

Essentials of Mortification: Resting and Conquering

by Paul West

Paul West's sermon emphasizes the importance of resting in Christ to achieve victory over sin and spiritual battles through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Jonah 2:6, Matthew 8:26, Romans 8:37, Ephesians 3:16, 2 Peter 1:4

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Sanctification"

Description

Paul West delves into the spiritual battle that believers face, emphasizing the unseen warfare that occurs within and around them. He highlights the importance of understanding that the victory over sin has already been secured by Christ, but believers must daily engage in the ongoing battle against the enemy's attempts to hinder their spiritual growth and ministry. By abiding in Christ and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, believers can overcome the temptations of the flesh, the devil, and the world's influences, ultimately resting in God's strength to achieve victory.

Transcript

Have you ever wondered how God's method of overcoming sin works within the believer? The battle that rages within and without the child of God is a purely spiritual one; one that is replete with angelic fighting and invisible weaponry. If our eyes could be opened to see even a moment's glimpse of this warfare, we would be speechless. Our inner men are in the midst of this battle, and our minds are often the canopy under which the fiercest fighting is conducted. As with earthly battles, there are moments of calm reprieves interspersed with vicious attacks. The battles are daily, weekly, monthly, yearly and are but the components of an entire war which is fought over the span of the believer's lifetime.

God's Word teaches us that Satan's host has already been defeated in the boundless realm of eternity. The war was fought and won when Christ was slain on Calvary before the foundation of the world. What you and I are experiencing now are the time-bound manifestations of this war, with Satan's efforts to derail individual soldiers. The enemy knows that if he can hinder a soldier's advancements unto perfection by keeping the conscience defiled, the propagation and proliferation of the gospel will be stymied. With no consistent victory over sin on the personal level, and no measure of conquest over fleshly temptation, the soldier is unable to transmit the life of Christ through his ministry unto others. If a Christian cannot overcome evil in his own walk, he surely cannot teach others to overcome with any measure of authority in

theirs.

We read in scripture that God enables us to overcome by strengthening our inner men with might by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:16). This happens when the indwelling Spirit of God fortifies our own spirits with the life of Christ. The power of the Spirit is grace - the grace to overcome the temptations of the flesh, the devil, and the lure of the world's wicked system. Only the believer who makes it his daily aim to abide in Christ is given this divine power. By putting on the Lord Jesus Christ daily by faith, and making no provision to fulfill the lusts of his flesh, the child of God enters into a walk that safeguards his soul from the wiles of the enemy. This spiritual wrestling against the giants of the land is wrought through the strength of God, through His weapons and armor, and it is by His strength that the soldier is rendered instantly victorious.

In the same way the Lord Jesus slept in the boat during the storm, so the child of God may rest in the heat of the battle when he has the mind of Christ. This, then, is a concept the world cannot grasp: conquering by resting. When our inner men are strengthened by God we can rest during the fiercest of warfare and effortlessly overcome. The reason many of us are defeated by the enemy is because we have not learned to rest in the might of the Spirit. We try too hard to fight; we grit our teeth and attempt all sorts of methods in mortification that are independent of the all-conquering power of spiritual repose, and as a result we become defeated legalists.

The great victors of the Christian battle are those who have understood the secret of rest. They have identified that the "greater is He in that is in you" is God Himself abiding within them, breathing might into the inner man so that they can partake of His divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust (II Peter 1:4). When God gives the believer revelation of these truths, he instantly ceases from striving, and like Jonah, voluntarily sinks into the depths. As soon as Jonah's head went beneath the surface of the water, he could no longer hear the boisterous wind and crashing waves. Going beneath the water meant death, but with that death came great peace and rest.

Hear me now, dear believer in Christ. Would you have peace from all the storms in your life? Are you tired of failure upon failure, of defeat and depression, of confusion and empty religious effort? Do you wonder how Jesus Christ could sleep peacefully in the hull of a storm-tossed boat, amidst the howling wind and furious waves? He calls you and I to do the same in the midst of our own storms of flesh and temptation. It is the concept of resting and conquering.

Observe how a falcon soars high above a valley. He gained that altitude by beating his wings and overcoming gravity, climbing higher and higher until he reached a thermal and another law took over: the law of aerodynamics. Now he just soars effortlessly; he transcends gravity - the pull of the earth no longer has dominion over him. Beloved, this is a picture of the grace of God cancelling out the dominion of sin's law. God's will is that we soar effortlessly over an already-won battle, having taken on the divine nature of victory. There is great rest in the thermal. The thermal is a picture of the Holy Spirit breathing power into our inner man.

Let us therefore beat our wings in defiance to the law of gravity, and allow God's Spirit to lift us higher and higher. See every wing flap as a mortifying blow to the flesh. Hide the Word of Christ deeply in your heart. Call on Him as you gain altitude, lest you soon become discouraged and plateau. Wait on the thermal; endure suffering, buffet your body into submission, take all thoughts captive to Christ's obedience. May this be our daily experience: resting and conquering.

May we all enter into this liberating truth.

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