

DEVOTIONS

ONE WON

1. The future is now

Romans 6:4-5 (KJV)

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been joined together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection; (We identify with His current position)

1 John 4:17 (KJV)

In this is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement, that as He is, so also we are in this world.

It is easy for people to look at what the Bible tells us about what Christ did on the Cross and think, "well, that will apply to my life one day in the by-and-by". The truth is that the Bible is very clear that what Christ did on the cross is as applicable to our lives now as it will be in future. We don't have to wait for a time in the future for His death and resurrection to have implications on our lives. It has implications now as it will have in future. Let us stop postponing the life that God designed for us for a future time. That life is for us in the here-and-now.

The writer to the Hebrews said that when we get saved through Christ we taste of the power of the age to come. The future is now in Christ.

Hebrews 6:4-5 (KJV)

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come,

2. Challenges will come

John 16:33 (KJV)

I have spoken these things to you so that you might have peace in Me. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.

There is a gospel that is being preached in some circles within the Church that suggests that when you are in Christ you won't face any challenges. Some even take it further by saying that challenges are a sign of sin, or disobedience.

While there are times that people go through challenges because of wrong choices or bad judgement, it is not always true that when we face challenges it means we are disobedient or are living in sin.

This gospel is causing many to seek easy solutions in life and fall prey to all manner of manipulation. Our Churches are full of people that don't understand that challenges are a normal part of everyday life and sometimes God allows them to help us in our life's journey. While God may not be the one to initiate suffering, He always takes the initiative in our crisis and uses it for our own good.

3. Even the battles we lose, we still win

Romans 8:28 (KJV)

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Picking up from yesterday's devotion, it is important to bring everything into perspective about challenges. God does not look at challenges the same way we look at them. That reason is that God sees our challenges in relation to the bigger picture of our lives. He looks at it from an understanding of how the challenge fits in into His purposes for our whole life, while we are only able to look at what is going on now.

For us to overcome we need to look at challenges from God's perspective not our own. Our own is limited, His is complete. Sometime He gives us grace to overcome right away, but sometimes He gives us grace to go through. The most important thing about every challenge is that we get to know God's heart for us and gain His perspective in the situation.

4. It is finished

John 19:30 (version?)

Then when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, It is finished! And He bowed His head and gave up the spirit.

To many people, when they read the story of the crucifixion and come to the part where Christ says "It is finished", they interpret that as Christ succumbing to death. While it may seem that He is succumbing to death, truth is that Christ is celebrating His victory in His death. He is not hopelessly giving up the ghost, but triumphantly proclaiming that His purpose has been accomplished.

Christ knew from the beginning that He was going to die for the sins of the world, and He knew what that meant. Therefore, when it was done, He proclaimed that it is finished. As a matter of fact the word used here for finish means *a plan that has been fully executed*. In effect He was saying it is done; the plan has come to its accomplishment, He was celebrating the victory which was now sealed.

5. Jesus overcame the world

Joh 16:33 (version?)

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

The word world has many meanings but what Jesus was talking about here is that He overcame everything that has become embedded in our human culture that is against the will of God. He was saying that when we are in Christ, whatever there may be in our culture (our humanly-structured reality, including things like our social, economic, religious, educational and traditional environment – 'the world') that is not in line with God's will He had overcome it. He was also saying to us that He had come to set us an example of – and to empower us for – living counter to popular culture.

As children of God, we sometimes find ourselves in situations that demand that we go against our world (culture), but it becomes difficult because doing so will bring rejection from our friends, relatives and sometimes even our own siblings or parents. But Jesus says, He overcame the world, both through His death and by example in the way He lived within his culture.

6. Treasure in Earthen Vessels (KJV)

2 Corinthians 4:7

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

Our victory in this life lies in the fact that we have the Life of Christ within us. It is not found in our own ingenuity. Paul describes it very well, pointing out that we have a great treasure in these earthen vessels. While our lives may be fragile and come into difficulty from time to time, we are sure of victory in Christ because, fragile as they may be, they are carriers of something more powerful than anything that came against it. We walk with confidence not because of anything we are in and of ourselves, but because of what we are carrying inside us. That is why whatever comes up against us, we don't lose heart but trust that through the victory

already won by Christ we will also win. There is a power at work in us that is more powerful than anything outside us.

7. Abundance of Grace

Romans 5:17 (KJV)

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Most people believe what Christ did to be true, but the problem comes in when they have to appropriate the victory. From an intellectual point of view, all is well. However, there is a barrier between their victory and them. That barrier is created by their lack of understanding that everything that Christ did for us cannot be appropriated by our works. Because they try to appropriate what Christ did by their own works, the feeling of being not good enough always stands in their way.

Our victory (or lack of it) does not come through what we do or what we have done (or left undone). The Lord does not expect us to live out our victory by earning it through our own works. He wants us to hand over our wretchedness to Him and take upon ourselves His righteousness and live out what a righteous man or woman deserves. The righteousness and the deserving is all due to the finished work of Christ.