

The Defeated Christian Life

by David Guzik

A defeated Christian life is marked by a conspicuous absence of power, peace, or joy, and can be avoided by pursuing a real personal relationship with Jesus, relying on the Holy Spirit, and seeking God's forgiveness and cleansing from sin.

Duration: 53:50

Scripture: 1 Kings 8:33, 2 Chronicles 28:22, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:37, 2 Corinthians 4:8-10, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 5:8-9

Topics: "Prayer Life", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of neglecting prayer and making excuses for a defeated Christian life. He uses the example of a child who doesn't have time for a quiet time to highlight how we often prioritize other things over prayer. The speaker emphasizes the importance of turning back to God, confessing His name, and praying fervently as the opposite of self-reliance and neglect of prayer. He encourages listeners to challenge themselves and examine if they are living a defeated Christian life, and offers biblical passages to remind them that circumstances or trials do not determine defeat, but rather our response to them.

Transcript

Tonight, I want to talk to you about something that's been mulling around in my mind for several weeks, and if anything, I would just title this message tonight, The Defeated Christian Life. Now, again, it's not that I'm in favor of the defeated Christian life. Hopefully, tonight we'll talk about how to avoid the defeated Christian life, but it occurred to me recently that we don't talk much in those terms anymore in the vocabulary of the church.

I might just be imagining things, but it seemed to me when I was a younger Christian, we spoke a little bit more about victory and defeat in the Christian life. I hear more talk about victory than I do about defeat, but it struck me, thinking not too long ago, that that's the problem with many Christian lives around me, and as I looked at my own Christian life, at my own Christian life, that's been a problem at certain times and at certain points. To just say simply, your Christian life is suffering under some measure of defeat.

You're a defeated Christian, and it's going to stay that way until you do something about it to change it. If I could put the subject just most pointedly here, I'd say that the real problem with many Christians and many Christian lives, and if you want to extend it out, wouldn't you say the real problem with many families, the real problem with many churches, the real problem with many communities, is that individual Christian

lives are lived in defeat. Now, you might ask, what does that mean to have a Christian life marked by defeat? Anytime I start throwing around terms like this, it's well and good for you to ask yourself, well, what do you mean by that? Well, I don't know if you can give a scientific or even necessarily a biblical definition of a defeated Christian life.

I'll give you a suggestion of one this evening, and to me, this is a good working definition, that a defeated Christian life is marked by a conspicuous absence of any one of these three things, a conspicuous absence of power, peace, or joy, any one of those three things. If there's a conspicuous absence of them in the Christian life, I would say you're dealing with a defeated Christian. Now, I don't think we should say that a defeated Christian is someone who's going through trials.

We'll talk about that later. Not at all. Trials and defeats aren't necessarily equivalent at all, and nor should we accept what the world gives to us often as an image of defeat.

You know, oftentimes, if we take a look at just the New Testament with square or new eyes, we see that oftentimes Jesus would have looked like he was defeated by the world's measurements. Here he is. How does he end his his career, so to speak, hanging on a cross, unjustly condemned as a executed criminal, and all of his followers have forsaken him? That's a pretty vivid description of defeat, the way the world looks at it.

But we know Jesus wasn't defeated at all. So I'm not talking about the way that the world defines defeat, just in the sense of success and failure. I'm talking about what Christian defeat is like, what defeat is like in the Christian life.

And again, I would define it as a conspicuous absence of power, peace or joy. Now, what do I mean by power? I don't mean the kind of power where a person can wave his hand and other people fall back because of some supposed move of the Holy Spirit. I'm talking about the power to live a godly life.

When you find a person who seems powerless to resist sin. A temptation, let's say, to anger comes up and they give into it consistently. There is no power there to resist.

You look at their life and they may have an idea about the power or feel like it's in there, but there's no exercise of power in the Christian life to overcome sin, to live in a godly way, to step forward for God's work in God's way. I'd say where you see a conspicuous absence. I'm not talking about a hiccup.

I'm not talking about a bad day. Any one of us can have those. But I'm talking about a conspicuous absence of power in a Christian life.

That's a Christian in defeat. Or how about this? A conspicuous absence of peace. This poor Christian is tied up in knots with anxiety.

They fear about the future. They fear about this. They fear about that.

I heard the message that Tim Coleman delivered in my absence last Sunday. What a wonderful message about fear and what a great antidote the peace of God is to that kind of fear. Well, I think that the peace of God is something that he gives to every one of his children.

This is something that God has for us. Our hearts should be settled and peaceful in him. Not that again that we won't have our moments of anxiety, but if the orientation of our life or if the direction that we're

pointed is primarily lacking peace, I'd say that's a defeated Christian.

I mean, look at them. Their face is screwed up in anxiety all the time. They're worried.

They're fretting. Perhaps they're developing all kinds of problems and difficulties within their body because they lack peace. Is this God's will for that believer? I don't believe so.

I believe they're living a defeated Christian life. And the third measuring stick I would give, and again, I want to stress that this isn't necessarily I'm not can't point you to chapter and verse that says thus sayeth the Lord. These are the three marks of a defeated Christian.

I'm just sort of observing this over my experience and my personal experience as a Christian. The third mark I would give is a conspicuous absence of joy. Some Christians just seem to walk around miserable all the time.

It's just they're hating life. You hardly ever see a smile on their face. And if you do see a smile on their face, it's not about the things of God.

There's not a sense of joy in worship, in prayer, in living the Christian life of satisfaction in God. They can be satisfied in any number of other things, how their favorite sports team is doing, how their stock portfolio is performing. But there's no joy about the things of living the Christian life about their relationship with God.

I would say where you see a conspicuous absence of that joy. That's a defeated Christian life as a birthright of being born again in Jesus. God has given us power.

He's given us peace and he's given us joy where you see a conspicuous absence of any one of those three things in a Christian life. I'd say that's a defeated Christian life. Now, let me take pains to point out that the defeated Christian is still a Christian.

We are not talking about a second class salvation. The defeated Christian is just as much a Christian as the victorious Christian, because our standing is based on what Jesus has done for us, not on what we can do or have done or are doing or will do for him. Our standing is in him.

It's by grace that you're saved, not of works. It's not of yourself. Make no mistake about it.

We're not talking about a second tier or a second class of Christianity. If you have one victorious Christian over here and one defeated Christian over there, they are brothers, they are sisters in Jesus Christ, and they are both equally saved. You're not saved because you're on a good role in your Christian life.

Man, it's been a good week. Wow, I'm extra saved now. No, you're not.

You're extra deceived if you're talking like that. You know, the whole matter is we're saved by the work of Jesus and by trusting in that on our behalf. So we're not talking about a second class salvation here.

Then again, let me say just as strongly that the defeated Christian does not enjoy the Christian life the way that the victorious Christian does. You see, we're not just talking about getting to heaven as if trusting in Christ is a ticket punched for fire insurance and, well, I got my ticket, well, then I'm okay. We're talking about enjoying the Christian life along the way.

I just recently got back from a river rafting trip and it was a great time and it reminded me of one of the first times, I think it was the second time I'd ever gone with this particular ministry that runs river rafting trips, a great ministry they have too out of the Calvary Chapel of Concord up in the Bay Area. One of the earlier trips I had gone with them, I believe it was just myself and my two sons and then also in the boat was a woman and her young son. And I don't remember exactly how old her young son was.

I'm going to guess maybe seven, eight, nine years old. And this young boy, maybe it was just a phase he was going through. Maybe he'd be the most delightful boy in the world right now.

But on that trip, he was a little terror. Not that he was so misbehaved, but he was so terrified of everything that he just couldn't enjoy anything. The minute we started going through the smallest rapids, he would dive for the center of the boat and not enjoy the ride and not have fun and all the rest.

He's got a life. He's got experienced guides all around him. Hundreds, if not thousands of people go up and down that river every day without incident.

Now, when the whole trip was over and they were towing our boat to the disembarking place and all the rest of it, that boy was just as much in the boat and arrived at the final destination as anybody else in that boat. He just didn't enjoy the trip nearly as much. Myself and my sons, we had the greatest time.

Man, we loved it. We couldn't get enough of it. This poor boy, he was just happy that it was over.

Well, I think that that's a good analogy of what the defeated Christian life is like. You get to the same destination, but don't you want to enjoy it and have an impact along the way? I'll tell you something else about that little boy was one of the jobs you have to do on these rafting trips is you have to paddle. You have to be one of the engines on the boat.

Well, this little boy did very little paddling. He didn't get the joy of participating in the work. And it's a joy to do that.

But he survived. We're saying now it's not enough to survive in our Christian life. We want to thrive.

We don't want to live defeated Christian lives. And I'll tell you, if you're living a defeated Christian life, you're miserable. Now, you know, what's funny about that is you might not feel miserable.

You might feel pretty good because maybe other areas of your life are really firing off on all cylinders. Your career is just going sky high. And, you know, you're happy about that.

And so you're not so miserable about your defeated Christian life or maybe this relationship or this project you're working on or whatever it might be. But the bottom line is this. I'll still say that if you're living a defeated Christian life, you are miserable, at least miserable in comparison to what it could be for you.

You could have so much more. I mean, here you are. You're you're happy, you know, playing around with the cardboard box while the brand new shiny bike is right next to you on the cardboard box is fun.

Well, good. I'm glad you have it. But there's something so much greater for you if you start learning how to live a victorious Christian life.

Now, where does defeat come from in the Christian life? Well, let me make it very plain where defeat does not come from. A lot of times we understand things best by understanding them in the negative, what they

are not, and then we can understand what they are. Defeat does not come from circumstances or trials.

Oh, this is how we often think this is almost immediately the refuge our mind jumps for. In a time of defeat, I'm defeated because, well, you know, if you had a marriage like mine or a husband like mine or a wife like mine, wouldn't you be defeated? Come on. Or, you know, you know, if you had as much debt as I have and all the bills piling up and the bill collectors are calling and this and that, well, then you know how defeated you would be, too.

Or if you had my medical condition, if you had my medical problems or my family's medical problems, and, you know, I could go on and on until I hit something that's close to you. But what's the point? You know what's close to you. And the bottom line is this circumstances or trials do not make defeat.

None of those things cause defeat. Look at this passage from 2nd Corinthians, chapter four, verses eight through ten. This is the first of three or four passages.

I'm going to want you to turn to this evening. 2nd Corinthians, chapter four, beginning at verse eight. Paul says we are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed.

We are perplexed, but not in despair. Persecuted, but not forsaken. Struck down, but not destroyed.

Always caring about the body of the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. Was Paul writing from the context of defeat or victory? Utter victory. But look at him there.

Look at his describes the circumstances. Crushed, persecuted, struck down, always caring about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. That's how he felt.

Now, those are bad circumstances. Those are severe trials. And think about it in your own life.

You know what? Whatever trial you're going through, you don't have to go very far to find another Christian that you probably know who's gone through the same thing, even worse. And they've emerged victorious. How come? How come you're in defeat, but they're in victory through this? Is it because God loves them more? God has it out against you.

Is it because, you know, you're the special target of trials? I don't think so. I think we often get confused on this point, and it's easy to get confused here, but we have to avoid it like the plague. Defeat does not come from circumstances or trials.

Let me put it to you this way. God is not responsible for your defeat. Now, he may be responsible directly or indirectly for your trial or for your circumstance, but he's not responsible for your defeat.

Defeat is your chosen response to that trial, to that circumstance. You chose defeat. Now, what makes this very hard is that we rarely actively choose defeat.

Which is it going to be? Defeat or victory? I'll choose defeat. We usually don't think that way, do we? Defeat is usually chosen by default, by passivity. We fail to pursue what we need to for victory.

Therefore, we slip into defeat. So let me make that very clear before I move on to my next point. Defeat does not come from circumstances or trials.

Well, what is the reason for defeat in the Christian life? Well, I'm going to repeat to you something that I've been talking about a lot here on Sunday evenings, something that really struck my heart from Alan Redpath in his great commentary, Victorious Christian Living, which is a commentary on the book of Joshua. And in that commentary, in writing on Joshua chapter 7, where Israel was defeated before their enemies at the battle of Ai, Alan Redpath goes in and he takes a look at the text there, and it's right there in the text. We're not going to go through it here in Joshua chapter 7 this evening, but I'll just describe it to you briefly that he goes through and he takes a look at the three different elements leading to Israel's defeat.

And I would say defeat in the Christian life as well, because the same principles apply. The three reasons for defeat in the Christian life are these. Number one, neglect of prayer.

Number two, self-confidence. Number three, sin. And let me define a little more carefully what I mean by those things.

Neglect of prayer really means a lack of a real personal relationship with Jesus. And if you do have a real personal relationship with Jesus, I believe that that will display itself in dedicated time unto the Lord, not just prayer out of convenience. Listen, prayer out of convenience is wonderful.

I try to pray out of convenience, don't you? There I am stuck at the red light, and I hate waiting. My family knows this about me. Not too long ago, Ingalil and I, we were on our way up to Santa Barbara, and we left about five o'clock.

And I know that that's a bad traffic time, but it wasn't on a Friday. I believe it was on a Tuesday afternoon, and I didn't expect traffic to be so bad. And I don't know what it was, some kind of road construction, some kind of satanic outpouring from hell.

I don't know what it was, but traffic was horrible. It took us an hour just to get to the other side of Ventura. We should have been to Santa Barbara by then, and we spent so much time just sitting, just sitting, just sitting.

Well, you know, I was with my wife, so we spend the time. I spend it half fuming, half talking to my wife. But if I'm all alone, I have a choice.

I can either sit and fume. But what I try to do is I try to pray. Isn't that a great time to pray when you're driving, when you're stuck at a red light, when you're sitting and you're standing in line at the supermarket? Now, you can look at all the covers of the magazines, but you probably don't want to do that.

Why don't you just, you know, put your eyes on something else and pray? Just think about things. Lift up people. Lift up people you know, family, friends.

Pray for me, for heaven's sakes. It's great to pray out of convenience. But listen, you will not build a strong Christian life out of praying out of convenience.

There must be a place in your Christian life where you pray out of commitment. This is a commitment before God that you will pray. And again, that's not to put down prayer out of convenience.

But it's to lift up prayer out of commitment. Neglect of prayer is a sure cause of defeat in the Christian life. Secondly, I think we can say that self-confidence is a cause of defeat in the Christian life.

Mostly what I mean by self-confidence is trusting in the strength of yourself in your own will, instead of an active, abiding reliance on the spirit of God. It's the spirit-filled, spirit-walking believer who's not trusting himself. He realizes that the resources to live the Christian life are not within him.

They're within God. And so he has to keep a constant reliance upon the spirit of God. Now, if you're living your Christian life relying on yourself, full of self-confidence, you might be suffering under a horrible defeat.

And I feel very badly for you because you're suffering under this great defeat. You have the best of intentions. Oh, Lord, I want to love you.

I want to serve you. I have to muster up the power to do this. And you keep looking in.

It's sort of a spiritual version of gazing upon your own navel and just, you know, introspection and looking at yourself and all the rest of it, instead of actively putting your trust in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit whom he has sent. Self-confidence is a sure cause of defeat in the Christian life. Third, I would say a reason for defeat in the Christian life is sin.

Now, I'm not speaking about occasional sin. The kind of sin that just, you know, happens just through the normal course of daily living, where you sin and the Holy Spirit calls it. Oh, Lord, just forgive me of that.

I'm sorry. You know, you catch yourself succumbing to a temptation or you say a cross word or something like that. I'm not talking about sort of the day in, day out kind of sin that we need to constantly be cleansed of.

And we need to seek God just for that cleansing, that washing of feet, so to speak, because our feet have been in contact with the world. I'm talking about ignoring the presence of sin in your life or ignoring God's warnings about sin. The kind of thing where if anybody were to follow you around 24 hours a day and look at your life and if they were a believer and if they really cared about you, if they could see you 24 hours a day, they'd say, wait a minute, what's this all about? This.

You mean you yell and scream at your wife this way? How long have you been doing this for years and you don't seem troubled about it? You don't seem broken up and repentant. This is sin. How can you countenance this in your life or this area of compromise? Oh, look at you.

Look at the way that you're flirting around the water cooler at work. That's all it is. It's just pure flirtation.

And it's not like you do. You slip up with it occasionally. You almost plan to do it every day.

And hasn't the Holy Spirit spoken to you? Well, he has spoken to your heart about it. You've ignored it. Here it is.

It's something that the kind of thing anybody would follow you around who could see your life day in, day out. They would look at it and say, what's this? This doesn't belong in the life of a Christian. We both know this.

You allow this to remain in your life. You harbor this kind of sin and it is a reason for defeat. Now, as I thought about this three-point list that Alan Redpath made, again, neglect of prayer, self-confidence, and sin, I sort of thought of it in these terms.

And this is just a suggestion. Maybe it'll make sense to you. Maybe not.

But it kind of occurred to me that you can get along, so to speak, in your Christian life. You can get along if one of these is weak or absent. I'm not saying you're growing.

I'm not saying you're thriving as a Christian, but you're kind of treading water. If two of these are weak or absent, you're in defeat. That's all there is to it.

And since the three of these are vitally connected one to another. Why are you neglecting prayer so much? Well, because you're in sin and your heart's cold towards God. And so why are you having such a struggle living your Christian life? Well, because you're relying on yourself.

You see how all three of them feed off of each other. Most of the time in a defeated Christian, you have all three of these very present and active. Now, I think it's helpful for us to understand how the dynamic of defeat works in the Christian life, because it's possible for us to paint a caricature or a straw man of what defeat looks like.

Do you know what a straw man is? We speak about in debating terms using a straw man. A straw man is a false argument, sort of like a boogeyman that you set up on the other side and you exaggerate the problem so much and you make it seem so ridiculous that it's easy to attack the straw man, but not the real problem that faces us. And I think that defeat in the Christian life, as I look at it, as it has been evidenced in my own life in the past, it's a very slippery thing.

Satan doesn't want defeat to come crashing down upon you. He wants to gently slide you into a place of defeat subtly. So you hardly know it until one day you wake up and you would look around and with an honest heart, you would say, my Christian life is far more marked by defeat rather than victory.

You may be hearing me speaking already and you may be thinking, well, I think I'm having a defeated Christian life right now. Pastor David must be very angry with me. I'm not angry with you at all.

I'm very sympathetic towards you. I know what you're going through. I've probably experienced very similar struggles to yours.

But at the same time, I want to encourage you and lift up your conception to say you don't have to live this life of defeat, but it's a slippery thing when you're caught in it. Turn in your Bibles to Second Chronicles, chapter 28. This is a most, might I say, unusual and fascinating passage that speaks about the dynamic of defeat in the Christian life.

Second Chronicles, chapter 28. Take a look, starting at verse 22. It says now in the time of his distress, King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the Lord.

Isn't that terrible? There's the trial, the time of his distress. And what did the trial do? He allowed it to push him further from God. He became increasingly unfaithful to the Lord.

Now, it wasn't the distress that did it. The distress could have driven him closer to the Lord, but he allowed it to drive him farther from the Lord. Anyway, that's the sermon in itself.

Verse 22. Now, in the time of his distress, King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the Lord. This is that King Ahaz, for he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, which had defeated him, saying, because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me.

But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel. I think this describes a frightening dynamic in the Christian life that when we remain stuck in defeat, we start looking to the very things that defeat us for victory. Isn't that a chilling phrase there? He sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, which had defeated him.

These were the pagan gods of another nation, and because he felt he was defeated by those gods, he said, I may as well sacrifice to them again when we remain stuck in defeat. We start looking to the very things that defeat us for victory. Let me explain it to you this way, you're neglecting prayer.

You know how that is in your Christian life. I do. You know, your heart is cold.

You just don't feel like praying. You're too busy, right? I share with you a story about quiet time without hopefully getting back to my son, Jonathan. I have to tell you that it was my son, Jonathan, because you need to understand that he's 11 years old.

And Jonathan is getting more and more introduced to the idea of having a personal time with God, a quiet time with God. Our leader of the middle school group, David Evans, has been working with him and the other kids in that group about that. And Jonathan had started out with kind of a lot of gusto about having a quiet time, but he got discouraged in it fairly quickly.

And so he he decided that he wasn't going to do that anymore. And David Evans asked him, well, why aren't you having your quiet time anymore? My 11 year old son just started summer. This is what he said.

I don't have time. Is that classic or what? You know, it encroaches on my video game playing time or my running around in the street with my pals or just goofing off or this or that. He doesn't have enough hours in the day to spend 15 or 20 minutes in a quiet time.

Now we laugh at that, right? That a little boy says, you know, I just don't know if I can work it into my schedule. But is it any less laughable when we say it? It really isn't, is it? It kind of takes the words of a little child to expose it for us. So you know how that is in your life.

You're neglecting prayer. And so often, how is it when you're in that dynamic of defeat and you're neglecting prayer, you run from prayer? It's like the very thing that you need to enter into victory, you run from. It's like you're sacrificing to the gods which defeat you.

This is what prayerlessness is, what's wiping you out. And you sacrifice more and more to this, so to speak, idol of prayerlessness or the neglect of prayer might even say that you sacrifice. So you don't have to pray and really see God.

There's an impulse in you that wants to pray. And you do want to pray because you're a child of God. But you almost have to sacrifice to push down that impulse to stay in your prayerless state.

You see what I'm talking about? Sacrificing to the gods that defeat you. But there you are, you're stuck in self-confidence. So what do you do for the solution? You look to your own willpower for the answer.

What? You're sacrificing to the god that's defeating you. You have to stop looking for self-power and willpower. You have to crucify self before God.

Count it as dead. That old life is dead. It's gone.

Look now for a transcendent power from outside of yourself. For Jesus Christ and the spirit whom he has sent to live through you in power and glory. Or think of the person who's caught up in sin and they're resisting the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

What do we often do in those cases? We follow after the sin even harder. Because as bad as that sin is and as much as it will mean our eventual ruin, there's a fleeting pleasure in that sin, at least for the moment. And so we want to grab whatever fleeting pleasure out of it that we can.

But really, if you think about it from a more sober perspective, it's insanity. You're sacrificing to the gods that have defeated you. If you want to see the folly of this in any one of these three areas, extend your road all the way from where you are right now to the end of that thing.

You know, are you are you toying with sexual immorality? Okay, great. Unleash yourself on that road. Go ahead.

Just mentally unleash yourself down there. Give your life over to sexual immorality and think about the end of it all. Is it pretty or is it ugly? It's ugly.

You don't want that. You you want to keep this, but just a little bit, just just confined in the right place. But it doesn't work that way, does it? You think, well, I'll control the sin.

I'll keep it. I'll keep a leash on it. I'll keep it in a certain pen in my life and it won't get out.

In fact, these other areas, my greed, my immorality, my selfishness, whatever it is. But you come to a more sober perspective and realize that that's all folly. Look at the end of that sin, because you can't keep it penned up the way you think you can.

The end of the road is certain. Did you see this in verse 23? It says, but they were the ruin of him and of all Israel. You almost think that if you appease the sin, it'll leave you alone.

It'll end up ruining you. And so I think it's very significant for us to sympathetically understand the dynamic of defeat in the Christian life that defeated Christian. They don't need a tongue lashing.

They need encouragement. They need strengthening to come alongside. Believe me, they need some frank talk, though.

There's no doubt about it. I think that there's not enough frank talk like that in the Christian life. A fellow I spoke with in my counseling office just a week or two ago, mulling these things around in my own heart and in my own life.

He's talking about his problems, and there's problems in his life. There's problems in his marriage. There's problems in his career.

There's problems just personally within him. With all the love I could express to him, I said, brother, can I kind of cut through some of the haze here? You're living a defeated Christian life, and it's messing up everything. You know, and it really resonated with him.

What could he say? It's true. Now, I want us to realize, though, as much as we would sympathetically reach out to the person in defeat, especially if it's ourself, we need to understand, too, that there's a great promise of hope for the defeated Christian. Look at this passage in Isaiah chapter 10.

Turn right in your Bible to that big book of Isaiah. It's the biggest book in your Bible, except for the book of Psalms, which is actually a collection of 150 books. So, in a very real way, you could say that Isaiah is the biggest book in the Bible.

Isaiah chapter 10, verse 20. It's a wonderful promise of hope for the defeated follower of God. It says, Isaiah 10:20, And it shall come to pass in that day that the remnant of Israel, and such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, will never again depend on him who defeated them.

You know, that's where we were back in Second Chronicles, right? Depending on the one who defeated us. But there will come a day when we will never again depend on him who defeated them, but will depend on the Lord, the holy one of Israel, in truth. The great place of hope is this.

God can break the dynamic of defeat in your Christian life. God has not ordained for you to live in a Christian life marked by defeat. He can turn it around so that you will never again depend on him who defeated you.

Never again. Oh, you're relying on that sin. It's a comfort to you.

You hate it, but at the same time, you rely on it. You depend on it. It gives some kind of consistency or thrill or voltage in your life.

God says, no, there's going to come a time when you'll never again depend on him who defeated you. And this needs to be our prayer. It needs to be our prayer for ourselves.

God, give me great victory over these things. Break me from the cycle of defeat. And God, move me into this great place of victory.

Not just myself, but Lord, show me other defeated Christians that I can encourage. Well, finally, I want you to turn to 1 Kings chapter 8. I didn't say finally in the sense of in conclusion. I don't want to get your hopes up that I'm quite done yet.

Preachers have a way of doing that, right? The old story among preachers is that, you know, finally or in conclusion means there's about 20 minutes left to go. I don't know if I'll be quite 20 minutes. But I mean, finally, in the sense that this is the last passage of scripture that we're going to take a look at together here.

1 Kings chapter 8, verse 33. Solomon in 1 Kings 8 is praying at the dedication of the temple. And it was a spectacular dedication of the temple.

Have you ever been to a great grand opening of a, you know, supermarket or a big shopping center or something? It's pretty spectacular. You have the searchlights in the sky and the ribbon cutting and dignitaries and applause and balloons and everything. And they make a big deal out of it.

I want you to know that the grand opening that they held at the dedication of the temple far surpassed anything that we could think of. Do you know how many sheep and oxen that they sacrificed at the dedication of the temple? Nobody knows. The Bible says there were too many.

They couldn't count them. It was beyond counting. The musical production, as it's described there in the book of 1 Kings, and then also in Chronicles, the musical production was absolutely spectacular.

And, you know, at any dedication of a great building or an event or something, you always want to have dignitaries come in, right? And if you could have the greatest dignitary of all come and visit your dedication, make his presence known there, who would you want? Well, you'd want God to come down from heaven and be there at your grand opening. And that's exactly what happened. The Bible says that at the dedication of Solomon's temple there, that the glory of the Lord so filled the temple that the priests couldn't continue their service, that they had to go out because the glory of God had so filled the temple.

Well, in the midst of all of that, Solomon makes a prayer. And he's praying, considering what God can do at this temple. Solomon was smart enough to know that not every day would be as spectacular as the grand opening day.

On that day, the temple was a was a day of tremendous, if it was a place, I should say, of tremendous celebration and enthusiasm and happiness and joy. Solomon knew it wouldn't be like that every day. Solomon knew that there would come a day when Israel would turn its back on God and the temple would have to be a place of repentance.

And in his prayer of dedication at the temple, he says, God, later on, when your people come to repent at this temple. Hear their voice, hear from heaven. First Kings, chapter eight, verse thirty three.

When your people, Israel, are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against you and when they turn back to you and confess your name and pray and make supplication to you in this temple, then here in heaven and forgive the sin of your people, Israel, and bring them back to the land which you gave to their fathers. You see what his prayer is? God, there's going to come a day later on where anguish repentance, tear streaked prayer is made from this temple where your people repent. Why? Because they're defeated.

Now, I think that this mention of defeat in first Kings, chapter eight, gives us three principles about defeat and and passing from defeat to victory. First, I want you to notice that Solomon expected defeat. Did you see that in verse thirty three? When your people, Israel, are defeated before an enemy.

He didn't say if your people are Israel. Lord, it might just happen someday, maybe kind of. No, he knew it would happen when your people, Israel, are defeated.

And might I say, unless the Lord returns quickly, if you live very much longer in your Christian life, it is almost certain that you will go through some period of defeat. It's not because it's natural. It's not because it's good.

But it's because we are susceptible to defeat until these bodies are resurrected and our salvation is complete. Now, the reason why I say that is, again, to put that comforting shoulder around you, defeated Christian. Don't feel condemned.

I have been there. I may be there again. Don't feel condemned.

Would to God that you would feel convicted? Yes, feel convicted. Yes, feel stirred by the Holy Spirit that something is not right here and something needs to be addressed. Yes, by all means, feel that way.

But do not feel condemned. You're still a Christian. You are still a child of God.

Let's move forward from here and learn how to walk in victory in this Christian life that God has given you. You don't have to be miserable anymore. And so the fact that defeat is common and almost to be expected in some degree, I feel funny talking about that, and I think you sense my discomfort with that because we don't want people to regard defeat as inevitable or necessary.

It's not that. It's just that it's likely from time to time until we are resurrected. The bottom line is that is that don't feel condemned about being a defeated Christian convicted.

Yes, condemned. No. We can all identify with you.

Secondly, I want you to see that Solomon knew where defeat came from. Look at it again there in verse thirty three. When your people, Israel, are defeated before an enemy because the battle was really hard.

No, because the enemy was really strong. No, because things just didn't go their way. No.

When your people, Israel, are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against you. Solomon knew where defeat came from. It comes from us.

Nothing can change in our Christian life until we realize where defeat comes from. It comes from us. As long as you're trying to blame your defeat on this circumstance, on this trial, on this person, on this phase in your Christian life or this phase in your life or anything.

Well, of course, I'm in defeat. You know, look, I've got two little kids running around, so forth and so on. Paul, I agree that's a very difficult circumstance.

Maybe a circumstance I wouldn't want to be put under. But friends, that is not the reason for your defeat. You are the reason for your defeat.

You know, there's a sense in which God allows defeat as a gift to wake us up. I'm not saying that God causes defeat. No, you're responsible for it.

But God allows the consequences of our defeat to come upon us, to wake us up. So here comes the Christian in the right counseling office and oh, he's very depressed and things are very down and very troublesome in his life. And he just doesn't know where things are going.

And I have every reason to look at that man and say, praise God, you feel terrible. Because look at the things that aren't right in your Christian life. What do you think it would be like if things were off kilter in your Christian life, but everything just felt great in your relationship with God? That's a much more dangerous place to be in.

You might say that in this sense, defeat is a symptom. It's not a disease. It's like the idiot light on your dashboard.

You know what an idiot light is? You know, some cars have gauges to measure temperature or oil pressure. And other cars just have an idiot light. And the idiot light doesn't tell you, you know, when it's getting close.

It just tells you when the system is failing. And so when the idiot light comes on, you better shut it down because the system is failing. Well, you know, there you are, you're driving along and the idiot light, you know, temperature is coming on there and your thing and it's on.

And there it is. It's shining at you. And you say that stupid idiot light.

I got to get that light fixed or you ignore it. You just ignore it. Well, I'm not even going to look at it.

There it is. It's shining bright. I'm not going to look at it.

I say that stupid idiot light. I've got to get that. I'm going to take that bulb out of there.

Then I don't have to look at that idiot light anymore. Well, you see how foolish that is, right? The idiot light isn't the problem. That's the symptom.

The disease is something going on in your engine. It's the same way in our Christian life, folks. The feeling, the sense of defeat that you have, the lack of those three things that we mentioned at the beginning, the lack of power, the lack of peace, the lack of joy.

Do you know why that's there? It's because something's off kilter in your relationship with God, in your Christian living. And if you get those things restored, then you'll notice the power and the peace and the joy flowing back. Might I give you my testimony? I've noticed that to work very reliably in my life.

You know, when I'm living the Christian life more as God intends it and in real fellowship with Jesus, you know, there's trials all around. You can look around and you say, well, boy, this is just getting worse every day. Oh, who cares? Jesus is in heaven and he loves me and I love him.

I have a loving father who cares for me. He'll take care of these things. I don't have to worry about it.

There's a peace. There's a power. There's a joy there.

You almost want to detach yourself from yourself and say, what are you nuts? You should start worrying a lot more about this. But it's like impossible to worry. He cares for me.

Oh, so it all crumbles away. Oh, well, who cares? Jesus is still with me. I have him.

I have everything. That's the that's the power of the victorious Christian life. Solomon was wise enough to know where defeat comes from.

We have to get to that place. Thirdly, Solomon knew how to turn defeat into victory. Look at it right there.

When Solomon speaks about it, it begins there at verse 34, I believe. But I'll start reading in verse 33. It says when your people, Israel, are defeated before an enemy because they've sinned against you and when they turn back to you, that's in verse 33.

You see, that's the first step. You have to turn back to God. I don't know how you turned from him.

Maybe it was dramatic. Maybe you can remember the event in your mind when you turned from God. Might I say you may be able to, but probably not.

Most of us, when we find ourselves turned away from God, it's been a very subtle thing. It's been a very subtle shifting by degrees. But you wake up and you find yourself.

You're not really turned towards the Lord the way that you should be. Well, turn back, turn back to you, to the Lord God in heaven. That's what Solomon says to do.

First, you have to turn back to God. Secondly, look at it there in verse 33. And when they turn back to you and confess your name, what does it mean to confess the name of God means to confess all his character, all his glory, all his will.

Lord, you are God. I am not. Your word is true.

You know, Lord, when your word says this is sin, it is sin. And I've been a sinner for partaking in it. That's what real confession is.

Confession of his name. You agree with who God is and what he thinks. It's a changing of the mind.

You used to think this. Well, you used to make excuses for that, didn't you? You may use to make excuses for your neglect of prayer. Suddenly, all those excuses seem very shallow.

You can't make them anymore. You just can't. You almost get nauseous when you start talking about those excuses because, you know, they don't hold any more water.

You're confessing his name. You're agreeing with him. And then look at the third element there again in verse thirty three.

When they turn back to you and confess your name and pray and make supplication to you in this temple, what do you need to do next? You need to seek God passionately. Whatever you're doing right now to seek God, do more. You say, well, Pastor David, I'm spending an hour and a half on my knees in an isolation tank to shut out all, you know, other senses.

So it's just me and God. I'm spending an hour and a half in that posture before God a day. Good.

Start making it two hours. Whatever you're doing now, do more. Seek God passionately.

Seek God energetically. Seek God like you mean it. Friends, I tell you, if you do those three things, if you turn back to God, if you confess his name, if you pray and make your supplication to him, he will hear from heaven.

And if you keep with it, if you keep on that orientation, he will take you from defeat to victory once again, because those things turning back to you and confessing your name and praying and making supplication to you. Those are really the opposite things of what got you into this place of defeat. They're the opposite of self-reliance and neglect of prayer and sin.

You need to answer those three with these three. So let me conclude, and that means I am finishing right now. You need to take a challenge, first of all, challenge yourself in your heart of hearts.

Are you a defeated Christian? Are you making excuses for your defeated Christian life? Then let's just make an end of it now. It's OK. I mean, it's not OK that you're in that place, but it's OK that you're here and that the Lord's speaking to you about it.

And I have been there, too. And just as much as God has spoken to my heart about these things, I trust he's speaking to your heart. So let's make it different and walk forward with him.

You know, I would also challenge you to not just challenge yourself, but to challenge others as well. The Bible tells us that we should admonish one another. And believe me, I know that there is a danger of being

a busybody in other people's affairs and sticking your nose into their business.

I understand that. But there is a biblical and appropriate place for speaking to the lives of other people, especially if they'll bear their life before you. Well, then they're inviting you to, aren't they? Friend, do not be shy about lovingly looking somebody else in the eye, saying, Sister, I think the problem is that you're living a defeated Christian life.

And let me speak to you about how to change that, how to turn that around. You can challenge them, you can challenge yourself. God is ready to change it.

Are you? That's the question. So, Father, that's our prayer tonight. You know, Lord, what really amazes me is how gracious and longsuffering you are towards us, even in our defeated state.

You know, you would have every right to cast us off at the first outburst of self-confidence or stubborn sin. Lord, you love us. You work with us.

You you chasten us and love you. You refine us. You bless us.

You're longsuffering towards us. God, you're just amazing. We're amazed by you, God.

But, Lord, we don't want to presume on your mercy. We don't want to mistake your mercy and longsuffering towards us as indifference towards our state of defeat. No, Lord, you do care.

You care greatly. Help us, Lord, to have your heart towards these things and to care as much as you do. No more, no less.

To care as much as you do. Be able to identify defeat, to seek you about it, and to change it from defeat into victory, relying on the Holy Spirit of God and trusting in him in Jesus' name. Amen.

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