

Study # 15

Cruciformity = VICTORY!

The more we are conformed to the Cross, the more we enter into the victory that was accomplished by Jesus on the Cross:

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, **triumphing over them** by the cross. (Col. 4:15)

. . . just as **I overcame** and sat down with my Father on his throne. (Rev. 3:21)

The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, **has triumphed** . . . Then I saw **a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain** . . . (Rev. 5:5, 6)

If we pursue the goal of cruciformity, we will seek to conquer everything within us that is not a full expression of Jesus' nature, including all that would hinder us to be so transformed. Not that we should search within ourselves for lack of cruciformity; a worshipful focus on Jesus and His cruciform attributes will enable the Holy Spirit to show us areas in which we "fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). We can be confident that He will show us only what we can handle and be certain that repentance, commitment to cruciformity, and dependence on the Lord to change us in each specific area will bring victory.

Attacks of condemnation, insults, or persecution defeat us only if we try to defend ourselves or try to fight our enemies with weapons that are "carnal" (2 Cor. 10:4 KJV). However, if we respond to such attacks with cruciform attitudes and actions as Jesus did, we have peace and victory. Nevertheless, if we respond in any way that is not cruciform love, our real enemy is exposed within us and victory is attainable by repentance and

deliverance at the Cross.

There is great victory in the realization that all things are planned to conform us to the paradigm of the Cross and in putting our trust in God that His love is working that change in us through what we are going through. See Study #2 for more on this.

Unkind words from others might tend to cause us to feel unloved, rejected, or guilty. However, if we know by experience that the cruciform love of Jesus can satisfy all our needs, then we have complete victory:

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor demons, . . . nor any powers, . . . will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:37)

Victory is assured over every tendency to be conformed to any other paradigm than Jesus' cruciformity. Many seek after men's approval and thus conform to men's expectations rather than the Lord's nature. We are certain of the Lord's approval if we pursue cruciformity as He has commanded so often in the New Testament. (See Table I).

Victory must be won over every deception that would hinder us from accepting the scriptural validity of full victory over all lack of cruciformity. The wonderful promises for overcomers in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 show us how much God desires for us to be victorious. Of the seven types of promises made to overcomers in Revelation, the following two have been selected to show the lofty rewards promised to those who are victorious in the challenges that our present life brings:

To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— 'He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery' . . . (Rev. 2:27, 28)

To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. (Rev. 3:21)

Beside the battles within, we are all in spiritual battles with forces outside of us:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Eph. 6:12)

Many books have been written on spiritual warfare. This thesis cannot say much on this topic, but it is crucial to realize that we can only expect to be victorious in fighting spiritual powers if we are acting out of a cruciform spirit and our motive is to see the cruciform nature of Christ expressed in all others.

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. (2 Cor 10:3, 4)

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 15:57)

The following statement by Dutch Sheets has often come to mind and has reminded the author to proclaim and “enforce the victory” won by Christ on the Cross:

Christ is looking for a volunteer army in the midst of their enemies, **enforcing His great victory** . . . He conquered Satan and his kingdom; we **enforce the victory**.¹ (emphases mine)

Finally, a challenging word from Jessie Penn-Lewis:

The triumphant Lord on the Throne now calls His church to enter into His death, and His life, and His throne life of victory. Let the believer who has been translated out of the power of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son now yield to the Holy Ghost to be drawn into the death of Christ, until in deepening conformity to His death he becomes assimilated to Him in vital union, even to oneness with His melted and broken heart.²

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¹Dutch Sheets, *Intercessory Prayer* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1996), 72.

²Jessie Penn-Lewis, *The Warfare with Satan and the Way of Victory* (Fort Washington: PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1973), 92.