

Lessons From Losing

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon teaches that spiritual defeat can occur when sin is present in our lives and that confession and repentance are essential for spiritual victory.

Duration: 41:30

Scripture: Joshua 7:1, 1 John 1:8

Topics: "Victory"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a strong relationship and fellowship with God. He explains that sin in our lives can hinder our victory and success. The preacher encourages the congregation to confess their sins to Jesus Christ and seek His forgiveness. He also urges them to have a desire to see God's name lifted up and to serve Him faithfully in the coming year.

Transcript

I have a story that I want to read to you from the Bible, but I want to go back and set the stage by telling you something that's true in practical life, even more so in spiritual life. A lot, a lot of years ago, when I was in high school at Erasmus Hall High School in Brooklyn, I was privileged to play on the first televised basketball game in the history of New York City TV. It was ABC Channel 7, and it was my senior year at Erasmus Hall High School, and we played a team from Connecticut called Stonington, Stonington High School.

It never had been done before where they televised the high school game. It was done on Saturday. Later on in that year, we were on TV again against Wingate High School, who had one of the great phenoms in New York City basketball history named Roger Brown.

We had a great player, Billy Cunningham, and those two games were good for me in the sense that it got exposure. I had good games in both those games, and that meant a lot of colleges approached me, recruited, wanted to recruit, but the problem with that was high schools back then didn't have film, but now two games were on film, so the coach got ahold of it and could run the film and look at what you would do during the game. See, in the flow of a game, nobody notices what's happening, if you're away from the ball especially, but when you have a film of it or a video of it, the coach can stop and say, what in the world were you doing then? Look at that defense.

Instead of being in the proper position, what were you standing there for like a statue, you know? Then when I went to college, ended up at the University of Rhode Island, their film was used a lot. Oh, we dreaded those film sessions because when we lost the game, they would put the film on to try to figure out why did we lose, what did we do wrong? When you won a game, you watched it and everybody was high-fiving and laughing and saying, oh, look at that, and you made a good shot or something, but when you lost and got massacred, let's say by some team, you showed the film, we dreaded those sessions because the coach would run it and stop and then freeze frame, and there you were out of position, you threw the ball away. I had the ball and a guy was free over there, but I was only looking there, and he said, why don't you just look both ways like I told you? Oh, so those were dreadful.

But the coach used to tell us, you learn more from a loss than you do from a win. That's true in football, basketball, baseball, any sport. From a loss, if you analyze it properly, you learn more and improve more than when you win.

When you win a game, it's like, yeah, we're bad, but when you lose, oh, you analyze and you apply and you evaluate what exactly went wrong here. This is true, especially in spiritual things. One great writer like Thomas Akempis said, I learned far much more about spiritual living from my failures than from my successes.

Because when you're blessed and things work out well, you just say, praise God, he did it, amen? Ah, but when things don't work out, then sometimes we have to stop and say, why didn't it work out? We're living now in a Christian day, a Christian era where introspection is not very much in. People just, if things don't work out, they just blame the devil or they kind of just use Christian phraseology to avoid looking at the situation and saying, what's exactly going on here in my life? Am I missing out on something? Am I losing a battle, even though I'm one of God's children? In fact, a lot of people don't even believe that you can be one of God's children and lose a battle. Well, yes, you can.

Of course you can. Why do we lose the battles? Because I want to win more battles in 2012 this year. And I want to avoid mistakes that you and I have made in the past.

One of the turning points in Israel was a battle that nobody hardly talks about. If I were to ask you what are the most famous days in the history of Israel, those of you who know your Bible real good, you would say the call of Abraham, that's when the Jewish people began. That's an important day.

Oh, Moses going to Pharaoh. Joseph going down to Egypt. Then hundreds of years later, Moses going to Pharaoh and saying, let my people.

The Red Sea, going in the wilderness. The building of the tabernacle. Those are historic moments.

Then Moses dies, and who was his successor? Joshua, and Joshua was the one who was supposed to cross the Jordan River and possess the land that God gave him. Now, Palestine is like this geographically, right? And God said, I've given it to you, but now you've got to go possess it. See, God gives us things, but that doesn't mean you sit on the couch and watch television the rest of your life.

You have to possess what God has given to you. Has God given it to us? Yes, but now we have to possess it. And that involves fighting and warfare, spiritual warfare.

We wrestle not against, but against what? What are those principalities and powers trying to block us from? From possessing the things that God has granted to us. Oh, we really need to think about these

things because I meet so many people, I just praise God, he gave it to me. No, you've got to go out and possess it.

He gave it to you, but you've got to possess it. Joshua goes across the Jordan River, and they're going to fight their first battle. Well, they had a couple battles on the east side of the Jordan River, which they won against two major kings, but now is their first real battle battle, and Joshua fought the battle of Jericho.

And the walls came tumbling down. God gave a great victory. But God had said in the battle of Jericho, now when you go in and you conquer the city that I'm gonna give you, certain things have to be devoted to me.

You can't touch certain things. Gold, some other things, they're to be given to God. You can have those other things, but you can't have those things.

In other words, what's mine is mine, God says, and I grant you, I give to you all because I give you the victory, but that you're allowed to keep, this is sacred. It's devoted to God. You must not touch that.

Now comes the battle nobody knows about, but this is the battle that changed the history of Israel. This is the one that put not only fear in their hearts for the first time, real fear, but it made Joshua backslide, and Joshua was one of the great leaders in the Old Testament, but you're gonna hear him saying the words now, which is of an unranked unbeliever. In fact, he starts to mimic the words of the backslidden Israelites 40 years before who said, God, why did you take us out of Egypt? We should have stayed there and died and just be eating the food there.

Oh, this was a battle, it was a huge thing. It was the first time Israel ever knew defeat. Israel had never been defeated, and you know, once you're punctured and you face defeat, that puts a lot of stuff in your head.

So let's talk about this battle. It's of an odd name, Ai. Those are the two letters, that's the way you pronounce it.

Everybody say Ai. But the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things. That's in Jericho.

Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zimri, son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah took some of them, the devoted thing. So the Lord's anger burned against Israel. That's odd, look at this.

Who's he angry with? Not the Philistines, he's angry with his own people. Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Avin, to the east of Bethel, and told them, go up and spy out the region. So the men went out and spied out Ai.

When they returned to Joshua, they said, not all the people will have to go up against Ai. Send two or 3,000 men to take it, and do not worry all the people, for only a few men are there. We're gonna take this thing easy.

So about 3,000 men went up, the Israelites, but they were routed by the men of Ai. They got beat down by those few men, who killed about 36 of them. That might have been the first casualties in war that Israel had faced and experienced.

They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries, and struck them down on the slopes. At this, the hearts of the people melted and became like water, and then Joshua tore his clothes.

Now, he totally loses it, Joshua.

It goes to show that even great men and women of God, we can lose it. We can lose it and get crazy. Anybody here ever gotten crazy in your walk with the Lord, and said things and thought things you should have never said or thought? Do I get one amen here behind me? Yeah, well, join good company here.

Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell face down to the ground before the ark of the Lord, remaining there till evening. That sounds like it was good, but it wasn't. The elders of Israel did the same and sprinkled dust on their heads.

That sounds like it's good. It's not. And Joshua said, ah, sovereign Lord, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? He's saying, God, why'd you deliver us and take us out of Egypt? We're only gonna be killed now.

I mean, Joshua, you saw what Moses did. You saw how faithful God was. What are you thinking that way for? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan.

I mean, he's talking now total unbelief, total fear. Oh, Lord, what can I say? Now that Israel has been routed by its enemies, Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this, and they did, and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. We're gonna be extinguished.

Joshua, what are you thinking? What then will you do for your own great name? And the Lord said to Joshua, stand up. What are you doing down on your face? Get the dust off your head and get off the ground. Israel has sinned.

They have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things that belong to me. They have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions.

That's why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies, but wait a minute. They're the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They're circumcised.

They're the people of the covenant, and yeah, they're still gonna get beat. No, but I'm one of the king's kids, and you'll still get beat. Yeah, but Moses was our leader, and we crossed the Jordan River, and you'll get beat down more.

They turned their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore. Wow.

To his own people, I won't be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction. The name of this message is Lessons from Losing, because there's valuable lessons, and this was put in the Bible so we would stop and think and say, what are the lessons for us today? The part of the story I leave out is God says, you call all the tribes, you gather everyone together, and I'm gonna direct you to the right tribe, to the right clan, to the right family, and to the right guy who's messed up everything for you, and it turns out to be a guy by the name of Achan, and Achan was punished by God because he not only stole things that belonged to God and hid it in the dirt in his tent, but he caused the people to suffer and be held back and suffer defeat, and Israel had a rep, they had props in the street that they could not be beaten. You couldn't beat Israel, but now at Ai, the word got out, you know what, you can beat them.

They had never been beaten, no one had ever died. Jericho came down flat as a pancake, but now something else had happened. They had been defeated, not because of the enemy, but because of Israel.

You gotta understand this. In life, the enemy cannot overcome us when we're right with God. A church cannot be held back when it's right with God.

That's impossible. The problem is not the devil or secular humanism or no prayer in schools, that's nothing to the church of Jesus Christ. A church will be victorious, a pastor will be blessed, believers will be blessed, they'll see the blessing of God in their family if they're right vertically with God.

Horizontally, things will be blessed and things will work out just wonderfully. There'll be challenges, sure there'll be battles, but the blessing of God, there'll be an open heaven if you're right vertically with God. But if something happens between you and me and God, then things are gonna be affected horizontally and we might blame horizontal, we might blame family and friends.

The problem is not with family and friends, problem's not the devil. The problem is something has clouded our relationship with the Lord, like Israel. So when they put the tape on, God made them watch tape.

God made them watch videotape and he said, you know why you can't stand against your enemies? Because something's not right between us. Even though you're my people, we gotta have not only relationship, we gotta have fellowship. And something's happened that's ruined our fellowship.

Now I love all of you and I want the best for you, the best of God for you this year. I don't want you to suffer any defeats that you don't have to. So we're gonna learn these lessons.

What does it come down to? Comes down to God said, there are certain things you can't have in your camp. There are certain things you can't have. They're to be given to me, they're mine.

If you keep them against my commandment, now we have a problem. You know, we see that in human relationships, even within families. I was recently with a family, they haven't talked to one of the sisters.

And one sister told me, I haven't talked to her in a year. She's not invited to family gatherings, unfortunately. I learned.

Why? Because they're not sisters? Of course they're sisters. Biologically, they're sisters. But there's a problem in the fellowship.

Something's come up. The enemy has sown something in there and now there's blockage. Come on, we all know what that's about, don't we? I just heard about somebody who turned on their best friend of 30 years and now won't talk to them.

Their best friend. Best friend for 30 years. Now they won't have anything to do with him.

Why? Because something came up and it blocks. And this is what happened to Israel. Were they God's people? Of course.

Did they have the right leader? Yes. Were they in the right place? Yes. Were they getting beat down? Yes.

Because something was in their camp that God said, can't be with you, it's got to be with me. That was thousands of years ago and we're not possessing land. You got to remember this.

Christianity is a religion about souls and invisible victories. The Jewish religion is about a tract of land and especially a city and an ethnic culture. Judaism is not about Grand Rapids, Michigan.

It's about that sliver of land, Jerusalem, the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and it is not strongly evangelistic. The Jewish religion is not trying to go out and make a million converts. Christians are.

The Muslim religion is about land. Christianity is about souls. What did God say? Go out and possess land, conquer cities? No.

He went, go into all the world and preach the gospel. Everyone who believes and is baptized shall be saved. The kingdom of God is invisible.

It's about changing people's hearts through the good news of Jesus Christ. Judaism is about that sliver of land and the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and sacred places like Bethel and Jerusalem and the Temple Mount and all of that. Islam is about land, possessing land, taking over governments so that the land then becomes under Islamic law, Sharia law, whatever kind of law.

They have their eyes still, the militant evangelistic type Muslims, they have their eyes still on Spain because for hundreds of years, did you know that for hundreds of years, Spain, España was Muslim, conquered by the Muslims when they had one of their early surges of taking over territories under first Muhammad and then his successors. And then they were driven out but they still got their eyes because they think territory. They think move in, dominate the population, reproduce more and have more kids so that you then control the government.

When you control the government, you then change the laws and then the country becomes Islamic. They're thinking land, they're looking at land. Judaism is looking at land because now they have the land but they don't want any more land.

They don't wanna possess anything in Michigan or New York, they don't want the South Bronx, they want right now, Palestine. Christianity is not about any land, we don't want any land because all gonna be burnt up in the end anyway, amen? That we're gonna have a new heaven and a new earth so what do we care about land? We're looking for souls. When Jesus Christ comes, all we can show him are people who have been won to Christ through our efforts, our prayers, our preaching.

But to get and conquer that land, they had this first defeat which gives us these lessons. Some things that we have that belong to God will hold us back from victories. We'll be weakened, we won't be strong.

We can actually suffer defeats. We can actually suffer victories. Look, brothers and sisters, I'm not being negative, let's just be talk straight, okay? Brooklyn is called the borough of churches for those of you visiting who don't know much about Brooklyn where I was born and raised.

Brooklyn is called the borough of churches. But most of the churches are all empty. They're all empty.

Why are they empty? They have the gospel, they have a Bible, they had a building in 1920, 1900, 1930, 1950, some of them were thriving, you couldn't even get in. The Baptist Temple which we used to rent to do rallies is this beautiful building. It recently had a fire in the last couple of years.

The Baptist Temple for 15 years was meeting with 80 people in the basement. Didn't even use the auditorium that seated 1,400. Why, there's not enough sinners to win? There's not enough people in New

York City to bring into a church? Of course there are.

Something got blocked, something got in there. Because when the right connections are made, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. But a lot of people who are yelling, we're more than conquerors, they're like the people who went to AI and got beat down.

They're talking talk but they're not taking time to say, am I more than a conqueror, am I living in the right place with God or do I have something in my camp, in my life that he says, no, you can't have that. That's gonna weaken you, make you vulnerable, give it to me. See, it's getting quiet now because we're not used to sermons like that.

I'm gonna preach it anyway because I have the microphone on and it is in the word of God. Because now we're in the day of shallow sloganeering, just God's on the throne, praise God, God is good all the time. Come on, bump and do all of that.

But brothers and sisters, do we not see all around us broken lives, shattered lives, people backsliding? We're in a fight, we're in a warfare. And I don't wanna fight a battle and find out I'm carrying stuff that doesn't belong in my camp. What are those things? I'm not going where you think I'm going.

But let's talk about this in just some general terms. It'll surprise you. If you study church history, you study the Bible carefully, here are just four things I wanna leave with you that two are linked together.

First of all, I'm not gonna be in the right position to have victory if there's sin in my camp that I have not confessed to Jesus Christ. Do we sin? Yeah, if anyone says, John says, anyone says he doesn't sin, he's a liar and the truth is not in him. How many sinned, I'll close my eyes because I don't wanna lose respect for you, but how many sinned at least once in 2011? I'll close my eyes, lift your hand.

Some of you, lift both your hands and your feet right now. Go ahead. Just like that.

But the righteous man falls down six times, but he gets up seven, right? And if we confess our sins, what? He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. But if that sin lodges in me and I don't deal with it, now you got AI. Now you got AI.

You can't have something that you know is against God's word. You can't have something that the Holy Spirit has dealt with. You can't hold onto that and be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

That is impossible in Spanish. It's impossible. Search me, like the Psalmist says, search me, oh God, and know my heart today.

Why search me? Because I'm tricky, I can't even look at my own heart because I won't go in some places where I need to go. Aren't we that way? We find fault in everybody, but our own heart, we give it just a once over, a little dusting. But search me, oh God, because I don't want anything.

I don't want anything. Because God says this to us. No, no, no, you give your sin to me.

That's why I sent my son to die for you. I'm the one who takes your sin. Give me your sin and I'll wash it away and I'll take it away, but don't hold onto it because that will compromise you.

Is there some resentment, some unforgiveness, some unclean practice, something that you've made a treaty with? You're not fighting it anymore. You're not denying it, you're not confessing it. That's how the

enemy works in our life.

Look, you're never gonna change. You've always been that way, you're always gonna be. No, if we're gonna be strong and victorious in 2012, we have to say no, that does not belong in my camp.

How am I gonna fight victoriously in the name of Christ when I'm carrying sin that he died for? That's impossible. Brothers and sisters, listen to me, I love you. That's impossible.

Don't believe anyone else who turns the grace of God into license for immorality. Jude warns us about that. Just reading about that the other night comes to my mind now.

Thank you, Holy Spirit. Jude says, watch out for these people who creep into the church and twist the grace of God, his love and his mercy, as an excuse to live immoral lives. You gotta be careful of those people.

They're very dangerous. They're false prophets. And they just justify it by saying, listen, you go girl, God is on the throne and he loves you.

Don't believe in that legalistic stuff that something's wrong. If it feels right, don't worry, God's on your side. Be careful of that, that will destroy you.

No, I'm gonna fight strong in 2012. I'm gonna be a blessing as God opens doors for me here and to minister and around the world. I wanna be right with God.

Perfect, no, I'll never be perfect. You all know that about me, right? Not perfect, walking in the light. Confessing everything God shows me is wrong.

How many want to walk victoriously with a clean heart in 2012? Lift your hand up, lift your hand up. That means you can't be an actor. You can't be an actress, you can't fake it.

You gotta get along with God. Not me, I'm not a priest, you don't confess to me. You confess to the high priest, Jesus.

And you tell him, Lord, I know this is in my life. While Pastor Simbala was talking, I just got convicted that I'm going into the new year with something that should not be in my camp, that should not be part of my life. That's wrong, that's a wrong relationship, that's an unhealthy thing, you've told me about that.

I love the man that came up to me and gave me his cigarettes just a couple weeks ago and he says, you know what? I've been a smoker, I battled this thing for 22 years, but you know what, here, take my cigarettes, take my lighter, he gave me everything. He said, because I know this is not something that should be in my life. This is not something that pleases God.

God has something better for me than having cancer go in my lungs. One other thing on that note. Condemnation for sin does not belong in our lives.

You and I will not be victorious if we're living with the guilt of sin that we've already confessed and given to God, he's forgiven us, but the devil will tell you that he hasn't really forgiven you and he tries to keep you heavy and negative and full of condemnation. You'll never be victorious, you'll lose at AI if you're carrying the guilt of sin. Whom the son sets free, the Bible says, is what? Come on, let's put our hands together, is free indeed.

Can we say it, free indeed? Say out loud, free indeed. Free from what? Free from condemnation. You can't be living guilty and thinking God is mad at you and be victorious at all against the forces of the enemy.

You can't. So if you're here today and forget unconfessed sin, sometimes we get past that and God gives us grace, we deal with it, and then the devil comes as the accuser of the brothers and sisters like he is some of you and he's reminding you what you did six months ago, six years ago, two years ago, or that abortion you had 20 years ago or whatever it was. How could you have done that? You don't really believe God forgave that.

You're gonna get it for what you did and see what he's saying is that the blood doesn't wash away all sin. But I want to proclaim to you, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all unrighteousness. All in favor, put your hands together one more time.

The blood of Jesus cleanses us. No condemnation. There is therefore now no condemnation.

I'm not living with condemnation. Confess it and let it go. When the devil comes, just point him to Calvary.

Don't talk to him. If you've confessed it and you've put it away and you're sincere and you're walking in the light and the enemy comes and brings up that junk, you just tell him, don't talk to me, talk to Christ who died on the cross. I plead the blood of Jesus on my life.

He conquered you on the cross and I conquer you now through Jesus Christ. So sin and the guilt of sin cannot be in our camp if we're gonna be victorious. Number three.

One of the things that can't be in our camp is faith in anybody else but God. Lean not upon your own understanding. Trust in the Lord, rely on him.

And one of the things that makes churches go backwards, ministers go backwards, oh, how many times I've seen this. They start to believe their own brochures. They start to believe that there's something about somebody, they're nobody.

All ministers are nobody, only Jesus is great. Come on, he's the king of king and the Lord of lords. Everyone else, Paul says, he that sows and he that waters is nothing.

It's only God who gives the increase. What are you talking about ministers for? Ministers come, ministers go, nobody remembers them. It's the name of Jesus that is to be elevated and praised.

But sometimes we put our trust in ourselves, our talent, our money, our education, our ability, and oh, it's a subtle thing. But God says, no, no, no. You cannot lean on your own understanding.

You can't rely on yourselves. You gotta give me all your trust because my strength is working in you, is made perfect in your weakness. Strong people in the Lord don't walk like this.

Strong people in the Lord walk like this. But you can't beat them. You cannot defeat them because when they walk like this and they say, God, have mercy on me.

Come on, can we say amen to that? God is gonna help them every time because they're walking in dependence on the Lord. If you're here today, you're trusting in that 2012 is gonna be great because you're gonna do this and I'm gonna do this. That's why God wouldn't let the Israelites have chariots.

All the other people had chariots. God says, you do not fight with chariots. Because chariots were so cutting edge and so powerful that he knew they would start accumulating chariots like they did under King Solomon.

See, David didn't have them, but Solomon, he drifted away because of a number of reasons and he started accumulating chariots. Why? Because then you trust in your chariots. Remember that verse? Some trust in chariots, others trust in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

Come on, let's say amen one more time. That's where a blessing can become a curse because God lets you go to college, gives you a good mind. The next thing you know, you're trusting in your college degree instead of trusting in God.

God gives you some ability. I've seen this with gospel singers. He gives them a great voice.

Instead of trusting the Holy Spirit, they trust their voice and all it is is music. But it's not by might nor by power, but it's by my spirit, say of the Lord. And that's why faith in ourselves cannot be in the camp if we're gonna be victorious against AI.

Faith has to be with God. We give him our sins. We know that he's taken away our guilt and all of our trust goes to God.

Don't trust in princes. Don't trust in the government. Come on, Democrats, Republicans, we're not that.

We're Christians. We serve the King of kings and the Lord of lords. We don't serve a party.

Those are warnings given us throughout the Bible. It's so easy to trust in people that look charismatic or strong or brilliant. And God says, ooh, there's the trap.

You're trusting in somebody else than me. I've had that happen to me. We started out, we had sold nothing.

God's had to rebuke me many times because the first offering I took was \$85 was the total tithes and offering from the Brooklyn Tabernacle. Imagine that. The man who took the offering told me it was \$85.

And one of the ushers then when he was on was stealing some of the money. That usher was stealing money. Oh, God is so faithful.

It just reminded me, the pastor who left me in charge of this handful of people and this mess there on Atlantic Avenue, he told me someone's stealing the money and we only have four ushers. So about the third week, the offerings were \$85, \$88, \$92. My wife got a job, I got a job.

And I'm thinking to myself, I'm so young, so naive, so out of it. God, what am I gonna do? One of these four is stealing because the offerings sometimes don't amount to what the envelopes even say. Someone's pocketing the money.

So at the end of one of the Sunday services, we're just all worshiping God and the Holy Spirit speaks to me and says, call that man forward. I have never done that that I can ever remember in my life. So I said, you, would you just come up to the front? And he went, me? I went, yeah, there's only a handful of us.

It's not like there's a thousand people here. You, yeah, you as in you. Just would you come up? He came up and before he even got to the altar, he fell and he started screaming for mercy.

And what I didn't know was, I had called the guy who was stealing the money. And he repented and he came to me and he said, how did you know? I said, I didn't know anything. I just called you forward.

Come on, can we give God a hand clap of praise? God is awesome. Awesome, awesome God. When you're getting offerings of \$85 and on Tuesday nights, \$7, \$6, \$10, guess who you have to trust? So then as things, the blessing of God comes, it's so easy to take your eye off of God.

God's had to rebuke me and say, who did you trust when you had nothing? Keep trusting me. The people don't give money, I give money. I bless the people, I put it in their heart.

Can we say amen to that? Give our faith to God. Come on, we're gonna give our faith to God in 2012. In our camp, no sin.

We give that to the Lord, we confess it. We confess it, he'll help us. He'll make us overcomers.

We don't live with the guilt of sin. You won't be victorious if you're feeling guilty. It's impossible.

Give that to him. Thirdly, we don't trust in ourselves. Can't have that.

Our faith is all on him. You, our faith, it's over there. Lastly, all the glory has to go to God.

Now, that's one thing that can get in our camp. I wince every time I hear people say, oh, I go to the tab. Do you? Well, guess what? The Brooklyn Tabernacle isn't worth two cents.

God gets all the glory. Someone said to me out in the street a couple months ago, in fact, a brother, you're sitting here today, aren't you, brother? I corrected you at the counter, didn't I? Because the brother just turned to me while I was drinking my coffee, and he sat next to me. I sat down next to him, and he went, I can't believe this.

We're having coffee together at the diner. And I said, yeah. He said, so he left me alone, and then he wanted to talk.

So he said, sitting two seats away, he said, Pastor Simba, you're here. I know you're here because you told me you were coming to this service. He said, you know what? My life's changed since I started coming to your church.

I said, really? How long you been coming? He went, oh, about two years. Easter, I think he said, two years. Ever since I came to your church, my life has changed.

I went, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Our church didn't change you. You give glory to God now.

God changed you, not our church, not Pastor Simba, not Pastor Delina. Those are just little ants running around. But God gets all the glory.

Listen, in 2012, if God sees that from your life and my life and from this church, he will get all the glory, we can't even imagine what he'll do. You can't. The problem becomes when we want to share the glory.

You know, A.W. Toza, the great writer, he said, a lot of preachers want God to get the glory, but they would like a tithe for themselves. You know, God is great, but please, mention my sermon, would you please? Or say something. And God's not giving tithes to a church.

Oh, come on, a denomination? I see ministers going nowhere because they're all tied up in their denomination. They're Baptist, Assembly of God, Presbyterian, our group, our group, your group, nothing. Jesus is the Lord.

Jesus is the one who gives the blessing. Come on, everybody, lift your hands up and clap like this. Come on, for God, everybody.

Say, to God be the glory. To God be the glory. To God be the glory.

Don't brag on your country. Don't brag on your island. Don't brag on your race.

Give God all the glory. Don't brag on your church. Don't brag on anything.

Just give God all the glory. Because when God sees that we want to keep some of the glory for ourselves, our education, who we are, then problems come. But when we're giving Him all the glory, listen, I believe this.

Eye has not seen, ear has not heard what God will do for a people that will give Him all the glory. That the only advertisement they want to make is not come to our church, here's the way we do it. Oh, I dread that.

Dread that like a plague. I just want to hear about Jesus. Tell me about Jesus.

Tell me how great God is. And the old thing is true. In the old camp meetings in the late 1800s, they had this saying as they locked themselves away with God out in the woods for a couple weeks, they would say, here's how you tell a good meeting.

When the meeting was over, if they went back to their tents after two, three hours with the Lord, if anyone was talking about who preached, they knew the meeting was not a good one. If they said, oh, did you hear that brother tonight? Was he good, wasn't he clever? Wasn't that good, the way he did that little thing and then he kicked his leg and then he did all of that? Then they knew, the more spiritual people knew that the meeting wasn't any good. But when they went back to their camp, God, you're awesome.

God, you are so great. God, there's no one like you. Who preached tonight? Oh, some guy, but God is so awesome.

Can we give God one more hand clap of praise? Lord Jesus, we want to serve you and walk with you in 2012. And we want to see great victories won so that your name might be praised throughout New York City and around the world. That's our desire.

We want to see your name lifted up. So today we confess our sins. There's anything, search our hearts, if there's anything in there, Lord, that shouldn't be there, that we haven't dealt with us, give us the grace, give us the light to see it and then give us the grace to deal with it.

Like just confessing it. We can't change, can a leopard change his spots? We can't change ourselves, but we can confess our sins to you so that you can begin a fresh work in our lives. We rebuke and we resist the accuser of the brothers and sisters.

And we plead the blood of Christ, everything we've done in the past that's under the blood, it is never to be remembered anymore by you, God. And if you are for us, who can be against us? If it's you who justifies us, who can bring any accusation against me when it's Christ who died for me? Today we put our trust in you. Not gonna stress out by carrying burdens on our shoulders.

We give it to you. We're trusting you today. Stop us from ever trusting in ourselves and relying on our own meager talents and abilities.

And finally, we give you all the glory today. Not unto us, but unto you be praise and honor and glory now and forever. Not to this church, not to us, not to our race, not to our country, not to anything but you.

We give you all the glory. You're not about to share your glory with anyone, and we don't want you to share it. We want you to get all the glory.

Get all the glory today. And this year, remember God as you help us, we're gonna give you the glory. We'll advertise it, we'll tell it abroad.

Everyone will know how awesome you are. And bless our visitors who are here and the churches that they represent. May they go back as arrows lit with the fire of God so that they can be a blessing in their respective churches.

We root for all of their churches. For every one of their churches is just as important as this church to you. You are no respecter of churches or people.

So we ask your blessing upon us today. Bless the people, let our love grow one for another. We pray this blessing on all of us in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

And all the people said, amen.

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