

CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE AND THE OVERCOMER

BIBLE TEXT : Job 17:9; Luke 9:62; Colossians 1:3-23; I John 5:4;
Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 25-29; 3:5, 12, 21; 12:11; 21:7.

LESSON 425 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all" (Ecclesiastes 9:11).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Job 17:9

9 The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

Luke 9:62

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Colossians 1:3

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

Colossians 1:23

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

1 John 5:4

4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

Revelation 2:7

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:11

Bible References:

I The Course of the Righteous

1. He holds his way, Job 17:9;

Matthew 24:13

13 **But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.**

John 8:31

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;**

2. He looks straight ahead, Luke 9:62;

Philippians 3:13-14

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

3. He overcomes the world, the flesh, and the devil, I John 5:4; Revelation 12:11;

Luke 10:19

19 **Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.**

4. He brings forth fruit, Colossians 1:3-23;

Proverbs 11:30

30 The fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life; and he that winneth souls *is* wise.

II The Hope of the Overcomer

1. He shall inherit all things, Revelation 21:7.

2. He shall be a pillar in the temple of God, Revelation 3:12.

3. He shall eat of the tree of life, and the hidden manna, Revelation 2:7, 17.

4. He shall not be hurt of the second death, Revelation 2:11; 20:14;

Revelation 21:8

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

5. He shall rule over the nations, Revelation 2:25-29;

2 Timothy 2:12

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*: if we deny *him*, he also will deny us:

6. He shall be clothed in white raiment, Revelation 3:5;

Revelation 19:8

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

7. He shall have written upon him the name of God, Revelation 3:12.

8. He shall sit with Christ upon His throne, Revelation 3:21.

Notes:

Running, Fighting, Rowing

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Revelation 2:17

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*.

Revelation 2:25

25 But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come.

Revelation 2:29

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Revelation 3:5

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Revelation 3:12

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.

Revelation 3:21

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Paul likens the Gospel, the Christian life, unto a race. He also likens it unto a fight. He gives us to understand through these figures of speech that the Christian life is a battle. There is a conquest; but we have the victory. The Christian life is also a life of progress. We cannot stand still. You may be rowing upstream in a boat, and making headway; but if you lay down your oars, although you might appear to be standing still, if you watch the shore you will find you are going downstream. Jesus said in Matthew 24:13, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Endure what? Endure temptation, endure hardness, endure the contending with the adversary of our soul. There are various kinds of assaults and the cunning craftiness of Satan to be met, but there is certain victory for everyone who perseveres and overcomes.

Fighting the Storm

"The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger" (Job 17:9). This bears out the thought of the navigator holding to his course against adverse winds and storms. The righteous holds to his course, holds his way, and becomes stronger and stronger.

World conditions today have reached a state of sin like a malignant cancer and it is going to take drastic measures to bring about a cure. That is why we need stronger preaching, stronger preachers, stronger workers. We need mighty prevailers with God around the altars of prayer. We need men and women who can lay hold of God and wrestle day and night for the salvation of the lost, for the destruction of sin, and the tearing down of Satan's strongholds, and for the upbuilding of the pillars of God's eternal temple in the hearts of men.

Sidetracks

Every new convert has to learn the secret of Christian living. Some get off on crooked doctrine. They let the devil sidetrack them and they go off on a tangent. They may have a lot of "shake," as Samson had when he lost his power, because they, like Samson, have deviated from the straight and narrow way. They have let the truth slip, they have let the Word leak out, and they are left like empty vessels, and have become as cisterns that are broken and that can hold no water.

There is nothing more pitiful than one who once was filled with the sparkling, bubbling, gushing wells of salvation and has become as an empty cistern -- a cracked cistern at that. Let us keep our souls free from holes and leaks and cracks, that we might be filled with the Spirit of God.

Bearing Fruit

"That ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work" (Colossians 1:9, 10). God has no ornamental shrubs in His orchards. The Lord has planted His trees for a purpose and that is that they bring forth fruit. It matters not what our gifts or qualifications may be, or how limited our talent, we are to bear fruit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22, 23).

Jesus has reconciled us "in the body of his flesh through death," and provided a cleansing, a holiness, a righteousness that will present us unblameable and unproveable in His sight. "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, . . ." One can start, and yet fail of the grace of God. As we have heard, "If you finish they will know you started; but you could start and not finish." The history from the Bible times down to the present time shows that people have failed of the grace of God and have finally been

Revelation 12:11

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Revelation 21:7

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

QUESTIONS

1. To what is a Christian life likened?
2. What is meant by overcoming?
3. Name as many promises as you can that are given to the overcomer.
4. Explain what part the overcomer has in Christ's reign.
5. What is meant by being clothed in white raiment?
6. Why must the Christian be strong?
7. What are some of the ways in which a Christian can be sidetracked?
8. What are some of the fruits of a Christian life?
9. Give a Biblical example of one who turned back.
10. Give Scriptural reasons why you think it is possible to be lost after having once been saved.

lost.

God is wanting to brand our souls with the doctrine of His Word. It is sound doctrine and sound sense to believe that one could fail God after having once been reconciled to God. It is not sound doctrine nor sound sense to believe that one can trespass and overstep the boundary line again and commit evil, and still retain the divine favour of God because he has once been in grace. Peter the Apostle tells us that it were better not to have known the way of righteousness than to have known it and then turn from it.

Stay with It

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31). Here another "if" illustrates that there are conditions to true discipleship. If we continue, if we persevere in the way -- then we are the followers of Christ. As long as one is in Satan's kingdom, Satan may not trouble him; but let him take a stand for God and line up to the truths of God's Word which cuts sin right down to the quick and roots it out, and get real salvation, then he is very apt to be the specific object of the assaults of Satan.

"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). When we get our hands upon the plough, let us hold on. A veteran minister said: "I ploughed in my early days, and ploughed in land that was stony and full of roots. Farmers know what it is to follow a plough in rocky ground. Sometimes the ploughshare will hit a rock or a root and you are likely to go right up into the air if you are not holding on with all your might. So hold on even if your feet drag; hold on if they leave the ground; hold on in spite of everything and anything! You will make the Kingdom of Heaven if you do."

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). Paul wrote in his First Epistle to Timothy, "Some are already turned aside after Satan." In the Second Epistle he had this sad note to insert, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." Demas had been one of his fellow labourers. They had worked hand in hand; they had fought side by side, but now -- "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a wholesome Gospel. It puts you right in the middle of the road, and makes you live upright and honourable, pure and righteous. It does not make you an oddity. It makes you a sound, sensible man or woman. The grace of God in your soul does this.

Pillars

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God" (Revelation 3:12). Let us pray that God will make us a pillar in the house of the Lord. There may be ornamentation in the house of the Lord, but that is not altogether essential. You can take off all the cornice work and the ornamentation and the house would still stand if the pillars were standing. But if you removed the pillars the house would fall. Let us pray that God will make us eternal pillars in the house of the Lord that we might stand and be standing when Jesus comes to receive us up into His Kingdom.

The Lord is going to honour our faith, consecrations, and perseverance. As we go through the fire, it will not be kindled upon us; and as we go through the waters and the floods, they shall not overflow us. Thank God, that is the promise. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Resist temptation, and it will pass away. Let us stand by the truth of God; let us "stand by the guns" and see victory. It is for every child of God of the Church Triumphant.