



Week 5

Christ as our Victor

READ

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken 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.

Colossians 2:13-15



Do you ever stop and wonder why so many movies and TV shows are focused on superheroes? It seems that as we look at the evil and brokenness in our world, we as humans have this need to imagine that there is someone greater and stronger who can come and fix it. When danger is close from an enemy a hero can fight on our behalf and be victorious. It's as if we innately know that there are some battles that are too big for us as humans to overcome. The Bible makes it clear that this is not just in our imagination. When we choose to rebel against God we come under the power of the ruler of this earth, Satan. Sin is often personified in the Bible, meaning it pictures sin like a being, a villain that has captured us and holds us as slaves. This too is true of death. Death is the ultimate enemy, the villain that will once and for all separate us from God. And as humans we are completely incapable of overcoming these forces.

Of sin, Paul, reflecting on his life before knowing Jesus, shared,

“For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing”

Rom 7:18-19

Have you ever felt that way? You know something is wrong, or it will hurt someone you love, and yet you do it even though you really want to act differently? That is what it feels like to be enslaved to sin. These powers: sin, Satan, and death, rob us of the good things that God has provided. Death steals away our loved ones. Satan accuses and lies to us, and oppresses and tries to dominate us to make us an agent of destruction, and sin works through us, ripping apart our lives as we hurt others and damage our own souls. And ultimately all of these keep us from being connected to God, our source of life and love. We need a hero, someone who will step into our mess and risk his own life to save us; someone who loves us so much that he will fight for us. And the Bible is clear, that hero is Jesus.

However, Jesus was not like a vengeful Liam Neeson character, systematically executing evil, one person at a time. Nor was he some Marvel superhero who came with immense power and a chiseled all-American jawline and used his extraordinary abilities to save helpless regular people. Jesus came as an ordinary average person. Isaiah, describing Jesus, wrote,

“He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain...”

Isa 53:2b-3



“...Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem”

Isa 53:2b-3

Jesus seemed utterly insignificant in so many ways. His ministry was a mere three years, his death that of a common rebel. By all worldly standards Jesus was a loser. But it was in this humility, this loss, that he overcame death, sin, and Satan. At the cross Jesus put sin to death, the condemning power of Satan over us was destroyed and the price for our sin was satisfied. And at the resurrection Jesus rose victoriously over death. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul declares when he recites the poem:

“‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’ ‘Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’”

1 Cor 15:54-57

and continues,

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

1 Cor 15:54-57

Jesus is our victor; he has done what we could not; he has rescued us and overcome our enemies. He is the champion. And now because of Jesus we do not have to fear sin, Satan, or death. They are beaten, defeated... they have lost. Jesus made a “spectacle of them” and now he rides before us, the great champion on the white horse (Rev 19), and he declares that because of his work, we too share in his victory (Rom 8:37).

Questions to Ponder:

(If you are doing this as family or with others share your answers)

1. Have you ever felt powerless about something and needed someone stronger to step in? How did that feel?
2. Read through Matthew 28:1-10 and 16-20. As you do, imagine yourself as one of Jesus' followers. What would you be thinking in that moment, what are some of the implications of what Jesus is saying when it comes to evil, sin, Satan, and death?

Kids Corner:

Have you ever experienced a bully? The thing about bullies is that they will keep bullying other people until someone stands up to them. When you watch a TV show or movie with a hero in it, usually it is the hero who stands up to the villain and the villain is like a bully. He hurts and picks on people who are weak and unable to defend themselves.

The Bible tells us that there are three bullies or villains that are the worst of all named sin, Satan, and death. Just like bullies at school, everyone is afraid of them because no one is strong enough to stand up to them and whenever anyone tries, they just can't do it. We needed a hero, someone who could stand up to those bullies and win! And guess what? We have a hero who did just that. Jesus was the greatest hero ever, and he was super sneaky in how he defeated our enemies. Jesus came down as a normal human being. He looked weak and powerless. And like a scary villain team: sin, Satan, and death attacked him all at once.

They nailed him to a cross, they whipped him and beat him up, they piled guilt and shame for all the bad things that had ever been done and ever would be done on his heart, and ultimately they took his life. It looked like the bullies had won... but they hadn't. Jesus tricked them. You see to defeat sin, Jesus needed to pay the penalty for sin, that was death and so he died... sin's greatest power was death. Satan was the great accuser, he accuses us before God, and when Jesus went to the cross he took responsibility for the bad things that anyone had ever done and so all of Satan's accusations against us were now put on Jesus.

Finally, on the cross death, the bully that separates us from God, attacked Jesus by stealing away his life. It looked like Jesus was a goner... but then three days later he rose from the grave. It was like a hero who is lying in the dirt and looks like he is beaten up and then as the villains are laughing, thinking they have won, he gets back up and smashes them to pieces! Jesus tricked sin, Satan, and death, into using everything they had against him and they had nothing else and he rose again and crushed them. And now because Jesus is our hero, we don't have to be scared of sin, Satan, or death. We know that Jesus has beat them. Let's take a few minutes to thank Jesus for loving us enough to be our hero.



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DISCUSS | REFLECT



Take a few minutes to read through the following passages of Scripture and then discuss/answer the questions below.

Read:

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:31-39 (NIV)

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 (NIV)



Going Deeper:

1. What do you notice are the benefits of Jesus' victory for us according to the two passages above?
2. Which enemy do you find most often gets your attention: sin, Satan, or death? How do the above passages encourage you with that specific enemy?
3. Do you feel like a victor based on Jesus' work? If not, why might that be?
4. In the second passage, we are called to give ourselves fully to the work of Jesus because we know it is not in vain; because he has the final word. What is one area in which you need to grow in this?

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PRAY





Take sometime to read through the prayer below and then speak it out loud and allow each word to come from the heart, both in thankfulness for the benefits of Jesus' work and also simply to praise him for his victory over sin, Satan, and death.

Loving Father, we thank You for Jesus who was wounded for our transgressions, who bore our sins in His body on the tree. For our guilt He gave us peace, and from our bondage to sin He gave sweet release. The triumph of the cross is witnessed by the myriads of believers who follow Christ into heaven. We thank You for Jesus who is our victorious and soon coming King! We honour Him by surrendering our lives wholly to His set purpose. Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Amen.

- Stephen & Brooksyne Weber

Pray throughout the day: As you go through your day, take time to pray through the following items.

1. Take time to reflect on areas of your life that have been a battle. Perhaps there is an area where sin seems to have power over you (ex. unhealthy anger, addiction, selfishness); where Satan may be speaking lies into your heart (ex. issues of shame, guilt, pride, depression); or where death is reigning in your life (ex. fear, anxiety). Find a time where you can get into a posture of submission (such as kneeling) and thank Jesus for his victorious work. (Ex. Thank Jesus that he overcame Satan and so you can be free of shame and guilt because that has been laid upon him at the cross).
2. Pray and ask the Spirit to continue to help your heart believe the truth of Jesus' victory and live in that victory over sin in your life on a daily basis.
3. Pray and ask the Spirit to reveal to you one person in your life who needs to hear the good news that Jesus is victorious over sin, Satan, and death. It may be a person who is holding onto pain, who is struggling with addiction and is losing hope, or who sees continual sin in their life that they feel like they can't overcome.

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CELEBRATE | GO





This morning you are invited to take time to declare and proclaim in worship, that Jesus is the victor and because of that we too are victorious. As a family or as an individual look up “Singing In The Victory - Austin Stone Worship” on YouTube and use the following words below to sing along.

Singing in the Victory

By Aaron Ivey and Brett Land

[Verse 1]

I will not be anxious,
Jesus, You are near
The Peace of God surrounding me,
and casting out all fears
The hand that holds the heavens,
is the mighty hand that saves
The voice that calms the stormy seas
Is calling me by name

[Chorus]

I'm singing in the victory,
the victory of the cross
I'm resting in the shadow,
of Your redeeming love
I'm standing on the promise,
the promise of new life
'Cause I am Yours forever,
and Jesus, You are mine
Oh Jesus, You are mine

[Verse 2]

When I have forgotten,
the fullness of Your grace
Yes, I'll remember Calvary,
where You took my place

[Bridge]

There is no one like You, God
Love immeasurable and strong
There is no one like You, God
So lead this heart to sing in awe
There is no one like You, God, no-o
Love immeasurable and strong
There is no one like You, God
So lead this heart to sing in awe
Whoa, whoa
Whoa, whoa

Application:

Jesus is the victorious one, he has overcome sin, Satan, and death. Now these things don't have power over us. One analogy used to describe Jesus' work on the cross is that it was like D-Day in World War II. D-Day signified the moment victory was certain for the Allies but there were still many battles to be fought before V-Day (Victory Day) was fully accomplished. Jesus has beaten sin, Satan, and death but they are not yet destroyed. He has promised that he will return again to vanquish them forever (Rev.19-20). In the meantime, we are called to be his representatives, continuing to break down the strongholds of darkness that we see around us by the power of his Spirit. Think of one area of darkness in our city (ex. addiction, abuse, injustice) and prayerfully ask the Spirit to reveal to you one way he can use you to bring the victory of Jesus to bear in that arena. (Ex. Supporting a mom who may be tempted and feeling pressure to abort an unborn child through the Victoria Pregnancy Center). Don't be limited to the obvious or the general, think of darkness you might see in the individual relationships around you as well.