

St. Paul's New Words for Superabounding Grace.

by Daniel Steele

Daniel Steele's sermon explores St. Paul's unique expressions of grace and victory through Christ's sacrifice on the cross, emphasizing the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives.

Scripture: Romans 5:20, Romans 8:37, 1 Corinthians 12:31, 2 Corinthians 2:14, 2 Corinthians 3:10, Ephesians 3:19, Colossians 2:15, 1 Timothy 1:14, Revelation 12:11

Topics: "Victory Over Sin", "Superabounding Grace"

Description

Daniel Steele preaches about the victory over sin and the superabounding grace accessible to believers since the coming of the Paraclete on the day of Pentecost. Through the cross, Christ triumphed over all evil angels and spirits, demonstrating the highest expression of love and power. Believers are encouraged to continue the fight with courage, knowing they battle a vanquished foe and that Christ has already overcome the world. The victory of Christ enables Christians to be triumphant in every place and hour, leading them in a triumphal procession as ministers of the victory.

Transcript

We will next examine the newly coined words to express the victory over sin and the superabounding grace accessible to believers since the coming of the Paraclete on the day of Pentecost.

Col. 2:15, "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (the cross). Here and in one other passage Paul uses the verb *thriambuo*, to triumph. It is found but twice in the Bible, and only as descriptive of pentecostal grace, or, as in this text, of Christ's complete victory over all evil angels and spirits, even the highest in dignity and power. The cross was the Waterloo defeat of all malignant personalities. In what way? Let me explain. Love is power. The highest expression of love is the highest power. The cross is the highest manifestation of love possible in the universe. When Christ, the Son of God, voluntarily bowed his head in death, as a self-sacrifice for men, even for his enemies, he shook the empire of sin to its very foundations. His last cry on the cross, with a loud voice, was the shout of eternal triumph and victory. In a celebrated cathedral in Europe there is behind the altar a cross, with a ladder leaning against it, as if it had been just used in taking down the body of Christ. Beyond a hill in the background of the picture are seen the heads of four men who are bearing it reverently to the tomb. At the foot of the cross a stream of blood is running down the hill towards the spectator. In rapid flight from that crimson rill is seen a serpent instinctively hastening from his conqueror -- the painter was a

good theologian. But how does this victory of Christ help the Christian when hard pressed by the tempter? It gives great courage to continue the fight, when we are assured that we are battling with a vanquished foe, and that the victor is still in the field and within call, shouting to all his soldiers, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Faith makes his victory ours.

Rev. 12:11, "And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." The blood of atonement, so appropriated as to prompt to unceasing testimony, is the infallible weapon of victory. So long as Satan could point to the broken law, he could say, "Your case is hopeless, there is no pardon, no mercy in law; it is a straightedge to lay on your character and show its crookedness. It cannot make you straight. It must condemn you. So all your attempts to be righteous are vain. You would do wisely to throw off all allegiance to that hard Master who reaps where he has not sown, whose law is impracticable, and whose commandments are grievous." But the death of Christ puts a new hope into the despairing soul. It brings to an end the reign of law. so far as it is the ground of pardon. The blood of Christ lays a practicable basis for the forgiveness of sins. Thus the devil and his hostile powers are deprived of their strength, which rested on the law as the sole ground of justification.

2 Cor. 2:14, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." The R. V. reads, "always leadeth us in triumph," not as the conquered, but as the ministers of the victory, the soldiers of Christ, who are in the triumphal procession to share the honor. The difference between the same unique verb, to triumph, used here, and the ordinary *nikao*, is that it implies not only victory, but the most public display of it. In Roman triumphal processions incense and perfumes were burnt near the conqueror with different effects, pleasing some but sickening others; to which custom the apostle beautifully alludes in the next verse, "For we are a sweet savor unto God, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." This passage is an encouragement to every consecrated laborer in the Lord's vineyard. No faithful labor will lose its reward. The number of them that are saved may not require large figures in the statistical report; the number that perish may be much larger. Nevertheless, he who scans motives and notes faithful work in obscure places, unappreciated by man, is preparing a triumph for him at the grand Review. Of this he has day by day a foretaste furnished by the indwelling Comforter. Hence he is a victor in every place and every hour.

Says Chrysostom, "Thanks be to God who triumphs us, that is, makes us illustrious in the eyes of all. Our persecutors are the trophies which we erect in every land." The eighth and last beatitude of Jesus, the last because it is the sweetest and richest, is pronounced upon them that are persecuted for his sake. St. Paul had tasted persecution again and again. "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned." Yet so gloriously did God sustain him that he could express his superiority to all his sufferings for Christ, only by borrowing the pageantry of the Roman general making a solemn and magnificent entrance into Rome after an important victory. This God's abounding grace enabled him to do "always" and "in every place." Let the Fainthearts and Littlefaiths in the church study these words of the great apostle and take courage, and put unwavering trust in the Captain of their salvation.

Rom. 8:37, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Here St. Paul's habit of inventing stronger terms expressive of victory than any found in the Greek language appears again in strengthening the every-day verb *nikao*, to conquer, by prefixing the preposition *huper*, the Latin and English *super*. "We are supervictorious." This compound verb is found nowhere else in the whole range of Greek literature. This struggle to lay hold of adequate expressions, this straining of ordinary speech till it breaks out in unheard-of inventions, indicates the greatness of the writer's

conception of God's wondrous grace surpassing the believer's utmost need.

Rom. 5:20, "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Here St. Paul invents a term which he repeats in 2 Cor. 7, making the strong compound verb "superabound," the original of which is unique in both sacred and secular Greek. Why these daring inventions by a man of fine literary taste, educated in the University of Tarsus, the greatest center of scholastic culture east of Athens? Classical authors usually abstain from the use of words coined by themselves, regarding them as barbarisms. Why did St. Paul deviate from a fundamental canon of rhetoric? The river of divine grace flowing through his soul was too full for its ordinary bed; it must overflow its banks, and cut for itself a broader channel, and become an Amazon for all the thirsty nations and generations. The constraint of the Holy Spirit caused these deviations from the standard of reputable use, and prompted this outburst of invented words. There is no other explanation. I want no other. This magnifies God's mercy and love. It shows how the richness of grace transcends the poverty of nature. In our second text (2 Cor. 7:4), "I superabound in joy," we have a phrase that matches St. Peter's "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Why should so many persons in Christian lands, and some even in the Christian church, be eagerly running to earthly springs to slake their thirst, while the heavens are pouring down Niagaras of living water?

"Love divine, all love excelling,

Joy of heaven to earth come down."

1 Tim. 1:14, "The grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly." Here St. Paul prefixes the super to another verb, which itself signifies to superabound, giving it the force of "exceedingly to superabound." This verb, *hyperpleonazo*, appears nowhere else in the entire volume of Greek literature. Before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, "faith" and "love" in human souls were streams so small that they needed no wider terms for their description. Thanks to God for bringing me into being in the glorious dispensation of the Comforter! It is preferable to the days of Christ's flesh.

No New Testament writer except St. Paul uses the compound verb *hyperballo*, to exceed, excel, surpass. He has written it five times as descriptive of the graces of the Holy Ghost, who has been aptly styled the communication of God, as the Son is the revelation of him. The texts are '2 Cor. 3:10, "The glory that excelleth"; 9:14, "Exceeding grace"; Eph. 1:19, "Exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe"; 2:7; "The exceeding riches of his grace"; 3:19, "The love of Christ which surpasseth knowledge." We have not time to unfold their wealth of meaning. Let each reader do this for himself.

No other writer in the New Testament has used the noun "*hyperbole*," transferred into English as *hyperbole*. The texts in which this is applied to spiritual blessings are 1 Cor. 12:31, "And a still more excellent way show I unto you"; 2 Cor. 4:7, 17, "More and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." They are well worth studying by those who are aspiring for a large view of God's promises, as a preparation for their realized fulfillment through increased faith.

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