

Have You Been Conquered?

INTRODUCTION:

1. One of the things people seem to miss about Jesus is that after rising from the dead He ascended to Heaven to **sit on its throne and rule until His every enemy is conquered** (Acts 2:32-35 – “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. ³³ Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. ³⁴ For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “**Sit at my right hand, ³⁵ until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.**”’).
 - A. That Jesus’ enemies will be His footstool tells us that **war has been declared upon all who stand against the purposes of God**, and this **war** has been raging on ever since that day.
 - B. And one day this war will end when Jesus’ every enemy is made His footstool, or conquered, seeing refers to the practice of a king (here: King Tiglath Pileser III of Assyria) placing his foot on the neck of a **conquered foe** in a show of complete power over him.
2. This eventual truth is of great importance to everyone because what follows this show of power is the **conquerer’s choice to extend mercy and life or condemnation and death**.
 - A. This is the role Jesus will play in everyone’s life (Jn. 5:25-29 – “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; ²⁷ and **He gave Him authority to execute judgment**, because He is the Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, ²⁹ and will come forth; those who did the **good deeds to a resurrection of life**, those who **committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.**”).
 - B. So, the question is not **whether you will be conquered**, but **whether you have been conquered** by the Lord **in this life** to receive mercy and not condemnation on Judgement Day.
3. That is what I want to talk about today—whether you have been conquered by the Lord.
 - A. For, if we hope to be victorious in this life, we **must be conquered**, defeated, by Jesus and become His footstool, putting our life completely into His hands and His control.
 - B. So, lets look at what it means to be saved in defeat by the conquering King Jesus!

BODY:

I. There can be no victory in Christ without our total defeat:

- A. This is because our **sin** makes us **enemies** of Jesus (Eph. 2:1-3, 12 – “And you were **dead in your trespasses and sins**, ² in which you formerly walked according to the **course of this world**, according to the **prince of the power of the air**, of the **spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience**. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the **lusts** of our flesh, indulging the **desires of the flesh** and of the **mind**, and **were by nature children of wrath**, even as the rest...¹² remember that **you were at that time separate from Christ**, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, **having no hope and without God in the world.**”).
 1. Here the Spirit tells us that when **sin** entered our lives it **put us on the wrong side of this war**, causing us to be **enemies** of Christ **fighting for the wrong prince or ruler**.
 2. And fighting on the wrong side means we are:
 - a. **Children of wrath**—the wrath of God that will bring death to Christ’s enemies.
 - b. **Separated from Christ and God** with **no hope** in this life.
- B. Until we have been **conquered by the Lord** by our **death**, there can be no victory in Jesus.
 1. We must die for Christ to live in us (Gal. 2:20 – “**I have been crucified with Christ**; and **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 up for me.”).
 - a. Life in Christ means **Christ and His will is our whole life**.
 - b. That is what it means to **serve Jesus as our KING**, which as Americans living in a democracy is very difficult for us to understand and accept.

- 2. So, each of us need to ask ourselves, “Do I see my submission to Christ as me bowing my face to the ground in total submission and surrender of my life to Him?”
- 3. For, all will bow before Jesus as our king **willfully** leading to **mercy, grace, and salvation**, or as **defiant enemies** facing **condemnation and death!**

II. How can I if I have been conquered by the Lord?

- A. The answer to this question is something those concerned about salvation want to know!
1. Fortunately, in 2 Corinthians Paul, when forced to defend his apostleship and spiritual credibility, presented some things about his apostolic ministry in the gospel that can help us answer this question (2 Cor. 10:1-6 – “I, Paul, myself **entreat** you, by the **meekness and gentleness of Christ**—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!—² I **beg** of you that **when I am present I may not have to show boldness** with such confidence as I count on showing **against some** who suspect us of walking according to the flesh.³ For though we walk in the flesh, we are **not waging war according to the flesh**.⁴ For the **weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds**.⁵ We **destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God**, and **take every thought captive to obey Christ**,⁶ being ready to **punish every disobedience**, when your obedience is complete.”).
 2. So, what can we learn from this passage to help us know if we have been conquered?
- B. Those conquered by Jesus have responded positively to God’s **entreating**, to His pleading, His **inviting** you by the gospel to come near to him through Jesus Christ (10:1-2).
1. Here Paul was addressing how certain teachers had caused the Corinthians to question his work and genuineness as an apostle.
 - a. They claimed he walked according to the flesh, or according to **self-interest** (10:2).
 - b. They judged him by **outwards standards**, claiming he was physically weak and his speech contemptible (10:7, 10).
 - c. Though these matters deserved a strong response, Paul **entreated** them by the **meekness and gentleness of Christ to repent** so that there would be **no need for future acts of bold discipline and punishment** against them (10:1-2, also 10:6).
 2. In much the same way, God **patiently** and **gently entreats** you/me to **repent** of our sinful ways today so that we can be saved from the horrors of the coming Judgment against the wicked (2 Pet. 3:9-11, 14-15 – “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, **but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance**.¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, **what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness...**¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, **be diligent** to be found by Him in **peace, spotless and blameless**,¹⁵ and **regard the patience of our Lord as salvation**; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you”).
 - a. If you have not responded to God’s pleas through the gospel to repent and live for Him in holiness, you have not been conquered by the Lord and are on the wrong side in this war.
 - b. And if that does not change, a confrontation with Jesus is coming that will end in your defeat, condemnation, and eternal punishment in hell!
 - c. Why would you face that when God gently pleads with you to repent and be saved?!
- C. Those conquered by Christ have been conquered by God’s **spiritual weapons** (10:3-4 – “For though we walk in the flesh, we are **not waging war according to the flesh**.⁴ For the **weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power...**”).
1. One is not conquered for Christ by **earthly weapons** like guns, swords, etc. One cannot be forced by military might to submit to Jesus as their king.
 2. One is not conquered by **earthly pressures, coercion, and intimidation**.
 - a. It has been rightly said that “one convinced against their will is unconvinced still!”

- b. So, if an honest evaluation of your “conversion” causes you to conclude that you came to Jesus resulting in baptism because of worldly pressure (i.e., to follow your friends) or coercion (to please family, mate, etc.) rather than because you are a **sinner** needing the **loving grace** offered you in **Christ**, then you need to rethink your “conversion”!
- 3. Not by **earthly things** focused on **filling fleshly desires** (which is very common).
 - a. While most would think it wrong to use **earthly weapons** that bring **pain** and **suffering** to the flesh to conquer souls for Jesus, few have problems going to the **opposite extreme** of using **earthly motivation** designed to **fulfill fleshly desires**.
 - b. For, some the main weapons in the “evangelistic” arsenal of churches today are **recreation, entertainment, athletics, and social meals** which appeal to people’s fleshly desires to draw them to Christ!
 - c. This is done despite such tactics standing in complete contradiction to Jesus’ own words concerning the **spiritual nature** of salvation in His kingdom!
 - i. For, Jesus rebuked those who came to Him because they wanted “food” to meet their physical desires rather than the spiritual life Jesus offered (Jn. 6:26-27 – “Jesus answered them and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **you seek Me**, not because you saw signs, but because you **ate of the loaves and were filled**.²⁷ **Do not work for the food which perishes**, but for the **food which endures to eternal life**, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.”).
 - ii. And Jesus clearly taught that those who come to him must be **spiritually drawn** through the divine power of the word (Jn. 6:44-45 – “**No one can come to Me unless the Father** who sent Me **draws him**; and I will raise him up on the last day.⁴⁵ It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be **taught of God**.’ Everyone who has **heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me**.”).
 - iii. So, you cannot be drawn to Christ or taught by the Father through playing basketball, enjoying a talent show, going to a ballgame, or eating a doughnut!
 - d. If an honest evaluation of your “submission to Christ” exposes that you were drawn to do so by physical, social, or recreational means, if that was what it was about, then you need to ask yourself whether you have truly been conquered by Jesus!
- D. Those conquered by the Lord Jesus have suffered the loss of all things that stand against God (10:4-6 – “For the **weapons** of our warfare **are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds**.⁵ **We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God**, and **take every thought captive to obey Christ**,⁶ being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.”).
 - 1. Here, of course, Paul was addressing how the gospel truth would defeat those at Corinth and their human wisdom and worldly ways used to oppose him and His work in the gospel. But there are applications to be made to our lives as well.
 - 2. Have the **strongholds, the fortresses**, of your heart been destroyed (10:4)?
 - a. The Corinthians would have been familiar with Paul’s allusions, having knowledge of the Roman war machines that demolished strong walls and massive towers in fortified cities.
 - b. In the spiritual sense Paul is saying that unless the **divine power of the gospel** of Christ has **destroyed the strongholds of self and sin**, you and I have not been conquered.
 - i. It is far too easy to allow fortresses of sin, especially habitual sin, that are built in our hearts by its **pleasure, gratification, excitement**, and its **slavery to remain** there.
 - ii. Yet, Jesus said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must **deny himself**, and take up his cross and follow Me.²⁵ For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but **whoever loses his life for My sake will find it**.” (Mt. 16:24-25).
 - iii. So, if the **fortresses** of sin from the old self **remain**, then you have not been fully conquered by the Lord and need to honestly ask yourself **why** that is true.
 - 3. Have the **arguments, reasonings, and every lofty opinion raised up against the knowledge of God** in your life been destroyed (10:5)?
 - a. This is serious because we can erect barriers, or defenses, against the gospel in our minds.

- b. This is especially true with recurring sin because we convince ourselves that our repeated **failures are not that bad**, that we can **control it ourselves**, etc.
 - i. Such arguments are **motivated by pride** and are **barriers** to true spiritual freedom!
 - ii. For, Jesus, who we claim to believe has the power over sin, has told us that exposing our sin to the **light** of the gospel and to our **brethren** is the answer.
 - 1) Jn. 3:20-21 – “For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and **does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.** ²¹ But he who practices the truth **comes to the Light**, so that **his deeds may be manifested** as having been wrought in God.”
 - 2) Jas. 5:16 – “Therefore, **confess your sins to one another**, and **pray for one another** so that you may be healed. **The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.**”
 - iii. So, God’s might offered us in Christ can tear down and destroy human arguments and high-minded ideals that stand against our freedom, but only if we swallow our pride and bring our deeds to the Light so others can help.
 - c. If an honest evaluation of your life finds such arguments that allow your sin to remain hidden and to continue it enslavement, you are not allowing Jesus to fully conquer you.
4. Is **every thought being taken captive** to the **obedience of Christ** (10:5)?
- a. Here Paul was describing the victory that truth has the power to bring in the minds of those at Corinth who questioned and opposed his work and apostleship.
 - b. But this truth has application in our lives, seeing that those conquered by Christ seek to bring every thought captive to Jesus’ will.
 - i. In other words, the sinful thoughts of hatred, lust, envy, ingratitude, etc., are immediately arrested and cast from the Christian’s mind in obedience to Christ!
 - ii. This is vital to our spiritual lives because if such thoughts are allowed to linger, they will take control of our heart and produce sin (Mk. 7:21-23 – “For from within, **out of the heart of men**, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, ²² deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. ²³ All these evil things proceed **from within** and **defile** the man.”).
 - c. So, if you have been conquered by the Lord, great effort will be given to assure that every thought is immediately examined and retained or cast out based on the will of Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

1. Paul states that a time of reckoning was coming (10:6).
 - A. Those at Corinth who heeded his pleas and obeyed would be distinguished from the insubordinate and impenitence who would face the full force of his apostolic discipline.
 - B. In the same way Jesus the King seeks our complete surrender to Him so that we can be saved and receive glory at His return, at which time we will be distinguished from the wicked who will face the fiery retribution of His judgment (2 Thess. 1:5-10).
2. Fortunately for you and me, God in his mercy is patient, giving us time today, right now, to repent and be saved (2 Pet. 3:9-15).
 - A. But one day the end will come, and God’s patient waiting will end.
 - B. And when that time comes, joyous glory will come upon all who have been **willingly conquered** by the Lord in their **death to self** and **resurrected life for Him**.
 - C. But for those who have **refused to submit in obedience** to the gospel, they will find themselves as the footstool of Jesus condemned to eternal punishment.
3. So, I lovingly ask you, as does God, “Have you been conquered by the Lord?
 - A. The life and joy of your eternal soul depends on it.
 - B. Will you come to Jesus today in F-R-C-Bp?