

# The Cross Brings Victory

by Zac Poonen

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*The cross is a pathway to resurrection life, leading to joy and fruitfulness through death to Self, and is the only way to true liberty and victory over Satan.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:28, 1 Samuel 2:30, Psalm 124:7, Matthew 16:21, 2 Corinthians 3:17, Hebrews 2:14, Hebrews 12:2, James 4:7, Revelation 12:11

**Topics:** "The Cross", "Victory Over Sin"

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## Description

Zac Poonen preaches about the positive side of the message of the cross, emphasizing that it is a pathway to resurrection life and joy for those who accept its working. Through the example of Joseph, he illustrates how embracing the cross leads to vindication and fruitfulness, even in the face of suffering and injustice. Poonen highlights that victory over Satan and true freedom come only through embracing the way of the cross, as seen in the life of Jesus and the importance of surrendering our rights and self to experience divine liberty.

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## Transcript

The message of the cross has a brighter side - a positive one. It is this, that the cross is not an end in itself. It is a pathway to the resurrection life. There is a joy set before all who are willing to accept the working of the cross (Heb. 12:2). The corn of wheat that falls into the ground and dies does not remain there forever; it springs forth into a triumphant fruitfulness. The believer who accepts the pathway of the cross, no matter how much he may be misunderstood by others, will ultimately be vindicated by God. Fruitfulness comes through death to Self. Some of this fruit we may see even while on earth, but all of it will be seen only at the judgment seat of Christ, when the Lord will reward His faithful ones.

The life of Joseph affords a wonderful example of this. It was a painful experience for him to be sold by his own brethren whom he loved, and to end up as a slave in a strange country. Nevertheless he made no complaints while in Potiphar's house, but faithfully carried out the work assigned to him; and when Potiphar's wife falsely accused him, he remained faithful to God. Flung in jail, he still did not complain, but accepted everything as permitted by God, and harboured no bitterness against anyone. Forgotten there by Pharaoh's ungrateful butler, Joseph still bore no grudge against God or man. The outcome of all this was that he finally became Prime Minister of Egypt. God honours those who honour Him (1 Sam. 2:30). He did so then, and He does so even today. It may not always be public honour in the world's eyes as in Joseph's case, but Divine honour nevertheless. How much we miss when we avoid the pathway of the

cross! But the story is not finished. Even after Joseph rose to supreme rank and had all power in Egypt, he sought no revenge on Potiphar's wife nor on his brethren, but forgave them freely. Many a believer has initially walked as Joseph walked, submitting to the suffering of the cross at every step. But then success has come and he has been honoured and exalted by God. And tragically, with it has come pride and selfishness and the lust for revenge. Joseph was not like that. He remained the same humble man, whether he was in the jail or on the throne. What a remarkable man he was! This attitude is what God appreciates and ever delights to honour. It is the spirit of His Son. When it is missing in us, He has to say that one essential thing is lacking in our lives. It was not through His miracles, nor yet through the messages that He preached that the Lord Jesus brought Satan to nought. Hebrews 2:14 tells us that it was through His death that He rendered the Devil powerless. If the Lord Himself defeated Satan only through death, then surely His disciples cannot defeat him in any other way. Many have the idea that if only they could do a few miracles in the Name of Jesus, the Devil would be defeated. But the Devil has yielded to no other weapon than the Cross of Christ. When a believer refuses steadfastly to accept any other way than the way of the cross in his life, he will find that the Devil is powerless against him. It is only the man who submits joyfully and completely to all of God's dealings with him, whom the Bible commands to resist the Devil and who will find the Devil fleeing from him (James 4:7). It is folly to resist the Devil if we have not first submitted ourselves to God.

The way of the cross is the only way of victory. That is why Satan tried his best to prevent Jesus from going that way. That is also why Satan is constantly trying to prevent men and women from accepting that way for their lives. Peter sought, in well-meant love, to prevent Jesus from going through the suffering of the cross, but Jesus instantly recognized the voice of Satan there (Matt. 16:21-23). Our friends and relatives may give us similar advice too, when our pathway is hard. But remember that the voices we hear, whether inside our hearts or from others, that would divert us from the way of the cross are always the whisperings of the Devil. Do we always recognize them as such?

In the book of Revelation we see the Lord Jesus as the slain Lamb. There we have heaven's view of Calvary. In the eyes of man, Calvary was a defeat. We have no account of any unbeliever seeing Jesus after His resurrection, and Calvary is therefore still viewed as a defeat by man. But in heaven's eyes, Calvary was the greatest victory ever won on earth. On earth they crucified the Lamb of God, but in heaven they worship Him. When, in following Jesus, you surrender your rights, men on earth may say that you have no backbone, but in heaven there will be rejoicing over a child of God who has taken a position of victory. "They overcame him (Satan)...they loved not their lives unto the death (of the cross)...Therefore rejoice ye heavens" (Rev. 12:11, 12). In Psalm 124:7, we have the Christian life pictured in the symbol of a bird that has escaped from a snare. A bird soaring in the sky is a perfect picture of the glorious liberty that God wants all His children to experience. Mountains and rivers can hinder the onward course of earthbound creatures, but not of a bird. It soars high over them all. God created man in order that he might be like that bird, perfectly free, having dominion over everything and subduing everything under him (Gen. 1:28). But man's disobedience has made him like a bird trapped in a snare, unable to fly.

Only the cross can break that snare and set us free. There is no other way. Accept death to this world and to your own self, and you will therein die to the Devil's power as well. His hold upon you will be broken, and nothing can then prevent you from soaring upwards like that bird. That is true liberty - and that is what the Holy Spirit seeks to bring in our lives (2 Cor. 3:17). But the way of the cross is the only pathway to that liberty.

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