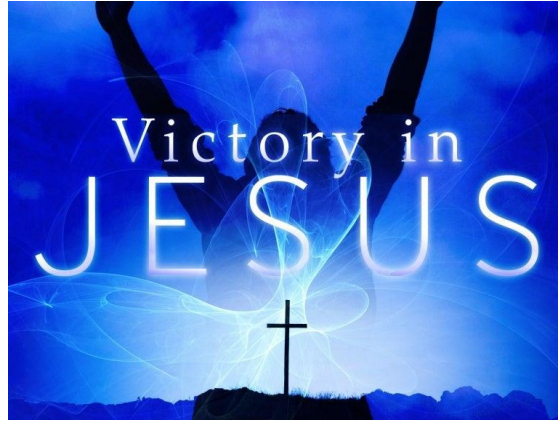


VICTORY IN JESUS



TEXT: 2 Corinthians 2:12-17

INTRO.: A. Paul is so concerned about the results of his first letter to the Corinthians that he rushes to Troas to meet Titus to hear from him their response. He is so greatly disappointed that, in spite of "*an open door*" of ministry there, he becomes restless and moves on to Philippi in Macedonia. (v.12,13)

B. We later find that Titus and Paul meet and Paul rejoices in the response of the church to his first letter, which contained the rebuke of public sin and instructions for discipline. (7:6-9)

C. Though Paul missed a "golden opportunity" to preach at Troas, he did not allow that to get him discouraged. Paul was always on the "victory side." He was not one of those introspective, morose saints always second-guessing himself. He was confident in his call and always rejoicing in whatever results God gave to him.

D. Paul, after his little diversion in vv.12,13, stops to immediately praise the Lord for his **"VICTORY IN JESUS."** Disappointment is turned into praise...

I. VICTORY IN THE GOSPEL MINISTRY: v.14a

A. Guaranteed Success: "...*always*"

1. Paul is letting us know that whenever we are engaged in Christ's service, we are "winners" or victors.
2. He praises the Lord for the promised victory available as we serve Him.

ILLUS.: Paul's use of the word "triumph" here is important and instructive. He is referring to a Roman triumphal entry into the city of Rome. He compares the ministry to victory in a military campaign. It was customary for the Roman senate to vote such a triumphant parade for any general who had been exceptionally victorious in the field. It was a glorious event. Representatives of the defeated people would precede and follow the glorious chariot of the General.

Usually the ornate chariot was drawn by two white stallions. "When Pompey triumphed over Africa, his chariot was drawn by elephants; that of Mark Antony was drawn by lions; that of Heliogabalus pulled by tigers; and that of Aurelius drawn by deer" -Clark.

Paul felt that the Savior had given him a triumph due to his victorious ministry.

II. VITALITY IN THE GOSPEL MESSAGE: v.14b-16a

A. A Life-Giving Message:

1. Paul speaks of the message he preached as being pervasive. V.14b
2. He says the "savour" of the message reached everywhere he went.

ILLUS.: Picking up the metaphor of the triumph again we find that when the day of the procession arrived incense would be burned on all the heathen altars throughout Rome. The odor would pervade the city. Its distinctive smell would enter homes, businesses, and the air of the city would be heavy with the odor. Paul is saying that the message he preached had the same effect. The "savour of His

knowledge" went to "every place." The message went to the rich and poor, the high & low, the great & small. Paul literally carried out the Great Commission.

Colossians 1:23 *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;*

3. Paul speaks of himself (and by extension all who are engaged in spreading the Gospel) as **"a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved" v.15a** and that he is **"the savour of life unto life" v.16b**.

ILLUS.: As the triumphant procession moved through the streets of the city toward the palace of the Caesar, the captives who were marching before the chariot carried censers of incense as well. These men, women and even children, would be released as free when the procession was over. To them the incense they carried had the **"savour of life unto life."** The application is obvious. Those who respond positively to the vital or living message of hope in Christ are set free. They have the **"savour of life unto life"** upon them.

B. A Death-Dealing Message: v. v.15b, 16a

1. This same message that produces life to those who receive it, produces eternal death to those who refuse it; to them it has the **"savour of death death..."**
2. These are "them that perish" spoken of in v.15b.

ILLUS.: Behind the General's chariot was another group of humanity. These too had been conquered and they too carried censers of incense. But when the procession was over, they would be put to death at the edge of a sword. These were those who rebelled at the conquering army or who led in battle against them. Or they could be those who refused to kneel to Roman military might & refused to pledge allegiance to Caesar. To them the incense had a distinctive odor, that of the **"savour of death unto death..."**

The same message that saves, also condemns. Everything hinges on the person's response to it. Either bow your heart to the Savior and pledge allegiance to Him, or you will perish.

III. VINDICATION FOR THE GOSPEL MINISTER: V.16C, 17

A. A Question of Sufficiency: v.16c

1. Paul is alluding to the awesome responsibility that anyone engaged in eternal business must carry.
2. It is not something to be entered into lightly or without reverence. Cf. 3:5
 - a. No mere human being is **"sufficient for these things."**
 - b. He or she needs supernatural help all along the way.
 - c. Praise the Lord such supernatural help is available!

B. The Issue of Sincerity: v.17

1. Paul speaks of the Word of God as the source of that supernatural help.
2. Paul uses the word **"corrupt"** which is only used in this one place in Scripture.
 - a. It literally means to "water down" or "huckster" or "peddle."
 - b. It refers to those who dilute the message of the Cross or who huckster God's Word as if it was a common commodity.

ILLUS.: As with every festive event, the Roman triumph had its entrepreneurs along the route hawking their wares. They would water down the wine they sold to increase their profit. They would peddle any trinket related to the captives or their nation or they would sell worthless souvenirs to the crowds which may have been toy Roman soldiers or images of the conquering general.

Surely we have seen in our day the watering down of the message of the Cross. Few preach the power of the blood to save any more. The **neo-evangelicals** have so compromised the Scripture that Adam & Eve are seen as myths, the flood of Noah was local, the miracle of the Exodus has been reduced to pitifully small group of Jews, and the miracles of Christ have been explained away, along with a literal heaven & hell.

(Billy Graham) [*Newsweek* 4/1/02 "A lot of Jews are great friends of mine," the Rev. Billy Graham told the then Pres. Richard Nixon on a recently released White House tape. "They swarm around me and are friendly to me. Because they know that I am friendly to Israel and so forth. But they don't know how I really feel about what they are doing to this country." Nixon replies, "You must never let them know." Graham has since apologized.]

Because of rejecting the message of God's Word **the Jew** has no blood sacrifice to cleanse him from his sin. Because of corrupting the message of God's Word **the Catholic** has turned mere wine into blood at the Mass, which can never cleanse from sin. **Some** who purport to preach the Gospel have diluted the message so that they say it is Christ's death, not His blood which saves. Many of **the new Bible versions** water down the Scripture and remove the deity of Christ, His blood and His doctrine. **The cults** make Christ a mere "son of God" instead of THE Son of God! **Islam** makes Him a mere prophet, with Muhammad being greater.

CONCL.: There can be no VICTORY IN JESUS with either minimizing the authority of our Savior or peddling God's Word for profit, or even worse by watering down the Word and words of God as in all the new "versions". Forget "versions" I want the inspired, inerrant Word and words of the Living God...the AV1611, King James Bible. Here is my creed concerning the Scriptures...

I believe the King James Bible to be the inspired, inerrant, infallible, indestructible and preserved Word and words of the Living God.

Remember that Jesus said "man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God"!! If we don't have an every word Bible how can we live up to this admonition from the lips of our Savior?