

Victory Over Your Sins

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance and crucifying the self to live a holy life, and that spiritual victory is available to anyone who seeks God.

Duration: 1:13:31

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 6:11-14, James 1:22, 1 John 2:1

Topics: "Victory"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the power of God to deliver people from their problems. He shares personal experiences of being broken to tears and repentance, and being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. The speaker also talks about the temptation for instant solutions to problems and the need for balance in the Christian life. He mentions a story of a man who prayed for deliverance and although nothing happened immediately, God set him free two days later. The sermon emphasizes the various ways in which God works and the importance of seeking His help in overcoming challenges.

Transcript

This man has probably spoken to more people in the United States than even Billy Graham. I've heard of him for many years. He has, of course, a nationwide television program.

And he shares his testimony very openly. That as an evangelist, he became controlled by evil powers. And that even sometimes when he was speaking, he was in the grip of lust.

He would go to a restaurant after the meeting, and he was in the grip of overeating. And he would be unpleasant to the waiters, and just behave in an un-Christlike way. He's a very famous evangelist with the Southern Baptist denomination.

The biggest Protestant denomination in the world. And he was so desperate in his struggle against sin, that he attempted one night to take his own life. He was very anti-charismatic.

Openly attack people, and make fun of people who were in that particular stream of God's work. And he had a friend that he was always talking to this friend, trying to find his way out of these difficulties. It's a very strange thing, because all during this period, clearly, the anointing of God was still on him.

His testimony of conversion is amazing. He was an illegitimate child. And he, as a teenager, withdrew from everybody.

Very shy. Couldn't talk to anybody. And at 18, he was saved and anointed by the Holy Spirit in a very unusual way.

But as he grew older, and as more and more people exalted him as a famous evangelist, he fell into more and more the grip of sin. But he didn't know what to do. The big meetings, the television appointments, what could he do? He described it as a claw that was just continually, continually clawing at his back.

Especially the claw of lust. Finally, his counselor got tired, his close friend and counselor got tired of listening to him. And recommended that he go see a layman, an ordinary man, who had a ministry of prayer.

And a ministry of helping people who were in special bondage to Satan's tactics. And finally he went. One night, he took that man with him on one of his campaigns.

It's quite an incredible story. I listened to it twice. The amazing thing is, the night that that man prayed for James Robinson, nothing happened.

But the man believed that Robinson was delivered. And two mornings later, God set James Robinson free, and most Christians in the states have been talking about it ever since. And now, he's not only still preaching in the big Baptist meetings, he's now also preaching in the big charismatic meetings.

And of course, this is just not done by the big B-Baptists in the United States. This is something little people like George Verwer or O.M. does, but not people of that background. And when he speaks, he hits the Baptists and the Pentecostals with equal deadliness.

And he is saying, it is not a matter of us going from one camp to the other camp. This is not what God wants. It's coming out of our camps to Jesus for deliverance and fullness and power in our lives.

And this is interesting because this has been the misunderstood policy of Operation Mobilization for 25 years. Other men have had similar experiences in the past few years. Paul Bilheimer talks about it in his book, Love Covers.

Jack van Empie, very different, similar conclusions. We need to love all of God's people. We need to be willing to fellowship with all of God's people.

And he's gone also on television and in his powerful book, Heart Disease in Christ's Body, about this subject. And this is what I want to talk about this evening. Because we believe that Christ can deliver from sin.

And we don't believe you have to wait until you're 40 years of age to have great experiences with God. And we just realize also that God works in different people in very different ways. In his message he very strongly spoke out of elevating experiences and of just getting caught up with some particular doctrine or some particular experience.

And many other things, of course, that he shared, which brings into balance the little that I've been able to tell you. I want to read from the book of Romans, chapter 6. Verse 11. I think these three verses have the key to the deliverance that's ours in Jesus Christ.

Verse 11 through 13. Please read in your own language. We will read in English.

Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in its lusts. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.

But yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead. And your members as instruments of righteousness unto God for sin. Verse 14.

Let's read that as well. For sin shall not have dominion. Sin shall not have dominion over you.

For ye are not under the law, but under grace. For sin shall not have dominion over you. Such very, very important words.

And it's clear from this passage and many other passages. It is possible to get victory over sin. Oftentimes we hear testimonies of people who are older, coming into a very special experience like this testimony tonight.

When I was 17 and 18, I thought, can this only happen to older people? Do you have to live in the wilderness for 10 years so that you can have a special out of the wilderness experience? Is this God's plan for His children? It was not the experience of the Apostle Paul. And it was not the experience of many, many great men of God that we have read about. God works in different people in different ways.

And this is why sometimes we do, don't we? We get confused with all the different messages about victory and holiness and sanctification. And some of us end up ultimately depressed by it all. James Robinson is now taking big meetings, calling people to be set free in a similar way.

But I don't think most of those people who are coming forward in those meetings by the thousands are going to be set free in a similar way. And most of us are going to have the same kind of heavy experience that James Robinson had after all those years of turmoil in his very unique ministry. This is why I always need extra grace from the Lord when I give the kind of message I give tonight.

Because I know that when we speak about crisis experiences, we speak about God's power to heal, we speak of God's power to deliver, even instantaneously He can deliver, that there is a temptation for people to want instant solutions. To all of their problems, even when they're 14, much less 40. I know in my Christian life there were a number of fairly strong crises, especially when I was a young Christian.

I had several times when God just broke me to tears and repentance, and I was filled with His power and His Holy Spirit. But then there was a problem. Especially if I went several months in some fantastic victory in a particular area.

And then suddenly, almost without knowing, fell again in that area. And this is where I began to see the tremendous balance that the Bible brings. And often as men and women, when we are first experiencing something really fantastic, we do automatically become a little bit off balance.

It's almost part of our very nature. And this is where, this was a beautiful emphasis in James Robinson's message, we must not look to man. We must look to the Word of God.

And we need to have this continued emphasis in OM, let us search the Scriptures and see if these things be so. And one of the things that hurts me the most, people who had some great experience with God, of healing or deliverance, fullness of the Holy Spirit. And yet now, four or five years later, they're

discouraged, they're defeated, they've in a sense lost what the Lord gave to them at that time.

This is why the message we share is commitment, total commitment with balance. This is why we not only speak about the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the very fire of God, but we also speak about the false fire that the enemy likes to spread in every possible way. This is why we not only preach deliverance from sin, but we preach 1 John 2, what to do when you sin again after that deliverance.

And I hope that you'll come to understand this. God wants to bring greater victory into every one of our lives. I've had a number of areas where I've had this very, you know, instant, clear deliverance from a particular problem, sin.

On the other hand, it seems as greater victory came in one area, the Holy Spirit, especially through some of the deadly writings of men like A.W. Tozer, began to expose other areas that I was not even aware of. That's why one of the great dangers of any crisis, special experience with God, is to think that you'd have now arrived. You are on the spiritual mountain.

And that's why the greatest danger of every crisis experience is that you then think, now you've made it, now you're on the spiritual mountain, so easily, when you get into that position, you start judging other people. And you get easily into judgmentalism. So easy, you begin to have little, total, quick answers for other people's very deep, complicated problems.

Now, this man who counseled James Robinson, he uses a chair. He makes the person he's working in sit in a chair in the middle of the room. And then he prays, at least sometimes in a very loud voice, for the one sitting in the chair to be set free.

God uses different people in different ways. The main thing isn't to sit in a chair in the middle of the room. I've heard of people having similar experiences in the woods.

In churches. And it's just so beautiful, the fantastic variety of ways that God works. There was a man in America trying to evangelize the Indians, a couple hundred years ago.

You ever think George Verwer was a fanatic? This man made me look like, you know, stale bread six days old. His biography, the biography of David Brainerd, has inspired more people to go to the mission field, at least a hundred years ago. Perhaps not so much today than most books.

He had many deliverance experiences. One of them was in a log. He got inside a hollow log for a whole day, in prayer and fasting, crying out for deliverance and the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

He climbed inside. Some of you, of course, know my tree story. The vision for Operation Mobilization.

Those two words, Operation Mobilization, came during a day of prayer when I was in a tree in the mountains of Germany or Austria, we can't figure out which. And you know, those of us who have quite a few emotional crisis experiences in our lives, we just so appreciate those other kind of people who just seem to grow and grow and grow. With very few crises, people like Dale Roton, and yet 29 years later, there they are, just like a solid oak tree in the middle of the woods.

In my early Christian days, and even when I was the leader of OM in Europe, Dale Roton was my Nathan. You've never met Nathan, he was a friend of David in the Old Testament. And he would especially confront me over my sin of anger.

And he'd call me to repent. That's a blessing, isn't it? Have you had that experience? Somebody comes to you and just tells you that you need to repent now. And of course, all these years, I've watched Brother Dale.

And really, maybe I shouldn't say this, but at times I've wanted to try to catch him on something. And it's been difficult. Somebody was trying to figure out Dale's great secret to his victorious life.

Young people always want to know, you know, what's your secret? Is it your jogging? Is it the excess of cornflakes? What's your secret? And when somebody was asking Dale, you know, what was his secret to maintaining this life of victory? He would look at them in his normal, phlegmatic way and say, well, I read my Bible. And then he'd look at the questioner in his phlegmatic way and say, well, I read my Bible. Certainly, God works in different ways in different people.

But the ultimate goal is always the same. To be more like Jesus Christ. To be a greater demonstration of His life, of His glory.

It's always the same. That self would be crucified and Christ would be lifted up. Some time ago, I was having a time of prayer and fellowship with David Wilkerson.

In the last two years, he also has gone through enormous changes. He found out about a writer named Austin Sparks. He got so excited about these books.

They're all out of print. Austin Sparks spoke at this OM conference in 1965. OMers were almost the only people left reading his books.

The message that was absolutely revolutionary and new to David Wilkerson two years ago was 20 years and very old in Operation Mobilization. That doesn't mean in OM we had that reality in our lives. It's one thing to get some of this understanding in the head.

It's another thing for it to explode in your heart and set you free from the chains of anger or lust or whatever may be having dominion over you. David Wilkerson has been spending days in his little cottage in the woods, totally out of contact, seeking fresh deliverance, fresh power and a deeper knowledge of the living God. Again, here's a man that's quite on in years.

A lot of his ministry is in the past. This question, therefore, comes back to my heart again tonight. Can we not find and know this reality when we are young, so we can have a whole life of crucified living and holy ghost power to touch millions for God across the world? Another question comes to my mind.

Are these great experiences of God only for a few famous people? Can Joe Blow be filled with a spirit even though nobody's going to write up a book or listen to his tapes? In our culture, we get greatly influenced often by just a few people. They become our spiritual heroes. We read their books.

We pray their prayers. I remember one brother on the ship. I'll never forget this lesson.

We were showing the film Sadhu Sundar Singh many, many times. We're going to show it here next week. And, of course, this young brother thought, Sadhu Sundar Singh, that is the true spiritual man.

He left everything, Sadhu Sundar Singh, and he wandered around in the mountains witnessing God mightily use him, and he wore an Indian sadhu. He wore the old sort of Hindu sadhu type of clothing. And this brother, he set his goal.

This was what he must be. One night, we found him out on the deck of the ship. He had a long sheet wrapped around him.

And he started walking around, you know. And, believe me, he was not having a spiritual experience. His mind had got mixed up as to even who he actually was anymore.

It's amazing how the mind can get confused. I met a man on an airplane flying out of Nepal. I said, you know, who are you? He said, I'm Jesus Christ.

Laughter Well, you know, you realize after I've had these various experiences how I long for OM to somehow have, yes, it's heart in the heavenlies, but it's feet well planted on earth. And you know, when we see some of these problems, there's a danger that we become religious cynics. We can become cynical about ourselves.

And we can begin to believe the subtle enemy lies about ourselves. Has the enemy ever told you very quietly, you're never going to get victory over that temper that you have? You got it from your grandfather who got it from his grandfather. You're never going to get victory over that.

You've prayed about it many times. Maybe you even had people lay hands on you. And maybe for some weeks or some months you, boy, you're really living in victory land.

But then that night when your little sister put all those cockroaches in your bed and you got in bed with the light out and you just felt them just crawling all down you. Somehow that beautiful sanctification experience just went out the window when you went to talk to your sister about this little event. I find the great test in my victorious life at times has been behind the wheel of an automobile.

I have a little motto in O.M., avoid the pain and go by train. I have a motto, avoid the pain, go by train. And I believe this is where we must understand the whole message of Scripture.

And how to bounce back when somehow you fall into sin in that area again. An individual incident of failure and sin is not the same as being under the grip and the dominion of sin as mentioned here in Romans. Because in the next six months you have a difficult time once or twice with lust and maybe fail with your eyes but that doesn't mean that this is a claw on your back and you need special deliverance.

And I find that some young Christians in their desire for spiritual experiences actually create problems. They actually create problems that they don't even have. There was a group that was touched in a great revival and in that revival they emphasized confession, even open confession.

And in the beginning it was very real and many people were helped and many were filled with God's love. But later on people were actually looking for things to confess even when they didn't have anything because that's what made the impact in the meetings. And people got more and more introspective always digging into the garbage can of the self-life to find some new sin that they could confess or share with a brother or a sister.

I don't think it's God's will to confess every silly, dumb, sinful thought that comes into our fickle heads. Imagine this situation where two people they were relatively friendly and they were getting on quite well. And finally one night the one person takes the other person aside and says I have something I've just got to share with you and I've just got to tell you about this.

I've got a deep hatred for you and I wanted to kill you the other night. Whatever you do when you go back to your mother don't lay something on her like that. Maybe in an off moment you drank too much some of you used to be on marijuana you wanted to murder your mother you don't go to her and say you know I just want to confess that really I wanted to murder you I thought I'd get that off my heart.

But it's often true that in the excitement and the emotion of a new experience with God we say and we do foolish things that often are not easily rectified. But probably with most of us these extremes are not our greatest problem. Our greater problem is probably the need for greater deliverance in our lives.

I've seen people in these conferences set free over these past 25 years. I remember a woman who came many years ago who's now one of the outstanding leaders in OM. She was in the grip of gluttony.

I've seen people in these conferences heave up the food. And I saw God set her free. We've had people come to these conferences absolutely in the grip of lust.

Things that are not worth repeating in a public meeting. And we've seen God set them free. And we know that there's power in the blood of Jesus Christ.

We've seen many come who've had enormous struggles with bitterness tremendous bitterness and resentment against parents, against sisters, against the church. And this bitterness so quickly affected their present behavior. Just little things would trigger off the root of bitterness.

And we've seen God set them free. One of our married women shared her testimony at the women's meeting. For months and months and months she was in the deepest of depression.

I mean very, very dark. And she went to doctors, she went to counselors she traveled to other countries to try to get better help. And then in a very quiet way she asked the elders of the church in her own town as it says in James to anoint her with oil and to pray.

And I want to tell you she was healed. And the greatest of skeptics around OM could not deny what God has done in that woman's life through simple prayer as taught in the book of James. It's hard for a movement like OM that wants to see a great work of God and yet we want to be ruthlessly honest and absolutely men and women of integrity.

I noticed something very interesting in this testimony of James Robinson who is now speaking more in some of his meetings about healing. A paraplegic, a person totally paralyzed came into his meeting and she was not healed in the meeting. Instead he used her as an illustration of the fact that the church seems to be paralyzed from the neck down.

We seem to be separated from Christ, our head. And he used it as an illustration. And then he said concerning this woman that he believed she would be healed as the church was also being healed.

That could be a long, long time the way it's going right now in a lot of places. We know God heals. But we also know there's mysteries in living on this planet.

In the way God uses suffering. In a group like this we would never in 50 years get unity on this subject. Just all the aspects of this subject.

And it's amazing, it's often when there isn't the instant deliverance there isn't the instant healing that the person sometimes learns through that the toughest lessons in all of life. Probably some of you will be

reading and studying this subject between now and when you go to heaven. And some of you will probably even go to seminary to just study even more and get it all sorted out and get all the answers from the Greek so that you know exactly what's what.

I have the joy of talking to a lot of seminary students. It seems to me a lot of them come out more mixed up than when they went in. Forgive me if I repeat one of my favorite expressions.

I hope it will never become a cliché. I don't believe there are simplistic easy answers in some of the deep questions about life and especially the subject of suffering. But that does not deny the fact that God can heal and God can deliver and God can set you free from bondage and sin and self in your Christian life.

It's wonderful when you get among very simple people in places like Pakistan. It's so encouraging and many meetings this year all over Pakistan. And you know after the meeting whether I say it or not they come forward for prayer and they're going to ask me to pray for the sick and you just better get ready to believe that God is going to do something.

And yet the amazing thing about many of these people if you do pray for the sick and nothing happens which is sometimes the case many of them don't seem to get discouraged. They almost seem to say well we'll see what evangelist comes along next week maybe he's got a little more. I'll never forget one lady who came to me in a meeting her one son had just died in the hospital after much prayer and her other son was just dying on that very day and she asked me would I pray.

In the room next to where I was there was another special meeting going on and they certainly were trying to deliver somebody from something.

Satan is constantly trying to confuse the issue through some difficulty and we find different approaches to people's problems today are causing God's people to polarize some are emphasizing psychology and counseling and when you go down that road it divides into several different roads the narrow more, the J Adams there's many different schools and then you pick up a book as I did recently and it just totally contradicts all that and throws out some totally new theory even with totally new terminology and now there are books that are totally reacting to all Christian psychology and saying this is really the devil trying to get in then someone else comes along and says the whole problem is not this it's doctrine it's sound doctrine your whole problem is just doctrine if you get the right

doctrine according to the Greek that will completely change your life and someone else comes along and says no it's church life and submission to the leaders in your church because you're basically rebellious and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft that can scare you out of your shoes and then someone else comes along and says no it's church life and submission to the leaders because you're basically rebellious and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft that can scare you out of your shoes and that their movement was a bit of a jerk which it probably was and you know it is it is often a problem when small minded people get in big positions it always scares me and it is always a problem when people with narrow minds get in big and high positions it really scares me and then there are

others who have other answers to some of our constant struggles and the danger is that we simply withdraw and then don't experience what God wants us to experience and out of fear please note that for a wrong experience in the end we have no experience at all and that's why I personally still like the road in which perhaps there are a few risks and I believe in praying for people and believing with them that God will set them free and then not leaving it there but praying for them corresponding sending helpful books

getting them into a training program so that they can be built up in every area of their Christian life and therefore not lapse back into the old ways again how many of you have had some kind of fairly strong crisis experience with the Holy Spirit in your Christian life

whatever you may call it you've had some crisis experience already in your Christian life I wonder if you'd raise your hand probably about 80% and this is true of people who come on OM we've seen in 25 years that doesn't mean this next year is just going to be easy because in new environments under new pressures you'll be tested in a deeper way in regard to some of this territory you thought you gained when you had those experiences with God so if you fail, don't be discouraged if you fail, don't automatically think the worst about yourself some of you are gifted in that area I've lost my first love and you get people always wanting to go back in what they had the night I was saved it was so nice, I felt so I want that back go ahead let's see you one great man of God said actually the

disappearance of some of that early zeal is actually a sign it's disappearance is a sign that you're growing up in spiritual maturity someone once said that the disappearance of that early zeal is actually a sign that you're growing up and becoming more mature I can still remember my first emotional love for the woman who is now my wife it was out of control before I could get even one minute dashing down the stairs in the elevator up to the 8th floor there she went one minute it's good can you imagine if that kind of emotion continued for 24 years we'd never get any work done we'd have to set up the desk in the bedroom I always get in trouble at least once in each message and as we go on in our walk with Jesus Christ our emotions may go up and down but our true love which is an act of

the will our true love remains the same let me just share a few practical things that we've learned about how to receive deliverance and to maintain deliverance over sin in your life first of all Ephesians chapter 5 be filled with the Holy Spirit that's the first step for many people although I know of course it may appear that there are other steps and I want to ask you this question I actually thought of asking it as the very first thing I was going to say are you filled with the Holy Spirit that's God's will for everybody it doesn't happen the same way in everybody but I think it's clear from Scripture that the fullness of the Spirit is the normal Christian life it doesn't mean you never sin again it doesn't dehumanize you it doesn't change your voice I've sometimes heard people try to

put on a spiritual voice after they had a spiritual experience it's not going to change your personality there will be changes that will affect your personality but your basic personality will still be there and you know why many people run away from the Spirit-filled life because they have false ideas of what they will become if they allow themselves to just be filled with the glory and the power and the reality of the Holy Spirit maybe some of you are afraid if you become filled with the Holy Spirit you're going to become like George Ferber you're running away, I don't blame you I made many mistakes in my early days of my marriage because I thought if my wife is going to be really filled with the Holy Spirit she is going to become more like me and I was always giving her my little

sermonettes little marriage pep talks pressing on doing your exercise program are you in the word what are you memorizing today this really went over great in that first year I felt that she was really slow really slow, this really irritated me which I repented of of course God really dealt with me about this God was working in her life in a totally original and distinct way that he was working in my life don't be fearful don't be fearful of what the Holy Spirit will do through you when he's got complete possession complete control as Oswald Saunders puts it in fact the word control is one of the best ways to explain this reality you're controlled by the Holy Spirit rather than thinking of a glass full of water it's to think of God's control in your

life and it's an ongoing process it may

start with a crisis but it has to go on in a day by day process and it doesn't mean that later on you won't need some special prayer for some other area in your life the fullness of the Holy Spirit is not the arrival station it's the junction for going on a whole new journey through life in a victorious way the second way we can make this a reality is there in Romans chapter 6 verse 11 likewise reckon ye reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin many books emphasize this it's good it's a good message we deny self and we take up the cross and we follow Christ but the third thing perhaps is even more important we decide that once and for all in our life we're going to be honest we're not going to be afraid to talk to someone about a problem especially if it's just continually

bothering us and it has dominion over us a lot of this kind of sharing has been going on during these days but perhaps not enough we're so busy here the interviews are often dealing with where are you going to go is it the ship, is it this office and we're so busy here some of us haven't stopped to consider where in the world are we spiritually right now before we launch into this and I want to make this recommendation that if sin has dominion over you in some area that this weekend or this coming week you get with someone and you get help and if you want to be specifically prayed for then you get that but don't drift into OM without experiencing deliverance from any sin that may be controlling your life and I believe God wants to deliver and set people free in these coming days and then

lastly you need to make sure that Christ is being made the Lord of your life it's so easy to hold back in some areas the area of materialism to not allow Christ to be Lord over everything we possess everything or our emotions so easy isn't it to get into a worry syndrome it's so easy to fall into worries to constantly worry means to deny that Christ is Lord in your emotional life and then Lord over our relationships how easy it is to rebel when we feel we want to pursue some relationship and someone doesn't agree or there's some other problem and so easily we rebel against even the Lord himself I want to ask you that one other question is Christ the Lord of your life of those material things of that time that valuable time of your emotions and your mind of the present and of the future of

where you're going to go of who you're going to marry of everything is Christ Lord that is inseparable from the reality of the fullness of the Holy Spirit it's wonderful to read about someone having a special experience with God but there's something better have one yourself meet God in these days get at least some of the help you need to be set free from any sin that has dominion and control in your life and refuse with all the spiritual energy you have to be discouraged whatever may come after you afterward let's pray just have a few moments in silent prayer we can sense what God is saying let's just all be praying with our eyes closed I believe there are some that need to do something specific tonight in some ways you sense that you're desperate some area of sin has dominion over you

and you want to be set free I want to pray for you I want to believe that God will break the chains in your life that chain of fear that may even keep you from responding to this challenge I don't have a chair to put out here for you to sit in but if you want to be set free by God's power of something that's gripping your life you mean it with all your heart and you're ready to follow through in the way that we've been teaching over these days then I want you to stand up and I want to pray specifically for you and I'm going to ask you to write me a note about it and if necessary we will meet next week

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