

Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

2 Corinthians 1:21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God.

1 Corinthians 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—

1 John 4:13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Satan Tempts You To Bestir Yourself

Do you know what the basic temptation is? One brother says he is often tempted to lose his temper. Another brother says he is frequently tempted to be harsh. Still another brother says he is usually tempted into unclean thoughts. Yet another brother says he is tempted to be talkative all the time. A thousand persons seem to have a thousand different temptations. Yet there is but one temptation in the whole world. Notwithstanding all the various temptations to bad temper, pride, greediness, adultery and so forth, the enemy really has but one temptation, and that is, to bestir the saints. Satan does not tempt you so that you lose your temper, become proud or greedy or adulterous. He simply tempts you to bestir yourself. If only he succeeds in bestirring you to do something, he gains the victory. Oh that I had enough tears to cry out, “Don’t be stirred!” Because once you have been stirred up to take action, you have failed. Whether you struggle with Satan, fight with him or resist him, so long as you are bestirred, he obtains the victory. Do keep in mind that our victory lies in being spectators; our victory is achieved in detachment. How wonderful if we could see it—that God sets us aside and lets His Son overcome for us!

“The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would” (Galatians 5:17). It does not say here that we strive against the flesh, nor that the flesh strives against us. It says instead that the Spirit lusts against the flesh and the flesh lusts against the Spirit. We are not involved; only the Spirit and the flesh are opposed to each other. What is it that we like to do? We like to sin, we like uncleanness. Yet we are to be the helpless observers, since the Spirit and the flesh are the ones that strive against each other. No place is given for us to participate. And yet such is God’s deliverance. We sit on the sidelines to watch the striving of the Holy Spirit against the flesh and vice versa. Such is the way of deliverance.

When I was first saved, I heard a story about a little girl who in her testimony revealed the extent to which she truly understood this matter of victory. During the Keswick Convention, someone asked the little girl, “How do you overcome when you are tempted?” “Formerly, whenever the devil came knocking at my door,” she reported, “I would immediately say, ‘Don’t you come in, don’t you come in!’ But this always ended up in defeat. Now, though whenever the devil knocks at the door, I at once say to the Lord: ‘Lord, You open the door.’ The Lord goes forward to do so. And as soon as the devil sees the Lord, the devil says: ‘I am sorry, I have knocked at the wrong door.’ And with that he turns and flees.”

In the course of our being tempted, if we cry out, “O Lord, here comes temptation; O Lord, save me, save me,” the devil will come in before the door is even opened. Today, leave it to the Lord to deal with the devil. The longer, the more anxious and more repetitious the prayer, the firmer is the holding on of our hands. One brother reminded us that when Peter was sinking, he merely cried out, “Lord, save me.” Just ask simply in one sentence, and this will indicate you are taking your hands off. If you continue to cry out, saying “O Lord, save me,” repeating it many times, you are already defeated. I call such prayer “hanging-on prayer.” The more you pray such prayer, the more it proves you have not let go, but are hanging on to the situation. You try to use prayer to attain victory; you are still thinking of using your own strength to gain the triumph. As a consequence you will not have victory. Stop crying, and you will come into victory. Do remember that Satan wants you to be stirred up, even if you are bestirred to pray.

Previously, you would burn when you heard any pricking words. What would you do today if someone were to pick on you incessantly? If you were to say to the Lord, “O Lord, this is not my business; victory is Your business; I confess I cannot control my temper; but Lord, You are responsible,” this would be called letting go. And the Lord would live out His patience through you. You could praise and thank God and say, “Lord, I could not care less.” But suppose you felt you could no longer bear the provocation, and you pray, “O Lord, save me, for I am quickly losing my control.” Fifteen minutes would pass like fifteen hours. Now although you would not explode outwardly, you would nonetheless be burning already within. And this would show you have not overcome. Satan does not seek for an explosion of your temper; he merely wants you to be agitated. And thus will he win.

Victory is when you are not stirred up to do. Victory means you pay no attention; it means you could not care less. Your calmness, aloofness and carelessness are rightfully called a letting go. Victory does not depend upon you, since you have already died. Instead, it is Christ who gains the victory for you. You have died and Christ lives—and this is called victory.

If you let go, God will take over. But if you wait for Him to take charge before you let go, God will wait for you to let go before He takes charge. Suppose the brother in the cloth department mentioned above was to be laid off the next month, but that he was also required to teach the new head instead of simply handing over the business to him. In that case he would be half responsible during the transfer period. With God, though, this is not possible. Either He accepts all or He accepts nothing. He never works halfway.

We all seem to have a serious sin which is one of unbelief. We take charge over ourselves daily. We think we will fail terribly if we do not take charge and suppress ourselves. But when we preach the gospel to the nations, we tell them that they need not to take care of anything because Christ has already died for them. We tell them that all they need to do is to believe, and they will be saved. In like manner, we have been crucified with Christ, and it is He who now lives in us. Praise and thank God! Christ is our head, and we are his members. Christ is the vine, and we are the branches. He is our life. He is our all. Let us who are saved therefore move out; let us who have been crucified with Christ care for nothing and let Him begin to bear all our responsibilities!

The Life That Wins by Watchman Nee