. This then is at least part of the answer why every Saint is not healed instantly, even though his faith is intact. It is why we are not carried to the skies on a flowery bed of ease. It is why we must fight to win the prize and sail through bloody seas. God sent us a Prophet who said, "You will have to fight for every inch of ground you gain." He knew this from the scriptures and from personal experience.

The love of God that was portrayed in Brother William Branham's life was not there by happenstance, but was produced by a lifetime of suffering. In his childhood, he suffered the want of the very necessities of life. He suffered from sin that was in his own unchurched family. In his limited school days, he suffered extreme poverty before his classmates and teacher. He suffered from accidents and from being socially unaccepted in his community. He suffered the loss of a wife and a child, which loss broke his heart into many pieces. Called into the ministry, he suffered the loss of his private life that he might minister to the peoples of the world. Having a second family, he was separated from them most of the time, as he gave up his life with them to serve his God. He suffered sicknesses and reverses during his 30 odd years of ministry. But the results were glorious indeed. The Spirit of the Lord Jesus was so manifested in his life that many people were unable to restrain from weeping when coming into his presence. It was not the spirit of the Prophet that caused the weeping, but the Spirit of Jesus in the Prophet. It was not the spirit of the Prophet that caused devils to tremble and flee, but the Spirit of Jesus

in the Prophet. It was not the spirit of the Prophet that caused the sick to be healed, but the Spirit of Jesus in the Prophet. And that Spirit of the Lord was there because suffering had so tendered the heart of this one that more and more room was made for the Chief Sufferer, Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ identifies Himself with the suffering Saints of the world. This is because He, Himself, suffered throughout His life, not only on the Cross, but for the full time of His stay on Earth, from His birth in a stable, to His misunderstood preaching, to His casting out by the Church and on to the Cross, He suffered. He suffered all kinds of temptations, even as we do. He suffered from the sin that was all around Him, but never committing a sin Himself. Our God knew that His plan to allow mankind to fall into sin would involve a Redeemer coming to save them. He knew that this Redeemer would have to suffer the sins of the people, yet He did not hesitate to come. He did not sit on His Throne, high and lifted up above the suffering, for 33 years He experienced it, and even learned obedience because of it.

We are taught that a Bride revival will come before the Rapture, but I wonder if we understand that suffering must come before the revival? Revival comes to those who have softened hearts and broken wills. It comes to those who have been broken in their own ambitions and ideas, and oft times broken in reputation, and despised by those who should love them. **“The lame take the prey.”** (Isa. 33:23) That is to say those who have been crippled

in all their human efforts will then lean on Jesus Christ and by this leaning, will gain the most for His Kingdom.

Brokenness is God’s plan for His Elect Bride. He will see to it that SELF in us is reduced. This is because self-confidence must be destroyed in order to make room for complete God confidence. We must be brought to the end of ourselves, and this simply cannot be done except through suffering. In the life of our Brother William Branham, as we have stated, can be seen years of crushing heartache and sorrow. From a young man who had been raised in a family without God, and knowing only one law, which was an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, he was transformed, through suffering, into one through whom the Love of God flowed like a mighty river. This anointing did not come cheap, and it will cost the Bride also. At this time our Father is seeking those who will submit to His remolding of the clay.

How can we read the scriptures and not understand this crucifixation of self in the lives of God’s Elect? Watch David as he hides out in the wilderness like a criminal, running from King Saul. He was to be King, but not until self in him had been reduced. See Joseph, a spiritual man who already had heart purity, but who was put through God’s furnace of suffering to take him deeper into the death of self. Job, who was perfect in his heart, and dead to sin (Scripture says he hated it.) had to be put through great suffering to die out to his own religious life. He had to die to his

earthly ties, to his own theology concerning his views of God’s providence. Perhaps these things were not sin in themselves, but they hindered his greater walk with God.

To those in the Message who feel free to read material other than Brother Branham’s, I would recommend a book entitled, “Don’t Waste Your Sorrows” by Paul E. Billheimer, published by CLC Publications, P.O. Box 1449, Fort Washington, PA 19034. This Brother’s book follows the scriptures and our Prophet’s teaching, and I feel that it will do the Bride much good in the way of understanding why Saints suffer.

A PERSONAL NOTE TO OUR READERS

Some of you have written letters and/or sent e-mail that we have not had time to answer. This is to apologize to you and to explain why you have not heard from me. It is not that I am purposely ignoring you, but that the writing ministry has grown so that it has become impossible for me to keep up with all the orders we receive. I am praying about enlarging the office and asking the Lord for more help with the work. The demand for the material has outgrown our ability to keep up with it. Please pray with us that the Lord show us what steps to take next. He has sent us the money we need; the main thing is a full-time helper in the office who is qualified for the job. God bless you and thank you for your prayers.

Brother C. W. Wood

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