

In search of...



Truth & Right

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Victory in Jesus

"Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

'Death is swallowed up in victory.'

'O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?'

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

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." (1 Cor. 15:51-58)

The above passage is, for

Christians, a great source of encouragement. Speaking of one of life's few certainties-death, is often an uncomfortable subject at best. Yet here, the apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, has an altogether different tone. The text speaks of death as being overcome, that it has lost its hold over us, and as such we have no reason to fear.

If one were to boil these verses down to their bare essence, in one word, that word would be victory. Paul writes to his fellow Christians that they have victory through Jesus Christ. Please pay careful attention to that; this victory is not of ourselves, but is due entirely to the sacrifice of the Son of God on our behalf. So Jesus is offering us this victory, but to have it we must meet the conditions that He has set.

"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be

brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.

For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 6:3-11)

Thus we understand that faith, a living faith that leads to obedience of the gospel, makes one a child of God. As such, a person is in Christ, so that they have all the blessings that come from Jesus. Most important among these is eternal life in Heaven where there is no more pain or sorrow. Taking all of that in gives us a clear picture of what the scriptures mean when they talk about victory!

First of all, it is a victory over death. I know it seems redundant to say so, but the point must be made. By dying a faithful Christian, death loses its power and intimidation. Most people are afraid of death, for one reason or another, but those who trust in God and His Word need not be so afraid. They have no reason to worry about death or wonder what

might come next. Those who would try to argue against this because we must still experience physical death miss the point. Physical death is an inevitability. Just because one's body gives out does not mean that they haven't overcome death.

Also, in death a Christian overcomes the problems of this world. The aches and pains that come with our many times frail human bodies, and especially how many physical ailments come with growing older are all put to an end when we die. But you know, the troubles we face here and now are not limited to illness and injury. What about troubles of the mind, worrying about what is to come, or worrying about our loved ones?

"So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience." (Heb. 4:9-11)

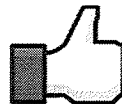
How wonderful it is to think about being able to rest, to know that our labors are behind us, and that we do not have to stress over things like deadlines or peer pressure or obligations any more! This means even more to Christians, because of the work that they are to be engaged in, and how

God tells us that work goes before us: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Blessed indeed,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!'" (Rev. 14:13) God sees and will reward our good works.

Finally, we must point out that in death, a Christian has victory over Satan and his temptations. At that point, the faithful child of God is beyond Satan's reach. They no longer have to battle the fleshly wants vs. the spiritual knowledge of what is right in God's sight. "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil." (Eph. 6:10-11) It's hard to keep fighting and fighting, but that's what we do against Satan. Yet a time is coming when our fighting will be over. What an encouragement that is to those that love God!

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To Live Is Christ

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- If Christ is proclaimed, Paul would rejoice (Phil. 1:18)
- Paul knew it would turn out for his deliverance (vs. 19)
- His expectation & hope was that he not be ashamed (vs. 20)
- And that Christ would be honored in his body (vs. 20)
- "To live is Christ, and to die is gain" (vs. 21)
- To live in the flesh would mean fruitful labor (vs. 22)
- Paul said he was hard pressed between the two (vs. 23)
- He desired to be with Christ, for it is far better (vs. 23)
- Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel (vs. 27)
- Do not be frightened in anything by your opponents (vs. 28)
- They would believe in Christ and suffer for His sake (vs. 29)
- So they were engaged in the same conflict as Paul (vs. 30)