

Christ is Victor

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“Facing Death”

Corrie ten Boom, a Dutch Christian, once spent some time in a small African country where Christians were oppressed by a new government.

On the first few days of Corrie’s stay, native Christians were ordered to the police station, supposedly for registration. In reality, they were arrested and executed; a systematic eradication was taking place.

On Sunday morning, Corrie was due to speak in a little church. Fear and tension were etched on every face; who knew who would be killed next?

Sitting on the bare, wooden benches, the Christians looked expectantly at Corrie, desiring her to speak a word from God at this tragic hour.

Corrie read from 1 Peter 4:12-14 in the Bible to these precious brethren. Here the reading is quoted from a beautiful old English version: *“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you”*.

Corrie then told them a story: “When I was a little girl,” she said, “I went to my father and said, ‘Daddy, I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ.’

“ ‘Tell me,’ Father said, ‘when you take a train trip from Haarlem to Amsterdam, when do I give you the money for the ticket? Three weeks before?’

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“The Spirit of Christ”

“The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Isaiah 61:1-2a).

The Spirit of Christ mentioned in this Scripture has been absorbing my whole attention. I need the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Christ brings complete freedom from sin. Sadhu Sundar Singh [a Sikh who decided to follow Jesus] used to say, “Salvation is not merely forgiveness of sins, but freedom from sin.” What a wonderful salvation and freedom from sin!

Man must know that he is nothing and worthless. Prayer helps him to come to this knowledge. Before meeting Jesus, a man thinks he is a great person and wants to become still greater.

It is good to come to Jesus to know you are nothing. A man who prays very soon comes to know that he can do nothing by himself. Jesus came to this position: *“I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30).*

My dear friends, the positive thrust in your life and the spiritual drive that you can have in your life, must they always be retarded and braked? No. Jesus gives freedom and liberty to the captives. You can never have a prison with an open door. In that case, it is no longer a prison. But the Spirit of Christ opens your prison door. You and I that were captives are completely unbound and released by the Spirit of Christ. You should not rest until it has become your daily experience.

This is followed by the proclamation of “the acceptable year of the Lord” [verse 2]. Now to proclaim this, we need courage. Some of us have become a bunch of cowards. So preachers also just say, “Oh God is going to bless you. Just drop a hundred into the offering. That will do it.” But God says, *“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember-*

est that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matthew 5:23-24).

Nowadays I don’t see even preachers doing this. They leave a word here, a word there—some words of dissension. But the Christ-like spirit gives you a Christ-like character. The heathen character, the character born of idolatry, is an ugly character which tries to mix and mangle truth and untruth.

God has a great purpose for each one of you. *“And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations” (Isaiah 61:4).* I am deeply burdened about the old ways. The temptation is to say, “Alright, let’s leave these former desolations alone.” God wants to cleanse and sanctify some of the old desolations in your own life. For any kind of cleansing, there should be a recognition and acknowledgement of the evil that has been wrought. One of the marks of real turning to God is godly sorrow. The sorrow of this world brings sickness and death. But godly sorrow brings repentance. There is nothing to regret about that.

To build the old ways is not an easy undertaking. It requires your whole personality and all the powers that you can summon. Some people sit and study all night when they have university exams. Some forget food, sleep, and other necessities when it comes to research. Now even in ascending Mt. Everest, a man of 80 conquered Everest and a woman with prostheses managed to climb Mt. Everest! Look at the excuses people come up with for not doing anything for God.

Building up the old ways and raising up former desolations is not an undertaking for lazy men or half-hearted people. When Nehemiah heard of the fallen walls of Jerusalem, he “sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven” (Nehemiah 1:4). What a concern he had for God’s name! This is a day of blasphemy. We are told to lift up the fallen desolations. Are we

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doing that?

We read in Nehemiah 6:15 that the fallen walls were rebuilt and [the Jews] finished that work in 52 days! Those were not like the 9-inch walls of today. They were massive walls. To build such fallen walls is a great task! When you are repairing a wall, you have to begin with the foundation. That involves immense work. But they completed that work in 52 days! Look at this oneness. Those walls needed to be joined. What precision it would have required! Just imagine how hard they all laboured.

The psalmist says, *“My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise” (Psalm 57:7)*. A fixed heart is a great blessing. A heart that flirts with the world will accomplish nothing. The mind-set of today is that everything should be comfortable and one’s security and income should be assured. With that mind-set, we cannot rebuild the fallen walls of Jerusalem. It requires a fixed heart to do great things for God.

Everywhere, people just want a temporary

relief. If you just heal a person, he goes back and serves the devil and comes back with a worse disease. My father used to say, “I am not here to heal your diseases that you may go and serve the devil.” He would not pray for them till they had heard the Word of God for three days. When they heard the Word for three days, that was generally followed by repentance, as they would not be able to resist the truth of God. In fact, my dad would have no need to pray for them, because God would have already given them the whole package—His touch and blessing upon their spirit, soul, and body! So when they repented and turned to Jesus, their diseases were also healed by the Lord.

How much grief it gives me to see the condition of so many of our fine boys and girls who have passed through our students’ camps and retreats! They don’t have a fixed heart. They could have taken the revival blessing to every corner of the world. But they never desired a heart like that of Nehemiah.

Are we mere spectators at a time like this?

A Christian can never be a spectator. Alright, America is a sinking ship. Don’t say, “Let me get a few dollars before the ship sinks.” What kind of mentality are you teaching your sons and daughters? When they go and work there, they don’t weep for America or seek the restoration of that great nation. They are a bunch of hirelings. Have you brought forth hirelings? Our children must rise up and lift up the fallen desolations.

Beware, my friends, we are living at a time in history when the end is very close. This is no time to dance around and prance around, but a time to build the old wastes and raise up the former desolations. May the Lord help us to do so.

—Joshua Daniel

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“No, Daddy, you give me the money for the ticket just before we get on the train.”

Her father agreed, “And so it is with God’s strength. Our wise Father in heaven knows when you are going to need things too. Today you do not need the strength to be a martyr; but as soon as you are called upon for the honour of facing death for Jesus, He will supply the strength you need—just in time.”

Corrie knew that some of those African brothers and sisters were facing death; she continued, “I took great comfort in my father’s advice. Later I had to suffer for Jesus in a concentration camp. He indeed gave me all the courage and power I needed.”

Her African friends agreed, knowing that God would supply all their needs—including courage in the face of death.

“Tell us more, Tante [Aunt] Corrie,” said one old man. So Corrie told them of an incident from her time at the concentration camp at Ravensbruck.

One day, a group of fellow prisoners wished to hear Bible stories from Corrie. Yet the concentration camp guards called the Bible das Lügenbuch [Book of Lies]. Any prisoner possessing a Bible or talking about the Lord could face death; yet Corrie went and fetched her Bible from her cot.

Suddenly, she had become conscious of a presence behind her. “One of the prisoners,” Corrie narrated to her African listeners, “formed the words with her lips, ‘Hide your Bible. It’s Lony.’” Lony had been one of the cruellest of women guards. Yet Corrie knew that she must obey God who had led her so

clearly to give a Bible message to the prisoners that morning. While Corrie taught, Lony remained behind her—and still stayed when Corrie suggested that a hymn of praise be sung.

Although this could have proved costly to the other prisoners, they sang—in the face of the enemy.

After the song was finished, a voice spoke. It was Lony, asking for another song like that. Again and again, Corrie and the prisoners sang. Then Corrie spoke to that woman guard about the Lord Jesus Christ. Her behaviour began to change, until she became a sort of friend.

Corrie told her African friends, “I knew that every word I said could mean death. Yet never before had I felt such peace and joy in my heart as while I was giving the Bible message in the presence of mine enemy. God gave me the grace and power I needed—the money for the train ticket arrived just the moment I was to step on the train.”

Broad grins spread over the faces of Corrie’s African brethren. She then closed the service with a poem by Amy Carmichael:

We follow a scarred Captain,
Should we not have scars?
Under His faultless orders
We follow to the wars.
Lest we forget, Lord, when we meet,
Show us Thy hands and feet.

After the meeting, someone began singing that old song:

There’s a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar.
For the Father waits over the way,
To prepare us a dwelling place there.
In the sweet by and by, we shall meet
on that beautiful shore.
In the sweet by and by, we shall meet
on that beautiful shore.

Later, Corrie was informed that more than half of those at that service met a martyr’s death—and so received a martyr’s crown. But God’s Spirit of glory had been resting upon them (1 Peter 4:14).

—Corrie Ten Boom, *Tramp for the Lord*

Reality Check!

**FOR ALL HAVE SINNED,
AND COME SHORT
OF THE GLORY OF
GOD; BEING JUSTI-
FIED FREELY BY HIS
GRACE THROUGH THE
REDEMPTION THAT
IS IN CHRIST JESUS**

ROMANS 3:23-24

“The Emptiness of Riches”

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Jesus, Matthew 6:19-21).

One of the wealthiest men who ever rose to power and influence in the British Empire was Cecil Rhodes. You might have heard of the Rhodes Scholarships, given to exceptional students from around the world to study at Oxford University in England; this international study program was established in his will. At the age of 27, Rhodes founded the De Beers Mining Company in South Africa. In less than a decade, he controlled the diamond mining industry.

Rhodes' interest extended beyond diamonds: not long after gold was discovered in the Transvaal, he also acquired a large share in the gold industry. Aged 37, he became Prime Minister of the Cape Colony (now part of South Africa). In addition, he was influential in placing Bechuanaland (now Botswana), the later 'Rhodesias' (now Zimbabwe and Zambia), and Nyasaland (now Malawi) under forms of British control. These occupy more square kilometres than Germany, France, and Spain put together!

Caring for some of the poorest, but among the happiest men in England, was General William Booth, the founder of The Salvation Army. General Booth and Cecil Rhodes were well acquainted with each other. On one occasion, General Booth asked Cecil Rhodes the striking question, “Mr. Rhodes, are you a happy man?” In his answer, Rhodes had to admit, “No.”

What a contrast these two men were, with lives that were motivated and lived by opposite concerns. One was concerned with the accumulation of wealth fuelled by self-centredness. The other was fuelled by a heart under God's control and a life given to the world in great need!

Jesus said, “*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him*” (John 3:36). Our fulfilment must be found OUTSIDE OURSELVES; it must be found in Christ. We are ever seeking to fulfil our desires and dreams within the realm of our own abilities, only to find that having gained them, our fulfilment eludes us. It is Christ, the giver of life, that will fill our void with an abundant life lived for others, for our good and HIS GLORY!

—See Edward Powell, *Dare to Trust*

“Baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire”

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matthew 3:11).

Here [John the Baptist] is speaking about repentance. Repentance is the beginning of Christian life. But as we go on further, we find dross in us. The idols we have entertained have left much filth in us.

“*Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you*” (Ezekiel 36:25). We need to be cleansed from this filth. God has made provision for this. Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

When Isaiah was brought face to face with God, he found himself unworthy. He cried out that he was a man of unclean lips. He needed cleansing, and God gave it to him through fire from the altar before His throne.

Our lips are not worthy to speak the eternal Word. God is able to cleanse us from such dross.

At conversion, you feel you are a desperate sinner. Once again after conversion, you feel desperate at the amount of dross that the Word of God and the presence of God lay bare to you. Are we fit to preach the Word of God? No, there is dross in us. But God has made provision for us that the dross may be cleansed. When the Holy Spirit and the fire of the Holy Spirit come into us, that dross will go.

But just one such experience is not enough. When one enters the responsibility of marriage, one needs a further cleansing by the fire. When one begets children, one needs another touch of that fire. This humble attitude must continue in us, and do its work in us.

We must maintain singleness of eye. Jesus asked Peter to launch out into the deep. We have to launch out deeper in our spiritual life, and then cast our nets on the right side. This means casting our nets where God wills. God watches us if our desire is for the highest life—the life of Jesus!

Isaiah and Elijah seem to have had such desire and saw it fulfilled. God gave it to them. God is watching our personal devotion and consecration, to bless us with the deeper life.

—N. Daniel

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“Love for the Redeemer: David Livingstone”

“Doctor Livingstone, I presume?” This famous greeting was issued by New York Herald newspaper reporter Henry Stanley when he met David Livingstone at Ujiji (now in Tanzania) on the banks of Lake Tanganyika in 1871.

Livingstone, an internationally renowned missionary who had discovered Lake Ngami and the Zuga River, the Zambezi River, Victoria Falls, Lake Nyasa, Lake Shirwa, and searched for the source of the Nile, had not been heard from in years.

Henry Stanley, a sceptic, set out to find him and write a story. He described Dr. Livingstone as “[a] man who is manifestly sustained as well as guided by influences from Heaven. The Holy Spirit dwells in him. God speaks through him. The heroism, the nobility, the pure and stainless enthusiasm as the root of his life come, beyond question, from Christ. There must, therefore, be a Christ.”

David Livingstone’s letters, books, and journals had stirred up a public outcry for the abolition of slavery. In his journals, Livingstone recorded the following incident: “We passed a slave woman shot or stabbed through the body and lying on the path. Onlookers said an Arab who passed early that morning had done it in

anger at losing the price he had given for her, because she was unable to walk any longer.”

In a letter to the editor of the New York Herald, David Livingstone wrote: “And if my disclosures regarding the terrible Ujijian slavery should lead to the suppression of the East Coast slave trade, I shall regard that as a greater matter by far than the discovery of all the Nile sources together.”

Livingstone was so loved by Africans that when he was found dead in 1873, kneeling beside his bed near Lake Bangweulu after suffering from malaria, his followers buried his heart in Africa before sending his body, packed in salt, back to England to be buried in Westminster Abbey.

In his journal, David Livingstone wrote: “I place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in relation to the kingdom of Christ. If anything will advance the interests of the kingdom, it shall be given away or kept, only as by giving or keeping it I shall promote the glory of Him to whom I owe all my hopes in time and eternity.”

Much earlier in life, Livingstone had felt the necessity and value of personally applying Jesus’ atonement for our sins upon the cross—

that offer of free salvation. A marvellous change occurred; it was, Livingstone wrote, “like what may be supposed would take place were it possible to cure a case of ‘colour blindness.’”

In his *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (1857), Dr. David Livingstone reflected on his motivation: “The perfect freedom with which the pardon of all our guilt is offered in God’s book drew forth feelings of affectionate love to Him who bought us with his blood, and a sense of deep obligation to Him for his mercy has influenced . . . my conduct ever since.”

—See William J. Federer, *American Minute* (online)

“Salvation through Jesus Christ”

When Jesus was on this earth, He said: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). This is the Gospel—the good news of Jesus Christ!

“For God” - Who showed the greatest love
“so loved” - the greatest amount
“the world” - the greatest number
“that He gave” - the greatest act
“His only begotten Son” - the greatest Gift
“that whosoever” - the greatest possibility
“believeth in” - the greatest simplicity
“Him” - the greatest Attraction
“should not perish” - the greatest promise
“but” - the greatest difference
“have” - the greatest certainty
“everlasting” - the greatest possession.

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University of Michigan Mondays 7:00pm
Angell Hall, Room G-144
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