

Christ's Victory Our Victory

by F.J. Huegel

F.J. Huegel's sermon illustrates how Christ's victory over Satan empowers believers to overcome spiritual battles in their lives.

Scripture: Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 2:14

Topics: "Victory in Christ", "Authority of the Believer"

Description

F.J. Huegel emphasizes that Christians face constant peril and temptation throughout their spiritual journey, especially as they strive for higher spiritual attainment. He explains that true victory over the forces of darkness comes through identifying with Christ's death and resurrection, which empowers believers to overcome the adversary. Huegel highlights that Jesus' ultimate purpose was to defeat Satan and liberate humanity from his dominion, and that believers share in this victory through their union with Christ. The sermon calls for a complete surrender of the 'self-life' to fully experience the authority and power given to Christians over evil. Ultimately, Huegel encourages believers to embrace their identity in Christ to exercise the authority they have been granted over the forces of darkness.

Transcript

AT no time in the Christian's pilgrimage is he free from peril. Temptations of every hue beset his path. The farther along the road, and the greater the grace, the more subtle the snares, and the more intense the opposition. It was at the end of the road in the hour of greatest achievement, in the moment of loftiest spiritual attainment, that the Saviour experienced the sharpest and grimest conflict; and so it is with the Christian. He will never know how determined and how mighty the foe is, how cruel the enemy, how potent the opposition, until he forges his way to the highest spiritual attainment. It is when he asserts his claim to a place with Christ in the Heavens, that the great Adversary, the Prince of Darkness, begins to employ his subtlest tactics, and brings into action his most telling weapons.

It is quite possible to doubt the existence of his Satanic majesty while one is still dominated by the "flesh-life." One simply does not see. The spirit is not yet released. Satan has no great controversy, no real quarrel with those who are content to go along professing to be Christ's, while "self" in one form or another sits, so to speak, upon the throne. So long as the "old life" is not displaced so long as the Cross is simply looked upon as a distant symbol, so long as no inner crucifixion takes place releasing the spiritual faculties and entailing a vital union with Christ in the power of His ascension-life, the Enemy is not greatly alarmed. It is when the Christian realizes his position of death-identification with the Divine Head, rising

with Him in spirit to a place of real power, that he comes to appreciate the meaning of Paul's: "For we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in Heavenly places" (Revised Version margin). It is then that he begins to grasp the deeper significance of the Saviour's Cross.

Jesus not only came to reveal the Father's love, to express in terms of human life the Divine purpose; He not only came to heal and to teach; it was not simply to give His life as a ransom for many there upon the Cross. In the strictest sense, those were secondary objects. There was one supreme purpose of which little was said, because man in his blindness would not understand. Behind the scenes there was being enacted a mighty drama. Jesus saw Satan fall as lightning from Heaven. He saw the real enemy. Not for a second was He deceived. Back of life He saw vast hordes of demons as thick clouds enveloping the world. Men were under the dominion of the powers of darkness. The Master's supreme glory, His prime value as Redeemer, lay in the fact that He was able to break that power. He cast out demons. He faced the enemy in the desert and came forth victor.

It is significant that on that last night the Saviour should have interpreted His Cross in terms of conflict with the Satanic dominion. He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John xii. 31). Paul had insight into this fact for he wrote that Jesus, through death, had destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. ii. 14). Elsewhere in speaking of the Saviour's Cross he declares that it was there on Calvary that He spoiled principalities and powers and made a show of them openly triumphing over them in it (Col. ii. 14-16). It would seem that even in spiritual realms whereof we have no cognizance, when conflict takes place (in Revelation we read that there was war in Heaven) the forces of light in their efforts to overcome, appeal to Calvary, and on the basis of Christ's victory there obtained, are able to triumph. "And they (Michael and his angels) overcame him (the Devil) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" Rev. xii. 11).

But is not God omnipotent? Why could He not with one stroke have upset the whole Satanic hierarchy? He could have, but that would not have answered His purpose nor solved the problem. Man had sinned. Man had been deceived by the great Father of lies. Man had made common cause with Satan. More or less unconsciously, yet how effectively a sin-besmirched world reeking with crime testifies, man had lent himself to the great plan of the fallen Prince. God was ruled out. Rebellion broke out in the primitive camp. So it was necessary that man of his own free will should break with Satan and return to the Father. Christ as man must overcome Satan. Herein lies the virtue of it all. It was Man, "the Son of Man," employing weapons which man might use, triumphing. It was Man challenging the usurper's authority and standing for God. It cost the Saviour the ignominy and shame of the Cross, for Satan fired the Jew with a diabolic hate. No man was ever hated as was Jesus—just as no one was ever loved as was He. Any explanation of this hatred on any other basis than that of demonism simply cannot satisfy. Why the best man who ever lived (perfect Man) should have been hated, as probably even Nero never was—the One who befriended thousands, communicating treasures of priceless value—remains the greatest enigma of History until we accept the Scriptural postulates. We read that "Satan entered into Judas." It was Satan who fired those hearts with the wrath of hell.

But to come to the point of interest for us. What has all this to do with participation? Much, every way. We are not only baptized into Christ's death, and raised with Him in the power of an endless life; we are the participants of His Victory over the forces of hell. When the Son of Man achieved, we potentially achieved in Him. The humblest believer may trample the "dragon" under foot. The weakest disciple who realizes his oneness with Christ, may in His Name "bind the strong man" and spoil him of his goods.

It had to be through death for this reason: The "self-life" and the Satanic spirit are in unconscious affinity. However polished the former-it may shine with the culture of the ages and bear the religious glow of the best in natural religions-it is still "self," it is still "flesh-life." It has the curse of God upon it. It has the smell of infernal associations about it. It stinks. "The carnal mind is enmity with God" (Rom. viii.). It hates Him while it pretends to love Him. Where "self-life" dominates, be the religious professions what they may, Satan finds plenty of ground on which to work. The rails over which he runs his engines of war, are laid. Just as there are affinities in the natural world, i.e. lighting and electricity-how they coalesce; sunlight and the green of nature-how they fuse and intermingle, and are made one for the other; the glass and light-how the latter penetrates the former. The glass does not lose its character because the light passes through it. So just as there are affinities in the natural order, so there are in the spiritual. If the "self-life" is supreme, Satan does not have to be invited in. The lines are already set for the "electric" current to flow. Satan is master of ceremonies, though he be apparently non-existent. The ground is all his. That is why the Scriptures speak of that wisdom which does not descend from above as being "earthly, sensual, devilish" (James iii. 15) .

So, I repeat, it had to be through death. The Son of Man through death,-the utter, absolute uncompromising, all-inclusive negation of "self-life" which the Cross entailed -destroyed him who has the power of death, that is the devil. The Christian has been planted into that death. He is grafted into the Cross of the Son of God. "Our old man is crucified with Him." In Christ he dies. He shares the Saviour's tomb. And, as in Christ he dies, Satan's dominion over him is destroyed-destroyed because the "flesh-life" with its Satanic affinity is destroyed. In all realms God works according to law, and in none more strictly than the spiritual. And it is law that where the carnal mind which is enmity toward God is given free play, the Satanic hierarchy which is based upon the same principles that govern the carnal mind, and which necessarily stands in closest relation to it, has no difficulty in asserting its authority and in maintaining its power. Even Christ Himself could not set a soul free from Satan's power which failed to avail itself of the efficacy of His death, and in the power of that death failed to renounce the "flesh-life"-the so-called "old Adam-life." If He did He would be untrue to the Universe. It respects even the rights of Satan. He respects the laws of the Universe. He can only save man in ways wholly in keeping with the highest claims of morality. In other words, He must be true to Himself. He cannot violate His own Nature.

I once saw this very principle at work. A missionary of my acquaintance suffered a strange break-down which had all the earmarks of demon possession. The missionary soon comes to know the derangement which, as Dr. White of China, who has made an exhaustive study of demonism, says, has symptoms absolutely distinctive. It fell to my lot to hear the blasphemy which issued from the lips of this dear comrade-those lips which had for years proclaimed Christ. One cried out within one's soul: "This is none other than a demon from hell." Prayer finally prevailed; though there were days of agony before it did. Not even a missionary is exempt, if inadvertently, or otherwise, he gives ground to Satan by some form of "self-life," or by accepting some lie or some counterfeit emanating from the pit.

Then, too, the Authority of Christ over wicked spirits is delegated to the believer. I once happened upon an incident in Mexico City which threw light upon what has been called the "executive authority" of the Christian. The boy scouts were taking their places at street corners to learn how to deal with traffic. I watched a lad on the stool of a "gendarme." The boy signaled and the traffic obeyed. If ten thousand cars had been lined up on Avenida de La Reforma, that lad could have held up the entire procession with a single wave of the hand. And why? He stood at his post vested with all the authority of the Republic of Mexico. It was the Magic Wand-law. That was suffi

cient. Said Jesus to the disciples: "I give unto you power over all the power of the enemy." They returned amazed and cried out: "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name."

Helen Montgomery in *Prayer and Missions*, tells of a Chinese lad casting out a demon. A poor grief-stricken father came to the home of a Christian pastor beseeching aid for his demon-possessed daughter. The pastor was not at home. His boy taking in the situation at a glance said "I'll go with you. I've seen father do it. I know how." Afterward the lad stated that while on the way he confessed his sins and called upon the Lord for help. Upon arrival he was conducted into the presence of a poor maid writhing and foaming at the mouth. The lad immediately turned upon the unseen spirit, in whose grip the maid had fallen, and said: "In the Name of Jesus Christ, I say, go forth." The spirit obeyed. The maid was instantly restored.

The humblest believer who realizes his oneness with Christ, is invested with the very authority of the Son of God. As members of His Body we share His executive authority. Shall we not judge angels? If God be for us who can be against us? Yea, verily I mountains do move and are cast into the sea at our bidding. The Apostles exercised this power and we may exercise it. Christ stands ready to make effective the command of the humblest lamb of His flock, if that lamb is obedient. But, we cannot have all that Christ has for us in this regard until He has all of us. A bit of "self" may seem insignificant enough to us, but God sees it in the light of the Cross: "self" placed the Son there. The true measure of "self" is the Cross. Pilate knew that for envy the Jews would have Christ crucified. After Calvary who ever could think lightly of envy? Envy's hands are red with the blood of the king. "Self" is still a monster and until we dethrone him (not wheedle him secretly, or, fondle him in some deep hidden love), dethrone him with the actual slaying of the Cross of Christ, we rob ourselves of infinite wealth and power; we feed on the husks with the swine.

God grant to us a disposition to die with Christ that with Him we may reign. In which case the very devils will be subject unto us.

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