

(Kitchener, on 2012) Overcoming Satan

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of partaking of God's nature through the Holy Spirit, rather than just imitating Christ or trying to be good through self-improvement.

Duration: 1:03:54

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 1:3

Topics: "Overcoming"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his personal experience of going through trials and how it has deepened his understanding of God's power and ability. He emphasizes the importance of relying on God's strength and comfort in times of difficulty. The speaker also highlights the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, where believers now have the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to overcome trials. He encourages listeners to view trials as opportunities for growth and maturity in their Christian walk.

Transcript

Yesterday we were looking at Hebrews 6, where we have this expression, let us press on to maturity or to perfection. In many translations the word is perfection, and that means like a cup being full. God wants us to be full of the Holy Spirit and more and more of the nature of Christ to fill our heart.

That is the meaning of perfection. And God wants us to press on to it, not wait, saying, well, one day I'll become like Christ. We all have that hope that one day when Christ comes back we'll become like him.

But how do I know whether that hope is a living hope or a dead hope? I want you to see a verse in 1 John 3. 1 John 3 says in verse 2, Beloved, we are the children of God. That is, if we are born again, this is written to those who have surrendered their life to Christ and been born again. It's not for everybody.

Now we are the children of God, but it has not yet appeared as to what we will be. When Christ appears, then we shall be like him. That means we're going to have a body like his, and we're going to have a complete nature exactly like Christ's nature.

And the reason is we shall see him as he is. Now there are two things mentioned there. We shall see him as he is, and we shall be like him.

Please remember that. Many people think only when Christ comes we shall see him as he is. That's only one part.

It's like two sides of a coin. One side of the coin is we shall see him as he is. The other side is what people forget, that when he comes we shall be like him.

So please remember for the rest of your life that when you think of the hope of Christ's second coming, there are two things in there. One, we shall see him as he is, and second, we shall be like him. Now that's very important because when you go to the next verse, verse 3, it says everyone who has this hope.

Now what is this hope? This hope is not we shall see him alone. We shall see him and we shall be like him. So this hope is a double hope.

If you have this double hope in you, you will purify yourself just as he is pure. Why is it so many Christians do not purify themselves pursuing the purity that is in Christ? Why is it they sit back lazily and say Christ is coming and when he comes he will take us to heaven? Is that what the Bible says? What did we read just now? When he comes, we shall see him as he is and we shall be like him. According to this verse, how do you know you have this double hope? Listen to that verse.

It says everyone and I want you to read it carefully. Supposing this verse is said like this. Everyone who has this hope in him should purify himself.

That's not what it says. Everyone who has this hope in him should purify himself means that is an exhortation. This is what you should do.

But that's not what it says. It's stating a fact, not an exhortation. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself.

That's like saying a cat when it gets dirty licks itself clean. There's a difference between that and saying a cat when it's dirty should lick itself clean. You're not exhorting the cat to lick itself clean.

If you're a cat, you will lick yourself clean. If you're a pig, you will not lick yourself clean. You got to exhort the pig, hey listen, you should be clean.

And if you got a dirty pig, you'll try to clean it. But if you got a dirty cat, you don't have to clean it, you know. Did you know that? You can leave the cat to itself, it'll lick itself clean.

Many people think this is an exhortation. Hey, if I have this hope in Christ, I should be purifying myself. No, that's not what it says.

It says you will purify yourself. That is the proof that you're really born again. That is the proof that you're really born again.

That you have a desire to purify yourself. It's not instruction. A cat doesn't tell its little kittens, hey listen, you're cats, so always remember to clean yourself.

Is that what a cat, is a cat teaching its kittens to be clean? Does a pig teach its pigs, hey you're little pigs, remember you must always be dirty, don't try to be clean. It's nature, nature. You don't have to, now I want to apply this nature of the pig and cat to us.

You don't have to teach your little children, hey, you're born of Adam, you must learn to fight. You must learn to grab things for yourself. You must learn to tell lies.

Because you're children of Adam, don't forget. Do any of your children, any of you teach your children to do that? You must also rebel against parents. And you must be stubborn.

And you must say no to your parents. Because you're children of Adam, don't forget. That would be like a pig telling its little piglets, you must be dirty.

It's nature, it's nature. It's automatically dirty, the pigs. And these children, anywhere in the world, you don't have to teach them.

They will say no to their parents, they will disobey, they will rebel, they will tell lies, they will fight, they will fight for their toys with other children. It's nature. In the same way, a little cat doesn't have to tell its kitten, you've got to be clean, you've got to be clean.

It's nature. And there you see, new birth is not just a good resolution. That is psychology.

And unfortunately, psychology has replaced the Holy Spirit in Christendom today. And a lot of people, a lot of preachers are preaching psychology, how to improve yourself. That's not only in the church.

You go to these management seminars that are conducted in big companies. They get some management consultant to teach people how to work better and how to behave better with your workers and your colleagues, etc. That's not Christianity.

Christianity is a change of nature where God does something inside us and makes us partake of his nature. Let me turn you to 2 Peter chapter 1. I believe personally, this is the greatest promise in the whole Bible. The greatest promise in the whole Bible is not that your sins will be forgiven.

Your sins will be forgiven is only like cleaning a dirty glass. The heart is cleaned. But why do you clean a dirty glass? Why do you clean the cups and glasses in your house? Why do you put them in the dishwasher and clean it? What for? Is it for decoration? When there are clean cups put on the dining table, is it for decoration? No.

The whole purpose of a cup and a glass is to pour something inside it. So the cleansing of your sin or the cleansing of your heart is not the end. Just like the cleaning of the cup and the cleaning of the glass in a dishwasher is not the end.

It's only the beginning. In that, something has to be poured. In your heart, something has to be poured.

And the cleansing from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ is only the preparation for that something to be put inside your heart. What is it? 2 Peter chapter 1. It speaks of these precious and magnificent... Verse 4 by the way. 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 4. He has granted to us very great precious promises.

And what is the greatest promise of them all? What is the purpose of all these promises? That through them you may partake. I prefer the word partake to this NIV translation. To partake.

In the NASV it says partake of the divine nature. Like the kitten partakes of the nature of its mother cat. It's not instruction.

The kitten has partaken of the nature of the mother cat. The piglet has partaken of the nature of the mother pig. The children have partaken of the Adamic flesh nature we have.

Even if you are born again, it's your spirit that is born again. Your flesh is still the Adamic nature. So, when a born again husband and a born again wife have a child, that child is not born again.

That child gets the nature of Adam from where? From its born again parents. And even if those parents are filled with the Holy Spirit, the child is still born with the nature of Adam. You all know that.

Wonderful holy parents get children who are disobedient and stubborn, tell lies, fight, quarrel. Because the nature of Adam, because they are born of the flesh. And they need to be born again and filled with the spirit before they can get the nature of God in them.

But this is the greatest promise in the whole Bible. That we can partake of his nature. Do you know that there is absolutely nothing that God can give us which is greater than his own nature.

And I don't know whether you realize that that is the greatest gift that God can give you. I feel sorry for all these people who are asking Jesus to give them material gifts. And not the real nature that God wants to give us.

I mean when you are seeking for material things. And say that Jesus has come to just bless us with physical healing and material things. We are babies.

We are like children who are satisfied with toys and candy and chocolates. And when you are grown up, when you are 20 years old or 25 years old. If you ask your dad for a gift.

You are not going to ask him for a chocolate or a toy car. You are probably asking for a real car. Right? Not a toy one.

I can't imagine a 20 year old asking his dad for a toy car. Give me a real one. And to ask God to give us material things as a blessing.

It's like 20 year olds asking their dad for a toy car. Is that what you want? A mature Christian will ask God, give me your nature. And the only way he can communicate his nature to us is through the Holy Spirit.

Now there is a lot of difference between imitating Christ and partaking of his nature. There is a very famous book in Christendom written by a Roman Catholic monk called The Imitation of Christ. By a man called Francis Kempis.

The Imitation of Christ. Now Imitation of Christ is a pig trying to act like a cat. Or a dog trying to act like a cat.

Let's take the example of a dog. You've got to train your dog now. You've got to behave like a cat.

Okay? From today onwards. And you know there are people who train dogs to do amazing things nowadays. They train dogs to sit and stand and go and pick that stone or pick up that stick which I throw.

It's amazing what they train dogs to do. And I suppose somebody could be clever enough to teach a dog to say meow. Don't say bow wow.

Say meow. And I suppose there are people who could train that dog to say that and say now from today onwards you've got to behave like a cat. And you train that dog and it always says meow meow meow like a cat until it meets another dog who barks at it and shows its teeth and suddenly the real nature of the dog comes out again.

This is how some Christians are. They are trained in church. You must be nice.

You must be kind. You must be forgiving. And all that.

And they try to act like that until somebody really provokes them. It could be their wife at home or their husband or somebody. And boy the old dog comes out again.

I mean it's difficult to pretend to be a cat when you're really a dog. But supposing you had a cat at home. And you told that cat listen you must always say meow and behave like a cat.

Cat will say no problem. Absolutely no problem. When you're caught off guard will you behave like a cat? Sure.

You can catch me anytime. I'll only behave like a cat because of nature. Do you see the difference between nature and training? Nature.

If the Christian life is the imitation of Christ, that means I'm basically still a child of Adam but I have to now behave like Christ. Because I've been taught in the church I must behave like Christ. I must behave nicely because I'm a Christian.

That's not Christianity. It looks like it. It's a painted fire.

It looks like a fire from a distance. But there's no light. There's no heat.

Because it's a painted fire. And I'll tell you a lot of Christians do not have real Christianity because they haven't opened their being to the Holy Spirit. You cannot partake of God's nature in any other way except by God communicating His Spirit to you.

You know when God created man, He created man with the capacity to receive His nature. There's nothing else in all creation that has that capacity. We need to understand that.

And God made the planets. The planets can't get His nature. The planets are very obedient.

You know that the planets have obeyed God for thousands of years without even disobeying Him for one second. But they can't partake of His nature. Just because you obey God in different things that doesn't mean you're partaking of His nature.

The planets obey. The trees obey the laws of nature. But they're not.

They can't partake of God's nature. So in the same way, when God made the angels, even the angels could not partake of God's nature. Do you know that Gabriel and Michael, archangels have got tremendous power.

But they can't be children of God. When somebody says, you're like an angel, that's not a compliment. I'll tell you that.

Somebody once told me, Brother Zach, your wife is like an angel. I said, rubbish. She's a daughter of God. She's no angel. Why do you want to degrade her to an angel? I don't want to be like an angel. I'm a son of God.

Do you know that sons of God are way above angels? We're supposed to partake of His nature. We're not like angels who cannot partake of His nature. It's something like saying, this pulpit, even if you pass electricity through it 10,000 volts, it cannot produce light.

It doesn't have the capacity to produce light. But you pass 110 volts through that little bulb and it gives forth light. What's the difference between that bulb and this pulpit? This pulpit is much bigger than that bulb.

It's because that has got the capacity to receive electricity and give forth light. The angels are like this. They have great power, but they can't manifest God's nature.

But we are like that bulb, the capacity to receive the Holy Spirit and manifest the nature of God. If only we could see this. It is not the imitation of Christ, but partaking of His nature.

And the only way to do it is by allowing our whole being to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I told you yesterday, it's like opening the blinds. You don't have to plead with the Holy Spirit, Oh Holy Spirit, please come into me.

You don't have to plead with the sunlight to come in if you open the blinds. If you keep the blinds shut, no matter how much you plead with the sunlight, it will not come in. But if you open the blinds, you don't have to plead with the sunlight.

It's just waiting to come in. And I want to tell you the secret of being filled with the Holy Spirit. You don't have to plead.

There are a lot of people who say, Oh God, fill me with the Holy Spirit. I remember one man saying, I have prayed to God for 40 years to be baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. It never happened.

You don't have to plead with the Holy Spirit. If you don't surrender your life, you can pray for a hundred years, nothing will happen. It's like keeping the blinds closed and saying, I'm praying, I'm fasting and praying, the sunlight will come in.

I said, Brother, open the blinds. You don't have to pray and fast anymore. So I say, you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit, just surrender every area of your life to Him.

That's all you got to do. And that's how we partake of God's nature and as we partake of that nature, that nature battles with the flesh, with the nature of Adam. It's a great conflict.

In Galatians chapter 5, this is how we grow to maturity. Galatians chapter 5 and verse 17. It says here, the flesh lusts against the spirit.

Now the word lust has sometimes got a bad connotation, but it's an old English word, which means a strong desire. That's all it means. In the King James Version, it says the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit lusts against the flesh.

All it means is the desire of the flesh is dead against the Holy Spirit and the desire of the Holy Spirit is dead against the flesh. These are opposites to each other. They are completely against each other.

And if you allow the Holy Spirit His way, He will keep you from doing the things that your flesh wants to do. You see, what a wonderful verse that is. These are opposed to each other.

But you're the one who decides which is going to win. I heard of an illiterate man who was born again. You know, illiterate people can also be born again.

We have a number of them in our own churches in India who can't read or write, but they are born again and they know Jesus Christ as Savior. One of our elders in one of our churches can't read or write, but he knows the Lord. And he preaches.

I asked him actually, how do you preach in your church when you can't read the Bible? He said, somebody has been kind enough to load an audio version of the Bible into my cell phone and I listen to the Bible every day. So it's amazing how you don't need to be very intelligent. You don't even need to read and write to know the Lord.

And I've seen wonderful brothers like this. We think that because we can read and write, we are so clever, we can understand. We can understand the Bible, but knowing the Lord is a completely different thing.

And so this illiterate man was asked, how has it been after you've become a Christian, born again? He says, well, in the beginning there was only a black dog inside me. Now there's also a white dog and the white dog is always fighting with the black dog inside me. He was talking about this flesh and spirit fighting against each other.

So they asked him, which dog wins? He said, that depends on which dog I give food to. If I feed the black dog, that wins. If I feed the white dog, that wins.

It's a very simple, illiterate man's way of saying who is going to win, which nature is going to win in you? It's the Holy Spirit or your flesh. That depends on which you feed. You know, for example, you've got a computer and you can go to the computer and feed the white dog or the black dog.

That's up to you. But that will determine who's going to win, finally, in a battle. Sure, you can read books and books can feed the white dog or the black dog.

You can feed the Holy Spirit, this new nature that's come inside you, or you can feed that old nature. Flesh fights against the spirit, spirit against the flesh. And what did we read in the beginning? That if you have the hope that one day I will become totally like Jesus Christ, you will purify yourself.

Now, many people do not know this truth about purifying themselves. Let's look at that verse again. 1 John chapter 3 and verse 3. We shouldn't forget this.

1 John 3, verse 3. Everyone who has this hope purifies himself just as Christ is pure. Everyone. So, if you don't purify yourself as Christ is pure, what does that prove, according to this verse? You don't have this hope.

If you have this hope in you, you will purify yourself as Christ is pure. If you are not doing that, you may say as much as you like, I am waiting for the coming of Christ, but you don't have that hope in you. You don't have the hope that one day you will be like Him.

Because it says everyone. As I said, this is not an exhortation, you should start purifying yourself from tomorrow. Everyone who is born of a cat will cleanse itself.

Everyone who is born of a pig, maybe you have to keep on exhorting the pig, come on, keep yourself clean. You don't have to exhort a cat. It's automatic.

It's a desire that comes in. I really feel that psychology has taken the place of the Holy Spirit in many a pulpit. We are training people to be good when they should be receiving the nature of God within them and being filled with the Holy Spirit within.

There is a lot of difference in these two dear brothers and sisters. Being trained to be good. You know, some people think Christianity is a self-improvement program.

You come to the church and learn to be nice and speak nicely and tell lies. No, it's partaking of God's nature. And it's because we don't seek to partake of God's nature that we are like the dog who is trying to behave like a cat and sometimes we start behaving like the dog again.

We are not supposed to be like that. That's why it's so important. The early Christians urged people, you must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

You must be filled with the Holy Spirit. And unfortunately that doctrine has been so misused and abused by so many Christian groups where they just think it is only speaking in tongues. But I say the main thing, I'm not against speaking in tongues, praise the Lord for that gift.

But the main purpose of the Holy Spirit is to make us like Jesus. Never forget that. God gave us His Spirit so that we can partake of His nature, the greatest gift that God can give us.

Everybody knows that God gave His Son on the cross. But do you know that God gave His Spirit also, the third person of the Trinity? The Son died on the cross for us and the Spirit was given to come and dwell within us so that we can partake of His nature. And that's how we grow into maturity as we allow the Holy Spirit to stand against this fleshly nature of ours.

And that's why God allows us to be tempted. Some of us wonder why. I wish I could live a life without temptation.

But if you live a life without temptation, you'll never be strong. You'll never be an overcomer. How do you tell a person who is weak to become strong? Well, there are two things he needs.

One, he needs to eat good food. And the other, he needs to do a lot of exercise. If he only eats food, he'll become fat.

If you eat food and do exercise, you'll become strong. Do you know the difference between a strong person and a fat person? World of difference. Some fat people, you just touch them, they'll fall down.

But a strong person, he's not going to fall down if you push him. The devil can knock down a lot of spiritually fat people. Spiritually fat people are people who are bloated with knowledge of the Bible.

They know everything. They know the Bible. They've gone to meetings.

They know how to sing the songs. But they haven't become strong because they have not fought. That means they have not exercised.

Exercise comes in temptation. That's why we need the Bible to read the Bible and become... that's the spiritual food. And then we also need to be tested and tried in different situations.

That's the exercise we get to become strong. And that's why we read this lovely verse in James chapter 1. Now only you can understand it. James and chapter 1. It says here, Count it all joy.

Verse 2. James 1 verse 2. Consider it all joy or pure joy, my brothers, when you face trials of many kinds. Trials of many kinds. How many Christians obey that verse? Hey, another trial.

Hallelujah. Praise God. That's wonderful.

I had one yesterday but a tougher one today. Praise the Lord. Consider it pure joy.

I don't think you find many Christians like that. It's like two people going to the gym and seeing all these barbells and different machines and the fat man who's not interested in becoming muscular. He says, hey, this is not for me.

But the man who's really interested in being muscular, he says, wonderful. This machine, that machine, that machine. I'm going to spend a couple of hours here.

But the lazy man says, ah, who's going to stand here? I get bored after five minutes on the treadmill. I feel like going home. See, that's why some Christians are like that.

They don't understand the purpose of trial. The whole purpose of trial is to make me spiritually strong and powerful to face every situation that can ever come my way. I mean, if you have a child who's only eating, eating, eating, eating, just sitting lazily and eating potato chips and hamburgers in front of a television, he's going to be fat.

He's not going to be strong. You want your child to do some exercise and keep itself fit. It's exactly the same with God.

God wants us to face trial and overcome. The whole purpose of trial, dear brothers and sisters, is to make you strong. And if you want to know a great example of it, Jesus Christ himself was tempted when he came to earth as a man.

Temptation did something in him. I want you to see this verse. Sometimes we don't read the Bible carefully.

What happened when Jesus was baptized? He was filled with the Holy Spirit. We read that. Let's turn to Luke's Gospel, chapter 4. In the previous chapter, Luke chapter 3, is where he was baptized by John the Baptist.

And you know the story. When John the Baptist baptized him, the Holy Spirit descended upon him like a dove. Luke 4, verse 1 says, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan.

He was filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism in the river Jordan. And then what did the Holy Spirit do next to him? It says he led him into a desert. Does the Holy Spirit lead us to deserts? He led Jesus to a

desert.

Some people think that the Holy Spirit means he'll only lead us to fruitful gardens and a comfortable life. No. Jesus filled with the Holy Spirit was led to the desert and it says in the next verse, he was led there, verse 2, to be tempted by the devil for 40 days.

Does the Holy Spirit lead us to the place? He doesn't tempt us. That's for sure. God doesn't tempt anybody.

But does he lead us to be tempted by the devil? He led Jesus. And if you're following in Jesus' footsteps, he'll lead you. And during those 40 days, he fasted.

And it says here, at the end of the 40 days, verse 13, at the end of the temptations, the devil finished all his tempting, he left him. And what was the result of this temptation? See the next verse, verse 14. Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit.

Did you see the difference between verse 1 and verse 14? He went full of the Spirit, was tempted for 40 days and came with the power of the Spirit. This is Jesus as a man. And he went and started preaching and fulfilling the ministry.

So there we see the reason why even if you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you still need to face temptation so that you can come forth from that strong in the power of the Holy Spirit so that you can accomplish mighty things for God. So, it's not enough even to be filled with the Holy Spirit. You need to face temptation and overcome it.

And then you become strong. So like I said, the Bible, knowing the Bible is like eating food. And when you face temptation, that's exercise.

With food and exercise, the fat is converted to muscle. You know that's true physically, spiritually, the equivalent is reading the scriptures and facing temptation. So don't, that's why James says, consider it all joy when you face all types of temptations because you're going to come out as a very strong person at the end of it.

The trouble with a lot of Christians is they want to become mature, but they don't want to go through any trials. It's like the man, the fat man who wants to become muscular, you know. He sees these pictures of these muscular he-men and says, boy, I'd like to have muscles like that.

But you know what that guy did to get those muscles? He used to go to the gym every day and work out and work out and work out. If you're too lazy to do that, you're not going to get those type of muscles. So when God takes us through trial, the purpose is to make us muscular Christians.

So I want to say to all of you, my brothers and sisters, don't ever be afraid of trial. Whatever it is, God allows us to go through physical trials, financial trials. He'll never forsake us.

That's His promise. He has promised, I will never leave you nor forsake you. And I can tell you that God's taken me through numerous trials.

In 53 years, I've been a Christian. When I was working in the Navy in full-time Christian work, in all types of situations. And in those trials, I've come to know something about God's ability and power, which I could never have known if I had not gone through those trials.

I mean, think of the stories in the Gospels. The disciples get into a lake and there was a storm. Mighty storm, so mighty that the water came into the boat and they were afraid of sinking.

And they see Jesus getting up and stilling that storm. And they reach the other side. Now, which would you prefer? Tell me, if you were in that boat, would you say, Lord, please take us through to the other side without a storm.

Let's have a peaceful trip to the other side of the lake. Would you prefer that or would you prefer, Lord, if there is a storm, let's face it and let me see your mighty power stilling that storm. I know what I would choose.

I choose to face the storm and see the mighty power of God stilling that storm rather than going through that lake without a storm. So, I find that many, many situations that the disciples went through were the Lord trying to teach them, I can handle any situation. Is there not enough food for everybody? Okay.

We'll multiply the loaves. They were always facing situations where human resources was not enough. They needed the mighty power of God to solve that problem.

There would be a demon-possessed person there. And the mighty power of God would cast the demon out. So, what Jesus was teaching them in all those situations that you read in the Gospels is God can help you through any situation.

Don't be afraid of facing a trial. It's in those trials that you come to know God. You know, if ever you see a man whose ministry has blessed you, you can be pretty sure that he's gone through numerous trials and that's how he got that ministry.

And you think you can get that ministry just by studying the Bible? You can't. Because the Bible says, the Old Testament was like that. In the Old Testament, you know, you didn't have to go through trials to get a ministry.

What did Moses do? He went up to the mountain and he heard God and he came down and preached it. And the Old Testament prophets were mostly like that. They heard what God said and they would go out to the people and say, this is what God has said.

But in the New Covenant, the ministry is very different. Let me show you how Paul got his ministry. I turn to 2 Corinthians 1. Verse 3. I want to read verse 3 and 4. First of all, verse 3. 2 Corinthians 1.3. Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.

Now that word comfort means more than just consolation. Think of the last four letters in that word. Fort.

Fort is a picture of something strong. And comfort really means strengthening. Make me like a fort, impenetrable by the devil.

The God of all strengthening. That's how I read the word comfort. Because I believe it comes from the word fort.

Now we go to the next verse. This God of all strengthening comforts me or strengthens me in all my troubles. Why does He strengthen me in all my troubles? So that I can strengthen others who are in trouble.

How do I strengthen them? With the same strength I received from God when I was in trouble. Think of that verse. Instead of comfort you strengthen.

God who strengthens me in all my trials and troubles. So that I can strengthen others who are in trials and troubles. With what? With the same strength and power I got from God in my trial.

So supposing you are a person who's never been through any trials. You don't experience God's strength at all. And somebody comes to you who's gone through trials.

You can't give him any strength at all because you've never been through anything yourself. You always pray, Lord please let me escape from all these difficulties. Don't take me through any trials and just give me a peaceful life on the earth.

Don't let me ever face a storm in the lake. Well then you'll never know how Jesus can still the storm. I want to face numerous storms in my life so that I can see the mighty power of God that can handle that situation.

Yeah. And so you see the weak Christians are the ones who are always trying to escape difficult situations. The strong Christians I say, God you planned this.

You planned it so that I can become a strong Christian at the end of it. Let me show you another verse in John's Gospel in chapter 12. John's Gospel chapter 12.

This is Jesus was approaching the cross. I mean he completed his ministry almost by this time. The next chapter is the Last Supper.

So this is almost the last day before the Last Supper. John chapter 12. And Jesus was facing the hour had come for whom he says in verse 23.

For many days he said the hour has not come. The hour has not come. The hour has not come.

But now he says in John 12, 23. The hour has come finally for the Son of Man not to be crucified. I like the way he said it.

To be glorified. He looked beyond the trial of the cross to the glory. And when I see a trial, there was no trial greater than the cross for Jesus.

He looked at the trial and he said this is not a time to be crucified. This is just a way to be glorified. And so I look at a trial and say okay this is a time when God is going to strengthen me.

It's like the fat man who is serious about converting his fat to muscle and he sees all these machines in the gym and says hey I'm going to be strong now. This is the time to be glorified. And he goes on to say when the trial comes verse 27.

As he faced the cross Jesus is very honest. He says in John 12, 27. My heart is troubled.

Yeah, when we face a trial we feel little disturbance in our heart naturally. We are human. But when we are troubled in our heart even Jesus was troubled in his heart and let me tell you to be troubled in your heart is not a sin.

Jesus was troubled in his heart and he was very honest about it. He didn't pretend oh my heart is not troubled. He said my heart is troubled.

So what? But I'm not going to yield to that. What shall I say in this time of trial? Oh father save me from this hour. No.

That would be sin. I'm not going to say father please save me from this trial. We got to learn something from this.

In the time when you face a trial your heart may be troubled. That's fine. But what are you going to say there? Oh God please get me out of this situation.

Don't let me face this trial. Don't let me face a storm. No.

I will not say that. It was for this reason I came to this hour. God has planned this very hour.

We are following in Jesus' footsteps. The same principle by which he faced the cross. We don't face the cross to die for the sins of the world like he did.

But the same principle guides us. In this hour of trial I will not say father save me from this hour. But I will say See the next verse.

I will say verse 28 Father glorify your name. So when I face a trial I can either say father save me from this situation or father glorify your name. Jesus said I'm not going to say save me from this hour.

I'm going to say father glorify your name. Let your name be glorified through me. And if you pray that prayer in every trial and situation that you go through you'll see the end result is that you become a stronger person.

So the difference between a strong powerful Christian who can handle every situation and the weak Christian who has been a Christian for so many years but gets discouraged and gloomy is because he doesn't face up to that trial. Now we need to see something wonderful. The temptation came from the devil.

You know that through Jesus. And a lot of trials in our life are sent by the devil. Who was the one who sent trials into Job's life? Who was the one who killed all of Job's children? It wasn't God.

It was the devil. But God permitted him. In a child of God the devil attacks not without God's permission.

With God's permission. It's a wonderful thing that we can see there in the book of Job. If you turn to the book of Job in chapter 1 there's something that the devil tells God which has been a tremendous blessing to me.

Usually we don't get blessed by the words of Satan. But here is a word of Satan that has really blessed my heart for many years. I think Satan accidentally said something which has blessed God's people.

You know what it is? Job chapter 1 when God was saying, Have you seen my servant Job who is so faithful? The devil says, Yeah, I'll tell you why. Because Job 1 verse 10 Satan says to God Listen to this. This is very, very interesting.

Job chapter 1 verse 10 Satan says to God Haven't you put a hedge around him and his family and everything he has? Little sentence. It's true. The devil tells lies to us but he never tells lies to God.

He dare not tell lies to God. Here he's not speaking to man. He's speaking to God.

God, you put three hedges around him. One you put a hedge around his body. Then you put another hedge around his family.

And then you put another hedge around all his property and finances and his business and everything else. Do you know that there are three hedges around God's children? That's the thing that comforted me. Those words of Satan.

I praise the Lord. I say, Satan, thank you for saying that. I discovered something which I didn't know.

And if you hadn't said it, I wouldn't have known it. Because it's not written anywhere else in the Bible. There are three hedges around me which God has put.

One around me. One around my family. And a third one around my house and property and business and bank account.

You think God's not interested in your bank account? I tell you he is. There's a hedge around it. And what we read, I don't have time to go into all that chapter, but God told Satan, OK, I will open hedge number three and hedge number two, but not hedge number one.

Hedge number one is around me. Around Joe. No, you can't go there.

But I'll allow you to go through hedge number three. That means you can destroy his property if you want. You know, ruin his finances.

OK. And I'll also allow you, which is a little more tough, to go through hedge number two and even kill his children. Don't worry.

God won't allow you to face that because you're not as spiritual as Joe was, so it's OK. He doesn't allow us to be tested beyond our ability. I mean, if you are in the kindergarten, he's not going to give you a PhD examination.

No. In kindergarten, you'll only get a kindergarten test. If you're in the first grade, you get a first grade test.

Joe was pretty advanced that God could test him even to lose his children. That's a pretty tough test. look at the confidence God had in Joe that I can test him.

And when he lost his children and lost his property, he said, Job 1.21. It's a great verse. Job 1.21. When I came to this world, I was naked. I didn't have any property.

I didn't have any money. I didn't even have any clothing. And when I die, I shall also die without anything.

I can't take my children with me. I can't take my money with me. I came into the world without anything.

I shall go out without anything. All my life on earth, whatever I got, the Lord gave. And if the Lord decides to take it away, praise the Lord.

What a great attitude. The only thing is, the poor man could not keep that attitude till the end. By the time you come to chapter 3, he's grumbling.

You know why? Because he didn't have the Holy Spirit within him. Today, we have the Holy Spirit within us. Till the end, we can say those words.

Till Christ comes, we can say that. That's the difference between us and Job. The Lord gave.

The Lord's taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. And I can hold that attitude till Christ comes.

I shall be an overcomer in trial. I don't compare myself with Job. Job could not do it because he didn't have the Holy Spirit within him.

But we can have. But it's a wonderful thing to know that every trial that comes to me, God has given permission to the devil according to the level of my ability. As I told you, if you're in the kindergarten, he will not give you a first grade examination.

He'll give you a very simple test. How do you pronounce C-A-T? That's all. Simple thing like that.

Because you're in the kindergarten. But do you want to live in the kindergarten forever? That all your life, you only know how to pronounce C-A-T? Do you want your children to live at that level forever? Or do you want your children to grow on to addition and subtraction and multiplication and like all the clever Romanian people, computer scientists and all that? Those are people who really want to advance in their profession. Why not advance spiritually as well to know more of God? Well, then I have to face more trials.

In every class that we go to, in India anyway, there are examinations. You pass an examination, you go to the next class. You don't get promoted if you don't pass an examination.

And trial is like that. The more I face a trial and I overcome, I go higher. Maturity is exactly like going from one class to another in a school.

First grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade. At every stage there's an examination. You pass it, you go higher.

God takes us through trials for that purpose. But it's wonderful to know that it's without God's permission that devil cannot come in. Now I'll tell you one more big difference.

Not only that I have the Holy Spirit, but Job did not have. That's why I don't complain. When I read Job complaining in chapter 3 and a lot of other chapters, I say, sorry, I'm not going to go into that.

I'm not going to be like that because I have the Holy Spirit today. I will not complain. I will praise the Lord in all situations because I know that God will never allow me to be tested beyond my ability.

That's 1 Corinthians chapter 10. You should all know this verse. It's one of the most wonderful promises in the New Testament.

1 Corinthians 10 verse 13. 1 Corinthians 10 verse 13. Look at the middle of that verse.

Right in the middle. God is faithful. I'm sure you'll all agree there.

But here he's speaking about he is faithful in one area. He will never allow you to be tested beyond your ability. But, listen, this is the best part of it.

Along with that trial or examination, he will provide a way so that you can overcome it and stand up to it. So, if we look at trial like an examination. You know, people... I don't know how you all do examinations in school here.

But we have examinations in India at the end of a year, school year. There's an examination. It's called a final examination.

And a lot of children are scared when they go to that examination. Am I going to pass in this or not? Is the question paper going to be tough? They go with a lot of fear. But supposing you go into the examination hall and this is a special type of examination where the teacher is allowed to sit next to you and give you all the answers.

Wouldn't that be a good type of examination to go to? Hey, this is wonderful. In this examination, the teacher is allowed to sit with me and tell me how to do those problems and give the right answers. That's the second part of that verse.

That's what it means. When you're sitting in the examination, he will come and sit beside you, the Holy Spirit. He's called a helper.

And he'll tell you how to do that, how to overcome there. What's the right answer here? That's how I'm going to pass. And if you have the teacher sitting next to you when you're doing this question paper, you can get 100%.

Sure. And that's exactly what this verse means. That when I face a trial, I don't have to fail.

But if you don't have the teacher sitting next to you, the devil's going to win. That's why it's so important to be filled with the Holy Spirit all the time. And to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit all the time.

He'll help you to pass. And I said the other thing. You see, one thing I have today which Job did not have is the Holy Spirit within me as my helper.

He did not have the Holy Spirit as a helper. That's why he failed as he proceeded in that examination. He found it too tough.

But I've got the teacher sitting next to me and I'll never fail. Impossible. How can I fail if the teacher is sitting next to me giving me the answers? Then why do you fail? Because you're not listening to the teacher.

At least in future you should listen. When he tells you to forgive somebody, forgive. That's the right answer.

You'll succeed. But you say, No, I'm not going to forgive that guy. He did so much harm to me.

Then you're going to fail. You're not writing the answer the teacher told you to do, to write. The other thing which we have an advantage over Job is this.

Job lived in a time when Satan had not been defeated. Did you know that? Do you know when Satan was defeated? On the cross. In Calvary.

He was not defeated before that. He wasn't killed on Calvary. He's still alive.

But his power has been taken away. Let me show you Colossians chapter 2. In Colossians chapter 2. It says about two things that happened on the cross. Number one.

Verse 14. Colossians 2.14 He canceled the certificate of debt. That's how it says in the NASB here.

That's a much better translation. The certificate of debt. He canceled all those decrees that were made against us.

The certificate of debt that I have was canceled. That's my sins were forgiven. And he nailed it and took it to the cross.

That's number one. We all know that. Number two.

It says in verse 14. The next verse. Sorry.

Verse 15. The next verse. He disarmed.

You know the meaning of disarmed. He took away the armor from the spiritual powers and authorities. That's the demonic powers and authorities.

That is Satan. He didn't kill them. But he took away the armor.

Triumphed over them on the cross. That's the second thing that happened on the cross which most people do not know. That Jesus Christ did two things on the cross.

One. He took our sins and paid the price. Second.

He defeated Satan on the cross. Satan was defeated there. His armor was taken away.

It's like a terrorist who comes with a whole lot of bombs and AK-47 guns to attack me. And when all his armor is taken away I'm not scared of him. Because he doesn't have any armor.

He's still alive. But he's harmless now. And he can't harm anybody.

And if I understand that Satan was defeated on the cross. It can change my whole attitude to Satan. And I'll tell you this.

Satan doesn't want you to know it. I remember once. I'll never forget.

There was a sister who brought a lady to our house for prayer. And I told her to accept Christ. And like I always tell people who accept Christ.

Now tell the devil that he was defeated on the cross. I told her. Tell the devil he was defeated on the cross and she looked at me and changed her appearance and said I was not defeated on the cross.

That was a demon inside her. It wasn't her speaking. It was a demon just like in Jesus' time speaking out through her mouth and saying I was not defeated on the cross.

My wife and I were sitting there looking at this woman. Well if a demon speaks to me then I speak to the demon. So I told the demon you're a liar.

You were defeated on the cross. Get out of her right now in Jesus' name. He left.

Not because of me but because he was defeated on the cross by Jesus Christ. He's not afraid of the name of Zach Bonin. He's afraid of the name of Jesus Christ.

In the name of Jesus get out of her. He left immediately. How do I know? I told her sister now tell the devil you were defeated on the cross and she said boldly Satan you were defeated on the cross.

She was free. But I learned something that day. I learned that the devil does not like to be reminded that he was defeated on the cross.

And I decided I'm going to remind him as often as possible that he was defeated on the cross and I'm going to teach other people to tell him that he was defeated on the cross. It will make a lot of difference in your life if you believe it. But you can't overcome him just by believing it.

Let me show you Romans Revelation chapter 12. Revelation chapter 12. It says about the devil as the accuser of the brethren in verse 10.

And verse 11. Have you read verse 11 of Revelation 12? How they overcame Satan? They overcame Satan first of all by the blood of the lamb. That means you're sure that the blood of Jesus has cleansed you from all sin.

And second by the word of their testimony. Not getting up in the church and giving a testimony to people but the word of your testimony to Satan. Satan you were defeated on the cross.

That's the word of the testimony. How many of you have told the devil that he was defeated on the cross? You know there are many believers who never said that to the devil even once. Probably a lot of people sitting here.

You know your sins are forgiven but you never told the devil to his face. Satan you were defeated on the cross. I encourage all people as soon as they are born again when I lead a person to Christ I assure him that his sins are forgiven and I say now tell the devil I don't belong to you.

You were defeated on the cross. Do you know that Satan can listen to you? He's everywhere. His demons are there.

And they'll convey the message to him that this guy says he doesn't belong to you anymore. And that you were defeated on the cross. He doesn't like it.

Why not tell the devil that? It'll strengthen your faith. And it'll make a difference. You'll be an overcomer.

And when trial comes to you from Satan it's coming from someone who was defeated on the cross. This is something we have which Job did not have. Two big advantages we have.

One, we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. And second, we stand in a position where Satan's been defeated unlike Job's time. Christ lives in us.

We don't have to be afraid. We never need to be afraid. I was afraid of the devil once.

The devil's afraid of me. Can you say that? It's like this. I'm afraid of these pit bull dogs if they come running at me.

If I go down the street and one of these pit bull dogs come at me, you know what I'll do? I'll turn around and run. I'm scared of them. But if I have a big African lion who's my friend walking with me down the road and ten of these dogs come at me I'll say, hey why don't you just give a roar? And the lion roars and they all got their tails underneath their between their legs and they're running.

What is it that changed my attitude to those dogs? I believe that this lion they're scared of this lion. Jesus is called the Lion of Judah. And as He if you believe that He's with you, the Bible says greater is He who is in you than He who is in the world.

Let me read that verse to you. 1 John chapter 4. You should know this. Some of these wonderful promises you must know.

1 John 4 and verse 4. 1 John 4 verse 4. You are from God little children and have overcome them. Why have you overcome them? All these evil spirits. Why have you overcome these pit dogs? Because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Do you believe that? Dear children, that's how you overcome them. Not because you're strong but the one who is in you is greater and therefore you don't fear. Every trial is meant to make you stronger.

And so you don't say Lord save me from this situation. Say God glorify your name and make me a better Christian as I come out of this trial. Now many of you will face trials of different types.

I've faced numerous types. God gives us different type of trials but remember the purpose of it all is to make us mature. So let us press on to maturity and not remain as babes forever.

Let's go beyond the kindergarten and pursue a Ph.D. in the Christian life. Let's pray. Head's about in prayer.

I want you to think about what you heard today and pray that God will make it a reality in your life. Not just a nice thing to be excited about right now but Lord in the days to come when I face different trials and you allow Satan to come through hedge number three or hedge number two or even hedge number one to touch my body. I want to believe that it cannot happen without your permission and I am going to be a conqueror in this situation.

Heavenly Father help each one of us. We pray and make us strong by the power of the Holy Spirit. Help us to partake of your nature and to live in triumph over Satan.

To manifest the victory of Calvary in our daily life. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Thank you.

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