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Victory Over Things That Are Against Us

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"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15:56,57).

People are always interested in getting victory over the things that are against them. The hope of victory keeps us fighting. Without hope of victory, the fighting spirit would droop and die. But we need to know the things that are against us. If you were to sit down and make a list of all the things that are against you, would that list be sensible and correct? Jacob was mistaken when he said, "Joseph is not and Simeon is not; and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me." As members of a fallen sinful race, we need to consider the things that are against us and find the way to victory.

1. The Holy Law of God is against us. It is the nature and function of law to be against those who violate it. It is the function of law to threaten and punish all who try to break it. No man can really break the law of God; it is the law that breaks the sinner. This is true of law in the realm of nature. Violate the law of nature and you suffer. Fire burns, poison kills, the law of gravity will have no mercy on the man who jumps from a tall building. The law of nature cannot be suspended. The only hope is intervention. Firemen might intervene by holding a net for you to jump into and, thus, avert the consequences,

but this would be no suspension of the law of gravity.

Moral law is against us. God has a law for moral beings and to break that law means moral death. The moral law of God, summed up in the Ten Commandments, says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." And again, "...the wages of sin is death..." The law of God is against every man because every man has violated it. Sin is transgression of the law, and all have sinned. The law is good, but we are bad. The law is holy, but we are sinful. The law is just, but we are unjust. To say that the law is against us is to say that God is against us, for He is the Judge who enforces the law.

The law cannot save us because of the weakness of the flesh. The law demands too much from the sinner. Its demands are just and every sinner ought to keep it, but with a sinful human nature, no man can keep it. The only hope of victory over the law is through intervention. To save sinners, Christ Jesus intervened in their behalf and let the curse against us fall on Himself. In Galatians 3:13 we read: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Jesus Christ took the law that was against us out of the way, and we get the victory through faith in Him. Christ Jesus did the work of salvation, and He alone must be the object of trust. He, the sinless One, was made to be sin for sinners. He who was earth's greatest blessing was made a curse. He, the fairest of

ten thousand was made a curse. Jesus, the obedient Son of God, was made a curse for disobedient sons of men. He represented us before the law of God and received the wages due us. He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. He satisfied the law of God which was dissatisfied with us. To be saved, the sinner must trust the Person Who was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Someone has defined faith like this: F-a-i-t-h, which means forsaking all others, I'm depending on Him. Another has put it like this: "I broke God's law; He came between; I'm depending on Him to save." A Christian woman was pleading with her physician to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. With some impatience at her pleading, the doctor said, "Tell me what you believe, and how you believe." The woman replied, "I believe that God is satisfied with what His Son Jesus Christ did for my salvation—that is what I believe; and I am satisfied with what He did—and that is how I believe." How plain and simple this makes the way of salvation! Whatever satisfies the law of God must be the object of our faith or trust. God's law is not satisfied with any sinner, but it is satisfied with Jesus Christ Who was obedient unto death. And so the believer can sing, "Free from the law, O happy condition; Jesus has died and there is remission."

2. Sin is against us. Who is not afraid of sin? If this wicked world had the faintest idea of the awful danger of sin, the very earth would rock under the groans and shrieks of men. Sin is a deceiver. The Bible talks about the deceitfulness of sin. Sin promises pleasure and pays off in pain. It promises a purple robe and then gives a black shroud. It promises treasures and gives tears. It promises roses and then gives thorns. It promises freedom and gives slavery. It promises silk and gives sackcloth. It promises broadcloth and gives rotten rags. It promises food and gives poison. Yes, sin is terribly seductive. Like Delilah, in dealing with Samson, sin pets and pampers us that it might blind us and bind us and damn us. Sin is treacherous. Like Absalom, it steals the hearts of men, turning them away from love and loyalty to God. Sin is a pretender. Like Jael, it gives us milk of momentary pleasure, and then, with nail and hammer fastens our head to the ground of despair. Or like left-handed Ehud, pretending to have good news, and then driving the deadly dagger into our very vitals.

Is there any victory over sin? If there is, how do we sinners get the victory? And again, the answer is through intervention. It is through the intervention of Jesus Christ Who was made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;

that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21). He Who had no sin was made to be sin. He was banished from the holy presence of God that we sinners might be brought near to God. He suffered hell that we might enjoy heaven. He groaned in pain that we might shout with joy. He became a suffering servant that we might become a rejoicing saint. He swapped His righteousness for our unrighteousness. He took our guilt and gave us His innocence. We are accepted in Him and stand justified before God. In Him no charge can be brought against us.

3. The world is against us. The world is not the earth—the globe on which we live. The world is made up of all men in their fallen state. John says that the world lieth in the wicked one. The whole human race has forsaken God and gone over to the side of Satan. Fallen humanity in all its desires and ambitions is opposed to God. Everything and everybody apart from the grace of God make up the world. All wisdom that is not from above is earthly, sensual, and devilish. All moral desires, not divinely implanted, are sinful desires. Every look of the eyes of the unregenerate is a sinful look. Every ambition of the lost is pride—the thing that leads the parade to destruction.

This world is not a friend of grace to help us on to God. The world is against us and would keep us away from God. But Christ hath chosen us out of the world, and hath taken us out of the world by a work of grace in our souls. And we get victory over the world through intervention. In I John 5:4,5 we read: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

4. The devil is against us. What a strange person or being the devil is! And we are shut up to the Bible for what we can know about him. We cannot learn from science or human philosophy the truth about him. But in the Bible he is revealed under a variety of names and in various activities. He appears to have been the chief among the angels. He turned against God, and his one ambition and aim seems to be to slander God and ruin man. He deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden, and through her, caused Adam to sin against God, and through Adam brought the entire human race into rebellion against God. He is described as a roaring lion, going about, seeking whom he might devour. And the only way we can get victory over the devil is by intervention. And so we read that Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. The Lord Jesus is the only One who can take us out of the hand of Satan. We can get

victory over Satan and his wiles through faith in the blood of Christ. Of that great throng in heaven we are told that they overcame the devil by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

5. Death is against us. Death is said to be the last enemy Christ will destroy. He has already conquered death in His own resurrection and He will destroy it for His people when He returns. On the human level, there are many problems in connection with the resurrection of our bodies. Science has no answer to the question, "If a man die shall he live again?" A few weeks ago as Mrs. Cole and I sat in our room in Miami, there was a sudden blast that shook the house, and at first we thought it must be a sonic boom. But the announcement soon came over the TV that it was an explosion at a rock quarry some 20 miles away. Three men were literally blown to bits by the accidental explosion of several tons of dynamite. Ambulances called to the scene returned without the bodies of the victims. Searchers could not find the bodies, but only bits of clothing and one foot. There is no human explanation of how the bodies of these men can be collected and rise again in the resurrection. There is no human explanation of how bodies which have been cremated—burned to ashes—can be made to live again. I am not able to explain how God can raise the dead, but I believe He can and will, and that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

I cannot explain the connection between my present body and my resurrected body, but I know I shall have the same body I now have. It will not be the same as to material particles, but the same as to identity. Our present bodies are continually undergoing change so that we have completely new bodies every few years, but it is the same body as to identity.

And victory over death and the grave will be through intervention. The Lord Jesus Christ will come and change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto His own glorious body. Paul says that we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. And this redemption of our body will take place when Christ returns, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:16-18).

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