

Being a Victorious Overcomer

Dear Friend,

When I try to fight the battles both within my mind and the battles coming at me from without, it isn't long that I feel over-whelmed. This is often a result of the fact that I dwell upon the crazy tapes going around in my mind more than I do the Biblical truths such as those I find in *2 Corinthians 10:3-5* where it says, "*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*"

These arguments and pretensions are the crazy tapes which tell us the situation is hopeless. We might as well give up now, because there is no other way out.

There are some days when I feel that trouble is coming from every side. It is critical at those moments that I meditate on passages like *Psalms 50:15*. There God tells me, "*Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will glorify me.*"

The issue is not my enemies but my inner me.

The battle became so intense the other day I had gone to sleep, not as a victorious overcomer, but as a worry wart who had been swallowed up by the needs all around me. The battle within was carried into my dreams, until I awoke at 5:30 am in a spirit of frustration and anxiety. It was then I crawled out of my bed and got on my knees crying out to God for help. I was literally doing what Ps. 50:15 said I needed to do. That is to call upon God in the midst of my troubles for help.

There is no magic formula for being a victorious overcomer. It is God who will deliver us when we call out to Him in our time of need. We must by faith do this knowing He will deliver us and as that happens we will glorify Him.

Romans 5:2-8 shows me additional ways that I can benefit from calling upon the Lord in the day of trouble. It tells me in the Message Bible, "*We throw open our doors*

to God and discover at the same moment that He has already thrown open His door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand--out in the wide-open spaces of God's grace and glory, standing tall and shouting our praise. There's more to come. We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling short changed. Quite the contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit. Christ arrives right on time to make this happen."

If I am going to believe these words and let them take root in my inner being I know I must obey *Isaiah 43:18,19* where it says, "*Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.*"

I have got to stop worrying that the present circumstances will thrust me into the same troubles I had in the past. It is only by faith in God that my eyes will be opened to the extent that I can see the new work that the Holy Spirit is doing in me now.

Reflecting on the hurts, pains and disappointments of the past will only activate the crazy tapes of despair. This in turn will sound off in my brain to the extent the promises of the scriptures are drowned out. Instead of letting that happen I must put up the shield of faith, as *Ephesians 6:16* tells me, and resist the fiery darts of doubt the evil one shoots in my direction.

The pressure may be on but we can't afford to give up. As Satan attacks, we must resist him steadfastly in the faith, "*Because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete not lacking anything*" (*James 1:3, 4*).

Now we need to use the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith to quench every fiery dart of the evil one. (*See Eph. 6: 16, 17*) Remember that Satan has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. "*God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its*

regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (Col.2:13-15).

Remember, *“They overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb (Jesus Christ) and the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death” (Rev.12:11).*

We are further promised that, *“He (or she) who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death” (Rev.2:11). “So, fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called” (1 Tim.6:12).*

Promise after promise is given to the overcomer in *Rev.2 and 3*. In spite of these words of promise, it is so easy to get tired out, worn out and burned out as we battle the devil, the world and our sinful flesh day after day. That is why it is so critical that we keep our daily appointments with God. In these daily appointments we talk to God in prayer, reading and meditating on the Scriptures under the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit and beholding the wonders of His creation.

Overcomers who don't give up live in the word of God, knowing that as God has spoken even so it will come to pass. *“So is my word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Is. 55:11).*

Sometimes that purpose is difficult to understand. Just ask Job who, although trying to live a God-fearing life, found himself going through unbelievable suffering. The book of Job clearly illustrates that as believers we must, when going through the fiery trial of suffering, remain steadfast in faith, entrusting ourselves to God who judges justly, just as Jesus did when He suffered. *“Who when He was revealed, did not revile in return: when He suffered, He did not threaten, not committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Peter 2:23).*

As overcomers, in *Revelations 2:11*, we are promised that we will eat of the tree of life and will not be hurt by the second death. Then in verse 26 we are told that as overcomers we will be given authority over all nations.

In Rev. 3:5 we are further promised by the Living Christ, *“I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and His angels.”*

But that is not all. We are further told in Rev.3:12, *“Him who overcomes, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God.”* Then in verse 21 we read, *“To him (and her) who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on His throne.”*

Why do we see ourselves all too frequently as defeated victims who think about giving up when through Jesus Christ we are declared victors and overcomers? *“That you may know what is the hope if His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe” (Eph. 1:18-19).*

The fact is we can either choose to be overcomers of sin, the world and Satan through Christ or we can be overcome by them. Those who refuse Christ and His overcoming power will ultimately be cast into hell itself. (See Rev. 2:11; 3:5; 20:15; 21:8) There is no in-between, for you are either an overcomer through Christ or overcome by sin, the devil and the world’s system. Now is the time to accept the victory Christ has provided *“This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he (and she) who believes that Jesus is the Son of God” (1 John 5:4, 5).*

Overcomers are doers of the word and not hearers only (James 1:22). They are on the front lines reaching out to the poor, the fatherless, widowed, hurting and homeless. Overcomers are those who are able to declare, *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor.4:16-18).*

Being a victorious overcomer in these last days depends upon the power of God revealed through Christ’s death on the cross and His physical resurrection. Jesus

warns us, *“Watch out that you are not deceived”* (Luke 21:8). We are further warned, *“Be on your guard. Don’t let the sharp edge of your expectation get dulled by parties and drinking and shopping. Otherwise, that day is going to take you by complete surprise, spring on you suddenly like a trap for it’s going to come on everyone, everywhere, at once. So whatever you do, don’t go to sleep at the switch. Pray constantly that you will have the strength and wits to make it through everything that’s coming and end up on your feet before the Son of Man”* (Luke 21:34-36 The Message Bible).

“Watch out,” “stand firm”, “be on guard”, are all clear cut directives from the Risen Christ who warns us not to be deceived nor trapped by the devil, the world or our fleshly desires.

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36). Our freedom from Satan has taken place because Jesus Christ died for humanity’s sins on the cross. The proof of this freedom lies in Christ’s resurrection from the dead.

Now we need to be strengthened with that power of the resurrection in our inner being. *Ephesians 3:16-19* explains how this is done, *“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”*

It is when we are rooted and established in the love of God that we receive the power to be a victorious overcomer. The saints who have gone before us are now watching and encouraging us be such overcomers by keeping our eyes on Jesus. *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart”* (Heb.12:1-3).

Are you growing weary and losing heart? Don't give up. Remain steadfast. Yes the hour is late and Satan is walking around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But you can be a victorious overcomer both against your enemies and your inner me.

Look to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. Throw off everything that will entangle or entrap you as you serve the Lord. Remember, "*In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us*" (Romans 8:37).

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry Rice". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Larry Rice".

Larry Rice