

Title: Overcome
Pastor: Andries van der Merwe
Date: 27 March 2011
Time: 18:00



Revelation 21:6-8 (New International Version)

⁶ He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death."

There are 4 groups of people:

- Those who overcome
- vs.
- the cowardly
- the unbelieving
- the sinners

In the context of Revelations it is interesting to note this theme:
When Christ speaks to the seven churches...

- He starts with affirmation & commendation
- Then the criticism
- Followed by an instruction
- And then the promise...

But the promise is only for those who overcome: Revelation 2-3
Overcome the weakness, challenge or sin...

The Children of God are expected to overcome
They are not the cowardly, unbelieving or the sinners
We are meant to overcome...

Revelation 21:6-8 (New International Version)

⁷ He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

...but the cowardly, unbelieving and the sinner...they will not inherit

1. Christianity is not for cowards ("vreesagtiges")

Matthew 10:27-33 (New King James)

Christianity is all or nothing...to one of the 7 churches He says:

Revelation 3:15-16 (New King James Version)

¹⁵ I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

No place for cowards, the double-minded. We are meant to overcome our fears that keep us from following God.

2. There is no place for the unbelieving.

We need to decide whether we are going to believe man or God.

Are we going to follow the philosophies of man or are we going to follow God's Word?

Colossians 2:8 (New King James Version)

⁸ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

In the garden...who are you going to believe?

We are meant to overcome doubt, with the Word of God.

3. We are meant to overcome sin in our lives.

Romans 6:1-14

Three things we need to overcome: fear, unbelief & sin.
Whatever you are struggling with... you can overcome.

John 16:33 (New King James Version)

³³ These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

Jesus is saying three things:

- We should not be afraid.
- Tribulation, hardship, suffering is a given – even for Christians.
- But He has already overcome – He has already achieved the victory...He has made the way for us to overcome, He has set the example for us that we can follow and overcome.

It is interesting how some Christians deal with suffering. Some think that all suffering is either a direct result of the devil, or resulting of their own sin, or due to a lack of faith... Therefore for victory or overcoming in suffering, the suffering itself must be removed for victory to be achieved.

Suffering is always seen in a negative light, therefore victory is only achieved when the negative ceases to exist.

Paul had this problem. He called it the “thorn in his flesh.”

We do not know exactly what it was, but most scholars agree that it probably was a physical ailment – a sickness or disorder.

II Corinthians 12:8-10 (New International Version)

⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul overcame his weakness through God’s Grace. Paul overcame even though the weakness was not removed.

And because of his struggle with this weakness, the revelation of God’s grace changed who he was: Instead of pleading with God to take it away, he was now delighting in his weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. “For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

His weakness and inability became a platform for God’s grace and therefore became his strength. He was no longer relying on the absence of hardships, persecutions and difficulties to do the will of God... but rather in the midst of them to overcome and live the will of God.

As a matter of fact it is in the midst of these difficulties that God’s strength is manifested in and through me.

Therefore we read Peter, James and others write: “Consider it pure joy when you face trials of many kinds” ...because of what it will produce in you.

James 1:2-4 (New International Version)

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Paul overcame his fear of his weakness and circumstance – they used to be hurdles in his life. What hurdles are you facing?

Socio-economic background, handicap or mannerism? What is keeping you back?

I want to touch on a fear that keeps us back from doing God's will:

I Peter 2:18-24 (New International Version)

¹⁸ Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. ¹⁹ For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. ²⁰ But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ²² "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." ²³ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed."

Verses 20-21:

²⁰ But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

Unlike what some may teach, suffering is part of our Christian walk. (Some teach we only suffer if there is sin in our lives.)

Being a Christian does not safeguard us against all suffering. All Christians must be willing to suffer

I am not saying we should seek to suffer, but we must be willing to undergo suffering especially in our devotion to Christ and the Gospel.

Sometimes we are so diplomatically correct that it becomes a cover for our own fears... because we are afraid of man & what man can do to us. And we do not stand up for the truth or the Gospel.

Romans 12:21 (New International Version)

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

We are so diplomatically correct that evil prevails. The saying is true: "Evil prospers where good men do nothing."

And we do not stand up for the truth or the Gospel because we are still afraid of what man can do or afraid of suffering. We need to stand up for the truth in our workplace, fend for the weak, stand up for the Church...

And suffer because of that...

Matthew 5:11-12 (New International Version)

¹¹ Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

I Peter 3:13-17

¹³ And who is he that will harm you, if you become followers of what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed." And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." ¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and always be ready to give an answer to everyone who ask you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶ having a good

conscience; that when they defame as of evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. ¹⁷ For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good, than for doing evil.

It is time to stand for the truth and overcome our fears, overcome evil with good.

This nation, this town, this campus: If we do not stand up...
We must do it with the right attitude – meekness and respect.

John 16: Christ promised us we will face tribulation.

I Peter 2:21

²¹ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

Spiritual maturity is not measured by whether we suffer or not, but rather by how we deal with our suffering.

I Peter 2:23

²³ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

Don't retaliate or make threats: Allow God to vindicate you. If we try we take away the opportunity for God to do so....

If we deal with our suffering in the right way, it is commendable before God. It is not only used to develop maturity, but Christ-likeness

God says we will also share in his Glory.

Romans 8:16-18 (New King James Version)

¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

It is time to stand for the truth and not be ashamed. To become like David...

God want us to become overcomers.

Overcome your fears & inabilities – “My strength is made perfect.” Overcome in the midst of your hardships – “My Grace is sufficient.”
Overcome your sin – “It is finished.”

It is time to overcome evil with good: “Do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.”

Philippians 4:13

¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.