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From Tribulation to Triumph

We see it promoted everywhere – on t-shirts, plaques and posters – “No pain; No gain.” It is erected as a badge of courage to inspire our efforts to succeed and encourage continued exertion whether mental or physical. It is a subtle reminder that says “Don’t quit. We are all in the same boat. You can make it.” These words can be more than a trite platitude. When they are spoken sincerely, they reflect a desire to quicken our steps toward victory.

As I study the Word of God, I am always thrilled by the many references to victory. Every Christian who trusts God is promised victory. In the book of First John, it is recorded, “This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.”¹ What a declaration! Think of it! We are living in the world. Every difficulty we face is obviously in the world. And in the world, there is victory. The Apostle Paul confirms this magnificent truth. He declares, “We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us.”² He recognizes the possibility of trouble, anguish, pressure, antagonism, calamity and danger³ but boldly states that through Christ we are more than a conqueror. In Webster’s dictionary a conqueror is “one who gains a victory.”

There is another reference to victory in the letter to the Corinthian church. Here, the Word of God records “Thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ.”⁴ In Roman history, a triumph was a celebration in honor of a victorious general. The general would enter the city in a chariot pulled by white horses. The kings, princes and generals that had been conquered would follow the chariot.⁵ It was a

*For whatsoever is
born of God overcometh
the world: and this is
the victory that overcometh
the world, even our faith.*
1 John 5:4

“triumph.” According to Webster’s dictionary, a triumph is “a state of being victorious.”

The victory promised to God’s children is explained in the Scripture by many words. We can collect these words like the words on a spelling list. We may begin our list with victory, conqueror, and triumph, but we cannot finish until we add blessed, prosper, and success. When we are blessed, we are happy, successful and prosperous. If we prosper, we increase; we gain;

and we thrive. A successful person is happy and accomplished. These are words of victory. And, they are God's words.

As we search the Word of God, we see these words over and over again. The Word of God declares that "doers" of His Word are blessed.⁶ It says those who delight in the law of the Lord bear fruit and prosper.⁷ It promises success if we obey His Word.⁸ Prosperity and health are assured to us when we walk in the truth.⁹ This is God's Word of victory. We may have tribulation, but the enemy has been conquered and we are blessed. With God's Word in our heart, we will triumph.

The Scripture records many examples of tribulation and triumph. In days of great violence, Noah rode out the flood in victory when he built an ark as God had commanded.¹⁰ The shepherd boy David felled the enemy Goliath through confidence in God's covenant.¹¹ Joseph, who was sold as a slave, led a nation to prosper in a time of famine.¹² Elijah was fed by ravens at the brook Cherith when he followed the word of the Lord.¹³ Daniel spent the night in a lion's den, emerging triumphant because an angel shut the lions' mouths.¹⁴ Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego walked out of a fiery furnace unscathed because they believed God would deliver them.¹⁵ Joseph, Mary and the child Jesus escaped the wrath of King Herod by obeying the angel's warning.¹⁶ Peter caught a multitude of fish because he trusted the word of the Lord.¹⁷ Each of these walked in victory by the Word of the Lord and the power of His Spirit.

In today's troubled world, it is important to note that our God has not changed.¹⁸ Our heavenly Father continues to bring triumph out of trouble. The songwriter was right when he penned – "Got any rivers you think are uncrossable / Got any mountains you can't tunnel through / God specializes in things thought impossible / He does the things others cannot do."¹⁹ To these wonderful words we simply add, "Trust Him."

¹ 1 John 5:4

² Romans 8:27

³ Romans 8:35

⁴ 2 Corinthians 2:14

⁵ American Dictionary of The English Language, Noah Webster, 1828 edition

⁶ James 1:22

⁷ Psalms 1:1-3

⁸ Joshua 1:8

⁹ 3 John 2

¹⁰ Genesis 6:22

¹¹ 1 Kings 17:50

¹² Genesis 41:57

¹³ 1 Kings 17:6

¹⁴ Daniel 6:20-21

¹⁵ Daniel 3:26

¹⁶ Matthew 2:13

¹⁷ John 21:11

¹⁸ Malachi 3:6

¹⁹ Oscar C. Eliason, 1929

And He Talks With Me

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day - Genesis 3:8

Whenever I read the above scripture, I hear the words of the old hymn, In The Garden, echoing around in my head, "And He walks with me, and He talks with me / And He tells me I am His own / And the joy we share as we tarry there / None other has ever known."¹

What a marvelous thought, that God would want to spend time walking and talking with me. Throughout the books of the Bible, we see examples of His desire for an intimate conversation with man. Both Abraham and Moses became so close that God called them His friends. He called out to young Samuel by name during the night. He spoke to Balaam through a donkey, when nothing else could get his attention. He answered Job's doubts with marvelous descriptions of His strength and power. He lifted and restored the prophet Elijah when he was exhausted and depressed. In the New Testament, we see Jesus speaking to all classes of society: lepers, Samaritans, and many afflicted with mental and physical diseases. There are just so many, many examples, I could not possibly name them all.²

God desires to walk "in the cool of the day" with you and I. The apostle Paul even tells us we should come "boldly before the throne."³ I believe we can really see the heart of the Father, His yearning, in Isaiah 49:16. "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." What a wonderful thought, that God would keep my image ever before Him!

Again, in Isaiah 1:18, we can hear the Father speaking, "Come now, and let us reason together." Let us reason together. "Let's talk," in other words. God, who is our Father, desires to spend time talking with us. He wants us to come to know Him, as we would know someone we loved and communed with on this earth. He is not something way out of reach, untouched by our feelings. No, He is "with us always". Jesus said we've only to ask, and He'll be there to answer.⁴

Suzanne Williams

The above is an excerpt. The full article can be read online at <http://suzanne-williams-photography.blogspot.com/>

¹ In The Garden, Words and Music 1:40-41; Mark 14:3; John 4:13; by C. Austin Miles, 1912

² Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23; Genesis

17:3; Exodus 33:11; 1 Samuel 13:4;

1 Kings 19:4-8; Matthew 8:2-3; Mark

Matthew 8:3;

³ Hebrews 4:6

⁴ Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6; 1 John 4:7-8; Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 28:20; Matthew 7:7-8