

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 ¶ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor 15:57,58

The passage before us is clear, Christ is our victory . He is our victory for justification. We have overcome sin and death, through him: By his death, and His suffering we are made righteous, through faith in him.

We have also overcome idleness. God in his mercy has called us into the vineyard of his service, to work and labor, for the cause of His glory. In thus too, we cannot fail, Christ has started this work in us. He has called us, and He will perform it. 1Thess 5:23. “ *He will work in us, the will and to do*”

We by him have overcome ignorance. We are not in darkness. We walk in the light. His Word is our light and it instructs us as to our life and calling. Meditation, reading, prayer, witness, giving, helping, serving. God’s people are all industrious, according to their calling. There are none without guidance. He is our helper. Rom 8:14-17

For some of us, this will be in the home, tending to children and spouses, others in the Church. Others still in our place of frequent gathering. wherever that might be. We all must admit, “ we need to be more diligent, serving Him!” Salt and light! Keep oil in your lamps, virgin daughters!

As we embark upon a new year, let us labor to *abound in our service* to Jesus Christ. Let us prepare NOW to rearrange our priorities so that we can be more productive in the sowing to the Spirit, waiting for an harvest of grace, and mercy for us and others for whom and with whom we labor.

May 2009 be a year of growth and service for all of us, personally and publicly, since we already possess the victory, through Jesus our Lord!

Pastor's Commentary And Outline

I would have been perfectly submissive!
(Theodore Cuyler, “God’s Light on Dark Clouds”)

None of us has any trouble in accepting the **doctrine of God’s sovereignty**—as long as things go to *our* liking! We are perfectly satisfied to let God have His way—as long as He does not cross *us*! We all believe in His administration, and are ready to “vote God in as our governor” as long as *our* business thrives, and *our* crops are plentiful, and everyone around our own table is healthy and happy.

As long as His mercies are poured out in *sweet wine*—we drink of them gladly. But as soon as the same cup begins to taste of *wormwood*—we push it away in disgust, or cry out piteously, “Let *this* cup pass from me! *Any other cup* I would have swallowed—but not this one! If God had only tried me with the loss of *property*, and spared my *health*—I could have borne it! Or if He had sent the sickness at some other *time*—I would not murmur so! Or if His blow had struck me somewhere else but in *my most tender spot*—I would not cry out so bitterly! In short, if God had only consulted *me* as to the *medicine* I should take, and as to which *branch* His pruning knife should lop off—**I would have been perfectly submissive!**”

As some of our readers may just now be smarting under *God’s strokes of discipline*, or letting their hearts fester into rebellion—let me whisper this precious truth into their ears: our Heavenly Father never afflicts one of His children—but for a wise purpose. He never strikes at random—or deals one blow in cruelty! Remember Aaron, concerning his two sons. “ **I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.** Ps 39:9”

Daniel 8:1-26 “ A vision of trouble, a call for patience”

Ecc 7:17

(1) The vision, an outflow from the dream. 7:1-7: 1st 553bc- 2nd 550bc

A recap of the 7th/2nd/8th chapter beast.

(2) The swift, rise, and fall of the He goat: 8vs. 8,22: 4 rulers - Syria / Macedonia / Asia / Egypt 311bc- 175bc - The little horn, 175, 163bc / 11:36

(3) Our model for the celestial conflict: vs. 9-13 /23-25/ 11:30-35/ Rev 17:8-18 / 11:7/ John 16:33/

(a) A sin cup (b) A manipulator (c) Compromise (d) judgment

(4) The elect will stand: 11:32-35 / 1John 2:4/ 5:9-11/ 8:31 Rev 13:10 - 21:19

**A private back door to hell
(Thomas Watson, “The Mischief of Sin”)**

“Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord.” Jeremiah 23:24

Let me not only speak to *scandalous* sinners, who seem to have ‘damnation’ written upon their foreheads—but to *secret* sinners.

“Cursed is he who makes an idol and puts it in a *secret* place.” Deuteronomy 27:15. Some of the Jews would not be seen openly bowing to an idol—but they would put it in their closet or some other secret place and there worship it.

There are many in like manner who will not *sin on the balcony*, or be like Absalom and sin in the sight of all Israel, 2 Samuel 16:22. But they shut up their windows, and commit their sin in secret. They have a private back door to hell—which nobody knows of!

Perhaps they live in secret *adultery*, or secret *envy* and *malice*, or secret *neglect of duty*. God knows that they are living in secret sins. What an aggravation of sin is this! These desperate, *heaven-daring sinners*, though they see the flaming sword of God’s justice before them, resolutely venture on in sin!

“I have been watching!” declares the Lord. Jeremiah 7:11 “I have seen your detestable acts!

Woe to you! How long will you be unclean?” Jeremiah 13:27