

“More Than Conquerors because God is For Us!”

Does this picture remind you of yourself? (picture of a weary soldier). It should. We are in a daily battle against our enemies, the devil and the other demons, who love to wield that weapon of temptation. And the devil and the other demons love to enlist the help of the world and our own sinful natures in the daily battles. If we are honest, we have to admit that the struggle against temptation is real and the struggle is wearying. The church season of Lent is the perfect time for us to recommit ourselves to our daily battle against our enemies and temptation. To aid us in our recommitment to the daily battle, consider Romans 8:31-39.

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This war memorial in Washington D.C. is a symbol of victory for our nation. In the early part of 1945, U.S. Marines were able to conquer the island of Iwo Jima, 700 miles southeast of Japan, helping lead to victory and the ending of World War II. The apostle Paul says we are CONQUERORS! Yet it doesn't always feel like that when we are in the trenches of daily temptation. Many times the daily battle against temptation, and losing some of the battles feels like this - **“For your (God’s) sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered”** (Romans 8:36, quoting Psalm 44:22). The temptation is strong to feel like Abraham, that the sacrifices God is asking us to make as his followers – time sacrifices, financial sacrifices, earthly pleasure sacrifices, open myself up to ridicule sacrifices, out of my comfort zone sacrifices - are just too difficult. At moments like that remember, **“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things (Romans 8:32)?** It's a rhetorical question, but the implied answer is, **“HE WILL!”** Does the busyness and stress of life tempt you to feel like you might crack under the pressure? Are health issues tempting you to feel overwhelmed and demoralized? Is your financial situation tempting you to feel less than confident that you will be able to pay ALL your bills, or cover an emergency should one occur or will you have enough money to live on in retirement? Does the fear of injury or death tempt you to be over cautious and keep you from living your life or letting your family members live their lives? Are you tempted to hide your Christian faith from certain family members, friends, or acquaintances because you have had uncomfortable experiences in the past when you have openly lived and shared your Christian faith? During times like this the temptation is strong to think that God doesn't care about you, that he has forgotten you. At moments like this remember, **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?”** (Romans 8:35). It's

another rhetorical question, but the implied answer is, “NO ONE!” Each of us has that one temptation that we are especially weak against – jealousy, anger, lust, greed, laziness, arrogance, just to name a few possibilities. The demons are experts in taking healthy sorrow and repentance over sin and replacing it with unhealthy guilt that thinks, “you can’t be a child of God if you are guilty of THOSE sins!” At moments like this remember, **“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies”** (Romans 8:33). In other words, don’t listen to the demons. God personally chose you to be a part of his eternal family in Heaven. God has a not guilty verdict waiting for you in his eternal courtroom.

Going through the daily meat grinder of temptation can cause us to temporarily forget that good news and leave us feeling battle weary and very little like conquerors. So I want you to remember Mark’s account of Jesus fighting off 40 days of the best temptations to sin that the Devil could muster. Matthew and Luke’s account share more details about how Jesus masterfully and powerfully defeated the Devil using the Word of God as his weapon. Mark assumes that people have read Matthew and Luke’s account of this event. Mark’s account is short and sweet, almost as if to say, “yeah, Jesus faced the best temptations the Devil had to offer and he shoved those temptations right back down the Devil’s throat!” What Paul is trying to tell us here today is that Jesus conquered every temptation he faced. And then he went on to conquer Hell by suffering it as our substitute. And then he went on to conquer death by rising back to life. Jesus is a conqueror! And he is also our Savior. So through faith in Jesus as our Savior that makes you and me conquerors! Jesus is also our judge. **“Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us”** (Romans 8:34). In other words, “Christian, you have nothing to worry about. God is on your side.” **“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord”** (Romans 8:37-39).

“What, then, shall we say in response to this?” (Romans 8:31a). When you are battle weary from daily temptations and you feel like an absolute failure as a child of God because you gave in to some temptations, remember that feelings can be deceiving. Your reality is found in Romans 8:31-39. In Christ, we don’t just win. We really win! It’s a blow out! God is for Us! We are more than Conquerors! Amen.