

How to Be a Winner 2

Sermon #1017

Study by W. D. Frazee—December 1, 1981

How many here this morning want to be a winner? How many of you would like to be a good loser? There are no losers. Thank God, the life of His trusting disciple is like that of his Master, a series of uninterrupted victories, not seen to be such here, but recognized as such in the great hereafter.

We must be willing to understand God's evaluation of what victory and success is. Then if we like what He likes, He will give us all the victory that we desire.

Who wins, the stronger or the weaker? The stronger. Who wins, the wiser or the one who isn't so wise? The wiser. Who is stronger, you or Satan? Who is wiser, you or Satan? Then who is going to win if you engage him in conflict? He will win every time. Don't forget it.

Apparently the strongest man who ever lived was Samson. At least he is noted for his strength. Was he a match for the Devil? No. The Devil got him down. The wisest man who ever lived was Solomon. Was he a match for the Devil? No. The Devil got him down. But men who are not nearly as strong as Samson or as wise as Solomon have walked the way with Jesus victorious.

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" 1 Corinthians 1:23-25.

So when we admit that we are not as wise or strong as Satan is, it doesn't mean in any way that we are discouraged. We are just realistic. Although Satan is stronger and wiser than we are, there is someone who is infinitely stronger and wiser than Satan. That is God. And as we read yesterday:

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" 1 John 4:4.

Who is in the world? Satan. He is strong and wise. We had just as well admit it. But greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. Who is that? Jesus. He is infinitely stronger and wiser than Satan.

I would like to study how the power and wisdom of Jesus is revealed, and how it is displayed. Because if we are thinking in terms of Samson or Solomon, we will be disappointed.

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not"
Isaiah 53:1-3.

Who is that? It is Jesus as seen seven hundred years before His birth. What a marvelous description of Christ. But it takes anointed eyes to see and anointed hearts to discern and appreciate the power and wisdom of God as revealed in Jesus. And if Jesus is to live in my heart, and take me over the road that He traveled in this world, then I must have anointed eyes and mind and heart to see and appreciate what He is and how He leads. Otherwise I will be so disappointed and discouraged that I won't know how to continue.

I have desired that this week shall be very practical. You have come to Wildwood to learn the way to witness; how to be a worker for Jesus. You have come to enlist in an army to help finish the work. Well, the soldier's life is not in the rocking chair. Foxholes don't carry Beauty Rest mattresses. And unless we understand what God is after, we will think that if we only pray enough or are saintly enough we wouldn't have all these problems.

Let me tell you, as soon as we pray saintly enough, we will have more problems. That's right. The only reason the problems are as little as they are, and the trials are as small as they are, is that we can't take very much. Don't forget it. The foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" 2 Corinthians 4:6-7.

Where is the power? Not in the pot. It is in what God puts into the pot. We have the treasure of the power of God in Jesus Christ. We have it in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. God designs that it shall be evident, both to the human agent and all who look on, that it is God who is doing something. That's why instead of using Samson all the time, He is using weak people. That's how I got in. Instead of Solomon all the time, He uses people who don't know so much. Can you and I qualify? Well, let's rejoice in your privileges, what do you say?

God must get the glory. Them that honor Me, I will honor. And it is faith that enables us to enter into these experiences.

"We are troubled on every side, yet **not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted,** but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" 2 Corinthians 4:8,9.

Paul, what you need to do is pray more. You need to have more faith. You wouldn't have all these problems if you were going the way you should.

Is that the answer? No. It is not the answer, dear friends. The fact that we are having trials, whether they are financial trials, health trials, trials of temptations and tests, may only show that we are in school.

Suppose I go up to the elementary school and say to a student, Have you taken any math?

He says, Yes.

I say, How are you getting along?

He says, Well, I run into a lot of problems.

Of course he runs into a lot of problems. What are they for? That's what he is there for—to learn how to solve problems. And how do you learn how to solve problems? By not having them? Nobody ever learned that way any more than you can learn to swim outside of the water, or learn to cook outside of a kitchen, or learn to nurse outside of a sanitarium and hospital.

Oh, I thank God for the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And that glory shines most beautifully and helpfully at the cross. That dear face is crowned with thorns and stained with blood and tears, but there is the power and wisdom of God. Unselfish love, sacrificing love, giving itself that others may be saved.

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." The only think that a clay pot can do is willing to be empty and clean so the light of God can be placed within.

Do you remember what happened to Gideon and his three hundred clay pitchers? They were broken. Are you willing to be broken so that the light may shine? If there is anybody here who thinks you have come to Wildwood to learn how to preach so you can move the multitudes, remember, God may take you over a road that breaks your heart. If there is somebody who has come to Wildwood to learn how to heal the sick as Jesus did, He may take you into an experience that will break your heart. However your desire to be a winner for God, it is the way of the cross. It is the way of victory.

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair." We may not know what to do, but we know what not to do, and that is to quit. Do you want the life of Jesus to be made manifest in your body? Do you want your hands to do the bidding of His hands? Your feet to go on His errands? Your mind to think His thoughts? You can have that, but there is a price. Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus in order that the life of Jesus might be made manifest.

Before sin entered there was no pain, no trials, no difficulties. When sin entered there was a new revelation of the love of God. As soon as sin entered, it became necessary for divine love to reveal itself in bearing pain. Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And if that loving life of Jesus is to be revealed in us, we must share His death in order that we may share His life. We must share the pain in order that we may share the joy. Bearing pain and bearing joy go together. They are two sides of the same coin. We must have both if we really want fellowship with Jesus.

When we get this viewpoint, we will not think of Wildwood as a kind of a nest. We won't get in and hope that everything is warm and comfortable, and everyone is nice to us. We did not come here to get away from the world with all its trials and problems. Well, thank God, there is One who has called us who left the glory and peace of heaven and came to this planet, the only place in this universe where there were discomforts and inconveniences and sorrows and problems. He left all the glory and came to the shame. He left ease and came to disease. He took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses. This is the life of Jesus.

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" 2 Corinthians 4:10.

I wonder what that means to bear about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus. It means contemplating the cross, thinking about the death of Jesus. The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are being saved it is the power of God. I read:

"Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith means the contemplation of Christ, beholding Christ, ever cherishing the dear Saviour as our very best and honored friend, so that we would not in any action grieve and offend Him. "We bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, which is life and salvation and righteousness to us. Wherever we go, there is the recollection of One dear to us. We are abiding in Christ by a living faith. He is abiding in our hearts by our individual appropriating of faith. We have the companionship of the divine presence, and as we realize this presence, our thoughts are brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. Our spiritual exercises are in accordance with the vividness of our sense of this companionship" *Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 387,388.

So we are to cultivate a sense of the cross as a present experience. As John beheld the Savior in the sanctuary as recorded in Revelation. As he turned to see the elder pointed to One as the Lion of the tribe of Juda, he saw a Lamb as it had been slain. Then he heard the elders and the angels, and all the inhabitants of heaven join in singing praise to the Lamb that was slain.

The angels are only safe as they contemplate the crucified Redeemer. That which holds the angels will hold us. When Satan urges us that there is a better way than God's way, when he urges us that the way to be really happy is to have our own way, when we look to Calvary and see Jesus giving His life we know that God loves us enough to do anything to save us, and we know that anything except His way is bound to end in defeat. So the keeping power of the cross is our victory.

"For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" 2 Corinthians 4:11.

Paul is talking about more than our contemplating what Jesus suffered. The experience of the cross is more than something to contemplate and admire in the life and death of Jesus. Paul says:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" Galatians 2:20.

In our imagination let's join the throng going to Calvary. The soldiers take Jesus and put Him down on the cross and start to nail the spikes through His hands and feet. We see them lift that cross and drop it down into the hole, increasing the pain in his palms and feet.

We say, Oh dear Jesus, isn't there something I can do?

Yes, Jesus says, I would like to have you on the cross with Me.

On the cross with You?

Yes. If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me (Matthew 16:24). You saw them put the cross on Me. You saw me faint beneath the load. You saw them drive the nails. Dear friend, there is a cross for you. And if you will be willing to take your cross and accept it. If you will be willing to give your life for Me as I am giving My life for you, then you may know My experience.

This is what Jesus was trying to help John and James to see when they asked for the highest place. They wanted to be close to Jesus. Jesus said, I am going to the cross. They didn't believe it, but they found it true. It worked out. James was the first one of the twelve to be a martyr. John was the longest in toil and sacrifice and suffering.

Ah friends, do we want fellowship with Jesus. Then we must accept the cross as the place of meeting, the place of sharing. And Wildwood is not to be a heaven on earth in the sense that the trials are all over. Rather, it is to be a place of trials and difficulties and problems where you and I can learn the meaning of the cross.

This experience is to be three things. The first is contemplating Christ on the cross.

Second, we are to share it in our own experience by choosing to give up our way and take His way. We are to die to sin and self. As He gave up His way and took the Father's way, so we are to give up our way and take His way.

Third, as a part of this we are to experience the buffeting of Satan, the trials and difficulties that make life a Calvary. We are troubled on every side. Why? We are bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus.

Somebody says, I don't see much pleasure in this.

Well, it is all according what you mean by pleasure. It is not a carnival. I hope not. It is not a fun time. But there were some people who had some fun at Calvary. One of the Roman soldiers took some dice out of his pocket and they had a game at the cross. They had a game to see who would get Jesus' clothes. And all the elements of competition and chance that games and gambling bring is manifest right there under the cross. And today there are those whose main desire is to get some fun and excitement. Even religion is supposed to be made exciting. It is supposed to have some fun in it.

Ah, I point you away from those gambling soldiers to the Figure on the tree. There is the real power. There is the real wisdom. There is the real satisfaction. It is deeper than all the frothy foam of this world. And what we are studying this morning is entirely different from most of what passes as religion today. I am telling you the truth. Far too much of what is called religion today is paganism. It is the endeavor to please the carnal mind, and the carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be.

We want to be converted, don't we? We will find the power and the wisdom of God at the cross. So we are thinking about bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus in order that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies. We are contemplating about the cross. We are thinking about choosing the cross. We are thinking about experiencing the cross. We are denying our own selfish desires. And for the joy that is set before us, like Jesus we are accepting the cross in order that others may see the glory of His love.

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