

Walking In Victory

WK: Overcoming Darkness

Good morning and welcome to our final message in the Overcoming Darkness series. We have been learning so much about spiritual battle, schemes of the enemy, and the supply in Jesus Christ to help us Overcome Darkness. A central scripture for this series has been,

For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12 NLT).

Overcome means “to succeed in dealing with”. As we will learn this morning, Jesus has overcome the darkness (past tense) and we are overcoming the darkness (present tense). This is a state of continuously dealing with darkness. Turn to your neighbor and say our battle is continuous. Turn to your other neighbor and say, “But don’t worry, Jesus already won!” Hallelujah!!! This morning our message is Walking in Victory!

Victory is a concept that resonates deeply with the human spirit. It is a state of triumph, and in our context, “an act of defeating an enemy or opponent in a battle, game, or other competition” or race. Many people pursue victory in various aspects of their lives, be it sports, academics, or personal endeavors [and I might add they put a lot of effort in these areas].

➔ **OG DISCUSSION: What areas of your life you feel you are winning in? What areas of your life do you feel defeated?**

However, true victory is the kind that goes beyond this life and satisfies the eternal. The Apostle Paul exhorts us in his letter to the Corinthian Church.

Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their

training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize (1 Corinthians 9:24-25 NLT).

This morning we will talk about how to run to win! In order to win we must be disciplined in our training and put forth every effort to DAILY succeed! Everyone say, "DAILY!" This is what walking in victory means. It is our daily disciplines to walk in the faith we have received. Hebrews 12:1-3 exhorts us as well,

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up (Hebrews 12:1-3 NLT).

Before we dig deeper into the word of God, we must realize that victory is not confined to the external circumstances of life. True victory extends to the innermost recesses of our hearts and souls, touching every facet of our existence. It is a state of joy, peace, and contentment that transcends or goes beyond the ups and downs of life. True victory is a reflection of a transformed heart, and it is this transformation that establishes our true identity as Children of God and Carriers of Christ.

1) We are Walking in Victory when we step into our kingdom identity.

To be Christian means more than just acknowledging Christ's existence or professing a belief in Him. It means embracing His teachings, imitating His character, and allowing His presence to permeate every aspect of our lives. If you have your bibles lets read from Romans 8 (HCSB).

➔ **OG DISCUSSION: Read through Romans 8 together and discuss highlighted verses and cross referenced verses below.**

For those who live[e] according to the flesh think about the things of the flesh, but those who live[f] according to the Spirit, about the things of the Spirit. For the mind-set of the flesh is death, but the mind-set of the Spirit is life and peace (Romans 8:5-6 HCSB).

Now if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.(Romans 8:10 HCSB).

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me (Galatians 2:20 NKJV)

So then, brothers, we are not obligated to the flesh to live according to the flesh, for if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live (Romans 8:12-13 HCSB).

The Spirit Himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—seeing that we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him (Romans 8:16-17 HCSB).

Brothers and sister we are walking in victory when we know first and for most our identity - who we are! When we accept ourselves as children of God, we acknowledge that we are loved unconditionally, accepted wholeheartedly, and destined for a higher purpose. When we understand the power of Christ that is living on the inside of us is the power to live out that purpose, we can experience daily:

- **Inner Peace:** Carrying Christ within us brings an inner peace that surpasses all understanding. In the midst of life's storms, we can find serenity because we carry the Prince of Peace in our hearts.

- **Victory over Sin:** Through Christ, we have the power to overcome sin and temptation. His presence empowers us to resist the allure of destructive behaviors and make choices that honor Him
- **Victory in Relationships:** Carrying Christ enables us to love others as He loved us, fostering healthy and fulfilling relationships. Forgiveness and reconciliation become possible, leading to victory over bitterness and strife
- **Victory in living out our purpose :** As carriers of Christ, we discover our true purpose – to serve and glorify Him. This sense of purpose brings fulfillment and victory over the emptiness that often plagues our lives.
- **Eternal Hope:** Ultimately, being carriers of Christ means we have the assurance of eternal life with Him. This hope transcends the temporary trials of this world and is the ultimate victory over death itself.

So first, We are Walking in Victory when we step into our kingdom identity.

2) We walk in Victory when we walk by Faith.

To walk by faith means living a life guided by trust in the Lord, believing in the unseen, and relying on His divine guidance rather than solely on our own understanding.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1 NKJV).

“Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see” (Hebrews 11:1 NLT).

The only way to please God is by faith. The only way to enter the kingdom of God is by Faith. Therefore the only way to be victorious is by Faith. We are walking in Victory as we have faith in the person who is victorious - Jesus!

We then can be victorious because victory lives within in the person of Jesus Christ and in us through the indwelling of His Spirit - Holy Spirit. In

Jesus, we already have the victory because he defeated satan on the cross when he said it is finished!

Now we live FROM this victory as we live IN Jesus! We have to choose to believe, that who Jesus says he is and what he has done and will do is - yes and amen!

➔ **OG Discussion: Do you believe? Do you have faith? Do you trust Him at His word?**

If the answer is yes you can be confident! You can be bold in your battle, and you can have assurance that you will win, you are victorious despite what you are seeing with your eyes!

If you continue to read in Hebrews you will see a pattern. (READ IN HEBREWS CH 11) It says 14x **IT IS BY FAITH!** Church it is by faith that we overcome the darkness and DAILY walk in victory! Hallelujah!! Why is faith or belief so important? Well Bill Johnson says it so beautifully in his book *Strengthen Yourself in the Lord*:

“You can’t live beyond what you can believe” (Bill Johnson, *Strengthen Yourself in the Lord*).

WE have FAITH that the Battle Belongs to the Lord. We have faith that we are more than conquerors through Christ who gives us strength. Why because the Bible tells us we are. For homework look for the scripture that tells us that. Therefore we can rejoice, pray and give thanks for our victory in Jesus! Why Rejoice? Because, rejoicing, prayer, and thanksgiving attract heaven and usher us into heavenly places where we can be strengthened in Lord to continue waking in victory! When we rejoice it brings us Great JOY and The Joy of the Lord becomes our strength. There is joy knowing the Lord is my strength and I battle in the power NOT of my might but in HIS might! Zachariah 4:6 says, “This *is* the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel:

‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the Lord of hosts.” If you look at the context of what the Lord is saying, it is in regards to rebuilding the temple. And this word is for us today because we are the temple of the Lord only by HIS Spirit.

Note: Song by Twila Paris - allow the gift of song and music to help make declarations of faith over your life

3) We walk in Victory when we...Sing songs of praise

Praise becomes a weapon of our warfare. Remember we were ALL issued the same armor for battle (Ephesians 6). The only one that was an offensive weapon was the sword of the spirit - which represents the word of God! Well you have to wield a sword, right! We must train to wield the word of God! As you are being transformed from degree to degree, strength to strength, you will begin to grow in your knowledge of the word of God. Often when we sing songs of praise we are singing the word of God.

A huge part of praising God is being grateful and giving thanks to God! Thanking the Lord is essential in the life of the believer. Why because it is the right posture and position to enter into God’s manifest presence. Let’s read together from scripture,

“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.” (Psalm 100:4-5 NKJV).

“Rejoice always *and* delight in your faith; be unceasing *and* persistent in prayer; in every situation [no matter what the circumstances] be thankful *and* continually give thanks *to God*; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus” (Thessalonians 5:16-18 AMP).

First we must understand knowing the will of the father has less to do with what career we should take or what we should eat and more to do with how we position our heart in relationship to God at all times, in all circumstances. Second we must also understand that rejoicing praying and giving thanks unto the Lord are acts of our will and that we need faith in order to do this always; especially when we are facing difficult times.

That's why singing songs of praise becomes so important. Don't just listen to praise music. Sing them out loud. Why? Because, you are singing Christ victory over yourself and building yourself self up in faith! We should cultivate a lifestyle of praise and thanksgiving. These things will natural flow out of a heart that is grateful.

➔ OG DISCUSSION: What are you grateful for? How often do you give thanks and praise to God for what He has done and who He is in your life?

The bible is clear that we are to make these things continuously ongoing in our lives. They aren't suppose to just happen on Sundays and on Holidays. Rejoicing, praising and giving thanks are all activities that draws our attention and focus on things above, the heavenly realm.

Is it so that we can feel good? Yes, but more importantly, it's so we can agree with what is true, no matter what we feel or perceive with our physical senses and emotions. This is how we wage war in the kingdom of God. We don't want to just focus on the devil giving him too much credit and too much attention. Instead, we keep our focus on the King and His kingdom, because the devil has no power in God's kingdom. The more we walk according to the Kingdom of God the more the devil and darkness is pushed back. He is unseated from having any authority in our lives and on earth. Bill Johnson says it like this,

“Thanksgiving agrees with Heaven by acknowledging the truth that our lives are a gift from God , and that He is sovereign over all. God

is extravagantly generous, and the life He has given us to experience on this planet is not a life of survival, but of abundance and blessings” (Bill Johnson, *Strengthen Yourself in the Lord*).

Thanksgiving helps us to recognize we have been given every good and perfect gift so that we can succeed in life and so that He can demonstrate His love for us and the world. This love is his personal invitation for us to enter into a loving relationship with Him.

Therefore thanksgiving and praise brings us into the manifest presence of God. It allows us to come so close that we become more aware of what He is doing and saying in the midst of our circumstances. Once we are aware, we can come in agreement and alignment! The key is keeping our awareness of God, which the Bible calls abiding in Christ. So often it's easy to vacillate back and forth from the kingdom realm to the earthly realm. That being said, our last point is..

4) We walk in Victory when we...Stay in the Presence of the Lord

We should desire to live our lives in such a way that we are always God conscious and aware of His Presence. Again I will take a quote from Bill Johnson,

I have purposed to try to live in such a way that nothing ever gets bigger than my consciousness of God's presence. If [something] starts to weigh on my heart and grow bigger than my awareness of God, I consciously turn my affection toward him to become more aware of His presence (Bill Johnson, *Strengthen Yourself in the Lord*).

Ephesians 3:12 tells us that we can come boldly and confidently into God's presence because of Christ's finished work on the cross. Are we just settling for our understanding that God is always present - omnipresent? Or are we contending for the manifest tangible presence of God in every moment?

By faith we can expect His life to invade our life and circumstances because Acts 17:28 tells us that it is in Him we live and move and have our being. I believe ultimately this is the Key to walking in Victory. If Jesus is Victory and He lives in me, then I am Victorious over all the schemes of the enemy. I truly believe that our end game is a journey, and it is a journey, of becoming One with The Lord! No separation between Him and me. There is no longer my life - there is only His life in me. I live, I move, I speak, I have my being in HIM and HIM alone.

You may be thinking that is radical P Theresa. And I would say to you, yes, yes it is. But Jesus is radical and he came with a message of truth that was radical! Do you Believe? Jesus was so radical that he made it his final prayer and greatest desire! And I want to close with this prayer found in John 17,

“I am not praying for the world but for those You have given Me, because they are Yours. Everything I have is Yours, and everything You have is Mine, and I have been glorified in them. I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them by Your name that You have given Me, so **that they may be one as We are one.**” (John 17:9-11 HCSB).