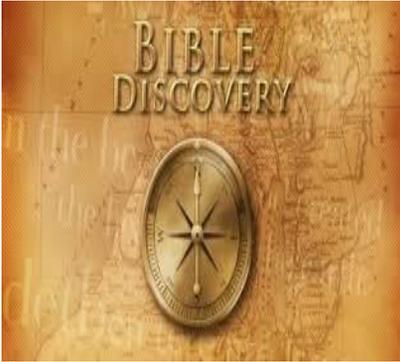


## Living Victoriously without Fear



We all know what it is to have bad days enduring unfortunate and pain-filled moments in our life. However, few of us will ever face anything worse than the tragedies experienced by a Christian couple in Chicago - Horatio and his wife, Anna. Horatio was a successful businessman, and church elder, when an unexpected illness brought the death of their 4 year old little boy. Before he and Anna could recover from the grief of this loss, a devastating fire destroyed Horatio's business and financial interests. The family literally lost everything they owned and had to start over. Less than two years later, while planning a trip abroad with his wife and four daughters, Horatio was delayed so he sent his family ahead by ship; only to tragically learn the vessel collided with another in the Atlantic and sank - his wife, one of only twenty-seven survivors of several hundred passengers; his four daughters drowned. I can't imagine the devastating grief these parents endured. It's a sad and painful thing to even recount this true story as we're reminded of the unimaginable grief they bore. However, despite this catastrophe, both remained steadfast, clinging to their faith in God. As Horatio made the long ocean journey to join his wife, he sailed past the site of his daughters' watery graves. As he did, his grief was overcome with a greater sense of peace and victory in his soul, and was inspired to pen the words to what became a famous hymn of the church. The first stanza from Horatio Spafford's hymn *It Is Well with My Soul* in 1873 goes like this –



*When peace, like a river, attendeth my way;  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well; it is well with my soul.*

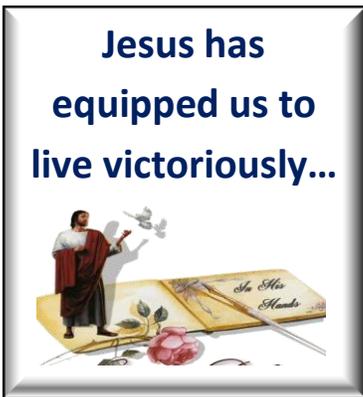
This grieving father was able to attest of a wellness in his soul, not because of the tragic circumstances, but **from his greater abiding trust and confidence in God!** This kind of peace refers to an inward disposition of faith, an attitude of victorious confidence that refuses to surrender our will to what appears as total defeat. Peter writes, “*And who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?*” [vs. 13] Some have translated this to mean we'll face no obstacles, have no troubles, and know no sorrows. But that isn't scriptural nor realistic is it? Living according to biblical principles is always the best way to live yet we're never guaranteed godliness brings constant success, joy or victory. We're not given the promise even that our behaviour will result in our actions being received with gratitude and good deeds in return. Our passage today isn't about gaining favourable responses for our goodness, or keeping us out of the potholes of life. Peter, who was more acquainted with the unpleasant responses of persecution and false accusations, also lived with constant reminders of pain and suffering but found the God-given strength to persevere despite such conditions

–and so must we if we would choose to live victoriously without fear. Our passage is also a reminder to us that the adversity is the soil in which the gospel thrives. In fact, Peter suggests that this principle should guide us in our response to our circumstances so that the gospel is proclaimed, God's glorified; we're truly blessed. Let's face it; the fallen human race is perverse so we may experience suffering even for doing good sometimes. Because we're fallen – living Adamic, sinful lives, we face pain and suffering common to all mankind. Our attention must focus on the blessing to come as we endure such times. Peter quotes the Lord's exhortation to Isaiah when the prophet learned the people of Judah wouldn't respond to his ministry positively [Isaiah 8:12-13]. God promised to take care of Isaiah, and He did. Though Isaiah eventually died a martyr's death, he persevered in his calling because God sustained him. God does this for every Christian, and it gives us the courage we need to continue serving Him faithfully in spite of what we may face. Rather than being fearful we must commit ourselves



**ADVERSITY  
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afresh to Christ our Lord purposing to continue to live for Him. Living victoriously, we hold the reason we're living as we do on the tip of our tongues so whenever an opportunity arises we can explain why we behave as we do. Our hope is the root cause of our behaviour, the subject of our answer, and the reason we can live victoriously without fear.



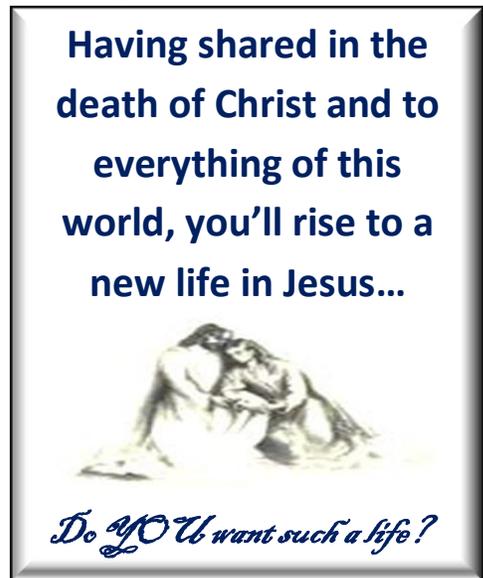
The point Peter makes for us in recalling Jesus' example; He who endured the greatest of suffering for you and me – bearing the full weight of sin though the sinless Son of God, suffering so we'd be spared the cost of our rebellious sin; is that He gives us victory though so undeserved through His mercy and grace. Jesus did it all – in the cross at Calvary, knowingly surrendering His life for ours, doing it "once for all" through the complete sufficiency of His sacrifice. In fact, it's because of His finished work that though evil hurts and guile misleads, we enjoy an inner peace when experiencing the sorrows, the pain, the suffering, the persecution which comes our way because Jesus has equipped us to live victoriously, to overcome our sufferings effectively leaving judgment to God who judges those who do any kind of evil. [vs. 12]

If then we're called to remember His was a vicarious sacrifice: the just One died for the unjust ones; if the purpose of Jesus Christ's death was to bring us into fellowship with God, to give us His Holy Spirit which enables us to do great things for God, what do we do with such a mind-blowing gift? Because Jesus became the



Victor rather than ever a victim, all who trust in Him share that victory. We're encouraged even though Jesus died because He remained in God's will, He experienced resurrection. Therefore we too remain faithful with the confident hope it's God who vindicates us and lifts us to victory. We're called to find in the consequences of Jesus' response to unjustified suffering, that He did it for you and for me – yes to save us from our sins – but also to strengthen our resolve to rededicate our lives to follow God's will wholeheartedly and confidently, assured of our ultimate triumph in the life of Christ.

If you're really serious about participating in the life of Jesus, God will allow a 1,001 things to happen to you, in order to deliver you from the love of material things, from seeking the honour of men, from self-pity, together with a multitude of other un-Christ-like attitudes. He won't compel you to go that way if you don't want to. If you're content to live the substandard, defeated life that most believers around you live, He will leave you alone. But if you're thirsting for God's best, He'll allow you to suffer pain, disappointment, loss, shattered hopes, humiliation, and unjust criticism in order to bring you to where you can't be shaken anymore; to where you're living victoriously without fear. Having shared in the death of Christ and to everything of this world, you'll rise to a new life in Jesus that causes you in the words of that old song: *I come to the Garden Alone, "to walk with Him and to talk with Him as He tells us we are His own. And the joy we share as we tarry there; None other has ever known"*. Do you want such a life?



God's will for our lives is constant victory but not only for our lives. Unless we're convinced first of all God wants us to live in continuous victory, we'll never be able to have faith for such a life and we'll never find the strength to share that victory with those we meet. We can study the Bible like students study chemistry in school. We can discover the meanings of the Old Testament types, hear the heroic tales, follow the law and dictate behaviour, but we'll still be defeated by sin in our lives. We'll know God's forgiven our sins; but won't have faith for anything more. Fortunately in this passage, Peter not only assures us that suffering for Christ's sake will allow us to live victoriously without fear set free from sin **and** empowered to live in Him; he teaches us some very important principles that because we're victoriously free from fear, we can and should share our victory with others.

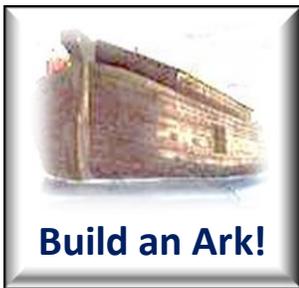
## *Principles for Living Victorious...*

1) **Sharing doesn't work by attacking unwilling victims with the Gospel but through sound explanation given in response to a request for our hope.** One finds little benefit from forceful evangelism more characteristic of selling replacement windows or carpet cleaning than the love of Christ. We're called to stimulate interest in Jesus and then respond to it.



2) **Sharing doesn't require we show them how much like them we are – it's about living distinctly different, victorious lives that they can want for themselves and then explaining why.** Rather than trying so hard to look and act like the world, making seekers comfortable with us, let us contagiously be willing to demonstrate Christ's love for them and welcome them as they discover a God who truly cares recognizing that we may face times when opposition to our well-doing arises and trusting still in Jesus.

3) **Do what Noah did – build an ark** if you want to see opportunity to share with unsaved friends and neighbours! We need not build the literal 'ark' but remember that it symbolized his willingness to spend his life testifying to the God who led his life and to the need for a Saviour. The ark served to condemn the sins of



**Build an Ark!**

the people of his day and to warn them of future judgment. If we, as Peter instructed, "*fix our hopes completely on the grace to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ*" our neighbours will begin to see the ark in our lives, and we'll have opportunity to explain that hope. Finally remember both Noah with his family, and the people of his day went through the flood. The difference was where they experienced the flood - Noah and his family were delivered through the flood, inside the ark, while the rest were destroyed by the flood, outside the ark. How about you?

As you have considered these principles for living victoriously, the question is now, "*what will you do with them*"? Sharing and building is the nature response. If you're a Christian seeking to know how God wants you to live victoriously – *go and tell*, share your life, your love of Christ, naturally with those you meet, not forcefully or artificially but openly and joyfully. Be contagious! If today you're reading this and wondering what faith is all about, wondering about this Jesus to who we turn for strength and victory, than I invite you to come into the Ark of Faith, find Him for yourself and join Jesus in a life of victory.

*Blessings,*

*Pastor Dave*