

# Christ is Victor

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## “Giving What You Cannot Keep”

‘He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.’ Thus wrote a young college student in 1949 by the name of Jim Elliot. While on an expedition to spread the Gospel some seven years later, Jim lost his life on earth—‘what he cannot keep’—to gain a home in Heaven—‘what he cannot lose’.

### *A Heart for Jesus*

One evening at about the age of six, Jim told his mother on the way home from a Christian meeting, ‘Now, mama, the Lord Jesus can come whenever he wants. He could take our whole family, because I’m saved now, and Janie,’ he said, referring to his younger sister, ‘is too young to know about Him yet.’ Born in 1927 to a Christian family in Portland, Oregon, Jim made an early decision to follow Christ and began ‘preaching’ to his young friends from the lawn swing. As he grew up, Jim sought to honour Jesus in his daily life. Once while eating lunch in the high school cafeteria, the six-foot-three student body president approached Jim’s table. He was selling tickets for an upcoming student dance and was eager that Jim—an influential student—should purchase one. The president ended his argument by saying, ‘Jim, you’re in this student body as much as I

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## “Reaching Forward to Perfection”

‘Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before’ (St. Paul, Philippians 3:13).

St. Paul was a positive thinker. Sound faith in Jesus makes us look forward, always. There was no mentality of defeat in St. Paul. He felt, ‘I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me’ (Philippians 4:13). We must one day attain to this great consciousness. Our lip prayer must become our heart prayers. These two must become one. When these work together, there will be no doubt in us about God’s answer. Such a man will be a mature man in faith. We must be careful not to speak any insincere word to please man or to gain these things which we have left behind. This would be a backward step, a regression.

Once we have humbly confessed our sins and have been forgiven, we need not think of them and be discouraged. They must not prevent us from reaching forward to things that are before. Those who run the hundred-yard race do not look back. They cannot win if they do so. The devil wants us to look back. When anyone has done us evil we must not think of it. As quickly as possible we must forgive and forget. Evil will never succeed. We often think it does, and try to defend ourselves against it or hit back. Evil is a defeated power.

There is no place for evil in a Christian’s philosophy of life. We must never resort to evil. Jesus said, ‘But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also’ (Matthew 5:39). Do

not recognize evil as a power to resist. Evil is not a power. In the lives of Joseph and Daniel in the Old Testament there was no negative thinking. They were lives of great victory because they did not resist evil. Joseph did not brood over the evil done to him. Daniel never brooded over the evil done to him. He did not even care to defend himself but just let God prove him to be in the right. Blessed is the man who can forgive. Forgiving, you must go forward.

A man who believes the Word of God must believe that God is always thinking of him. Resist not evil. Do not recognize it as a power. When you resist it, it gets power. Paul did not reflect on the insults and injuries he received. If we brood over the evil done to us it will grow into our souls. The memories will be ulcers in our souls and bring us low in our spiritual life. When we learn to forgive, we develop a new grace and a new power and a new faith.

Jesus said, ‘And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses’ (Mark 11:25). When you kneel down to pray, first pray for your enemies. This is the only way or else you will go down till the devil completely possesses you. Think of the loving God who wants to lift you. He does not slumber. Christ has conquered evil. Do not recognize evil as a power. Love, faith, holiness and purity: these things last. Hatred, anger, and envy will perish. They destroy those that entertain them. They ruin your personality. You have to fight a big battle against negative thoughts.

God Almighty has got great things for

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you. Do not think of lower things. When God has a palace for you, why are you angry with those that denied you a place in a hut? Forgive those that have acted negatively. Think of God who has a wonderful blessing and a wonderful place for you.

‘But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil. . . . Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect’ (Matthew 5:39,48). These are the statements of our God who won the battle. When we are trying to be perfect like our Father in heaven, the very nature around us will cooperate with us. Let us not make much of our enemies in our thoughts when a mighty God is prepared to give us all things. I have seen people going down, down, and down in their spiritual life and becoming wicked by thinking of the evil done to them. Do not look back. You must feel, ‘I shall do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me’.

—N. Daniel

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am, and ought to support it.’ Jim’s answer was bold and straight: ‘Yes,’ said Jim, ‘I’m in the student body but not the way you are. I’m a Christian and the Bible says that I’m in the world but not of it. That’s why I’m not going to the dance.’

After high school, Jim studied in Illinois where he sought to follow the Lord wholeheartedly. Writing home in February 1947, he described how he had begun to pray with several housemates in their ‘den’. ‘[S]uch times we do have! The first fruits of Glory itself,’ he wrote, and ‘as soon as we hit a subject that has a need God can fill, we dive for our knees and tell Him about it. These are times I’ll remember about college when all the philosophy has slipped out memory’s back gate. God is still on His throne, we’re still on His footstool, and there’s only a knee’s distance between!’ As for the degree Jim was seeking, that was A.U.G., ‘approved unto God.’

***A Heart for Missions***

During his first two years at college, Jim became aware of the personal implications of Jesus’ command to go and preach the gospel. He noted down statistics such as the following: ‘There is one Christian worker for every 50,000 people in foreign lands, while there is one to every 500 in the United States.’ Jesus’ command and such facts combined to make an impression on Jim. If he remained in the United States, he would need to prove that such a decision was really justified. In 1952, Jim set out for Ecuador desiring to help spread the good news of Jesus.

On his twenty-sixth birthday, Jim finally married Elisabeth Howard in Quito after years of correspondence and a willingness to remain single in accordance with God’s will. ‘No one warns young people to follow Adam’s example,’ he once wrote

to his parents, ‘He waited till God saw his need. Then God made Adam sleep, prepared for his mate, and brought her to him. We need more of this “being asleep” in the will of God. Then we can receive what He brings us in His own time, if at all. Instead we are set as blood-hounds after a partner’.

Jim and Elisabeth eventually made Shandia their home base in the eastern rainforest, seeking to reach out to the jungle Indians for Christ’s sake. In addition to other meetings, a small nucleus of baptized believers began to meet specially in a schoolroom of bamboo walls and backless benches for the ‘breaking of bread’, sharing bread and wine as reminders of Christ’s broken body and shed blood on the cross. They began to understand the meaning of worship, simply and sincerely offering their hearts’ love to the Lord. Often they ended the meeting singing ‘kirikgunaga, kushiyanguichi—Cristo shamunmi!’ (‘Be happy, believers—Christ is coming!’)

Soon several young Indians took over the task of the Sunday morning meeting, showing that God’s Word is God’s oracle—regardless of who was preaching it. Ever conscious of lost souls, Jim had hoped some years earlier for Christian work among a tribe called the Aucas: they had never heard of Jesus, their only contact with white men had been by killing, and they were feared by other Indians. Then one day in September 1955, information arrived that a missionary friend (Ed) and missionary pilot (Nate) had spotted Auca houses a short flight from Arajuno. Jim was desperate to reach this savage people with the news of Christ.

After making friendly contact from an aeroplane for the second time, Jim noted in his diary, ‘God, send me soon to the

Aucas.’ God granted that wish when Jim finally shook the hand of an Auca man in early January 1956—but two days later, he and his four companions were killed. Although Elisabeth later laboured among this very tribe, for Jim, an earlier prayer he once wrote was answered: ‘God, I pray Thee, light these idle sticks of my life and may I burn up for Thee. Consume my life, my God, for it is Thine. I seek not a long life but a full one, like you, Lord Jesus.’

—See Elisabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty*

## Reality Check!

“BEHOLD, [JESUS]  
COMETH WITH CLOUDS; AND  
EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM,  
AND THEY ALSO WHICH  
PIERCED HIM: AND ALL KIN-  
DREDS OF THE EARTH SHALL  
WAIL BECAUSE OF HIM.  
EVEN SO, AMEN.”

REVELATION 1:7

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## “The Changed Cross”

A Professor of Surgery from Sydney University had just returned from the island of While on earth, Jesus said: ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me’ (Luke 9:23). A beautiful poem tells the story of one who had picked up a cross—those trial tests of faith and love—but became wearied with ‘the conflict and the strife, and all the needful discipline of life.’

This cross-bearer began to doubt her ability to endure, and fancied that others’ burdens were lighter to bear. Yet while

asleep, One appeared who said, ‘Follow me! I am the Way.’ He showed her many crosses in different shapes and sizes, of which a small beautiful one with jewels set in gold caught her attention. ‘Ah! this,’ she thought, ‘I can with comfort wear, for it will be an easy one to bear’. Yet the weight of the jewels was intolerable. The next cross she tried was decorated with lovely flowers—but underneath were thorns. No cross suited her need. Weeping she laid each heavy burden down, as her Guide gently said, ‘No cross, no crown!’

At length, she gazed at the One who

led her. ‘Be not afraid,’ He said, ‘but trust in me—My perfect love shall now be shown to thee.’ Presently, she took up a plain cross inscribed with words of love. A heavenly brightness rested on it; as she bent to sustain her burden, she recognized her own old cross again. Henceforth, she decided, her ‘own desire shall be, that He who knows me best should choose for me’. ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me’

—Jesus

## “The Lord Delivers Us from Bondage”

I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King. Thus saith the Lord, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters’ (Isaiah 43:15-16).

This is how the Lord describes Himself. To be the redeemer of the people of Israel, His specially chosen people, the Lord had a way for them right through the sea. He showed that Pharaoh of Egypt was no longer their king. When Pharaoh was their king, they had to bear a great burden. They were under hard taskmasters. They wanted deliverance.

The devil knows the areas in which he can oppress us with the maximum pain. He does not normally inflict pain which is easy to bear. He creates pain and oppression in that area where you are most pained, thereby inflicting huge loss and

damage.

Who is a redeemer? One who delivers you in that area where you are a captive. Certain thoughts are very strong. Oh, you put them out of your mind but they come back again. They chase you. They persist in pursuing you. You cannot run away from them. You may cross the oceans but the thoughts are still there. The devil oppresses many people with wrong thoughts. They are weakened. So there is no rest for them. That is not the work of God. God’s thoughts are strengthening, ennobling and freeing.

Very often we do not see the difference between our thoughts and God’s thoughts, because of the spirit of perversity. That is why the Bible says, ‘There is a way which seemeth right unto a man’ (Proverbs 14:12). You say, ‘My thought is

right!’, ‘My plan is right!’, ‘My ways are right!’ No! No! You must know how to go to God, who searches your heart and weighs your spirit, to know whether this is a perverse spirit or the spirit of God. This perverse spirit can be a very strong spirit. It can afflict the whole family. It seems to afflict father, mother, sons and daughters. It makes it impossible to see what is right and what is wrong. The spirit of perversity is always to be found wherever there is idolatry. This perverse spirit is also found where Christians make an idol of something. I can detect this spirit very well.

The Word of God tells us that the Lord delivered them from all their oppressions. But Israel’s nature of grumbling was still persisting for forty years. There remained in Israel the spirit of unbelief in the face of daily miracles for forty long years.

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This Fellowship is an inter-denominational missionary and prayer group working for revival in churches and amongst students in several countries. We invite every layperson to become God’s ally in changing his or her corner of the world. We train people in evangelistic work and to be self-supporting missionaries.

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But the Lord was trying to make a way for them. Right from the start, it was a way in the wilderness. When they came out of Egypt, they came against the sea. When you come against a forest, you ask somebody, ‘Is there a path through this?’ But when you stand by the shore of a mighty sea, you never ask such a question. But God says, ‘I am the Lord . . .’ and He makes ‘a path in the mighty waters’. When you see the mighty waters before you, you tend to get fearful. I do not think that in the Christian life there is ever a person who does not confront mighty waters at some time or other.

I look to the one who alone can make this path. To many of you in your personal lives there may be the desire for sanctification. But somehow, it is slipping away. Somehow you seem to fail. Some evil thoughts still prevail. Some anger, some wicked and covetous desire, some bitterness or some lust is lurking somewhere in the heart. The mighty waters are before you. But what does God say to you? ‘I am the Lord,’ the One who ‘maketh . . . a path in the mighty waters’. Maybe you are despairing about your condition. No, these mighty waters are going to divide by a clear path of victory.

—Joshua Daniel

## “The Stain of Sin”

‘I never cared about you.’ Jim callously continued, ‘I’ve just been using you all along.’ Anger boiled over as Marvyn King listened to the words of his flatmate. All control lost, he wielded a kitchen knife and brutally stabbed Jim to death. Yet a deep distress followed, and Marvyn called the police to report his grievous crime, Jim’s body at his knees. He was convicted of second-degree murder and given a seven-and-a-half to fifteen years prison sentence.

Marvyn King was born in North Carolina to a mother too poor to raise him and no supporting father. That start to life, however, did not stop Marvyn from becoming a talented young man in music and literature. Following graduation from Montreat-Anderson College, he moved to Detroit—but trouble lay ahead.

That trouble came when Marvyn befriended Jim, a heroin addict and the son of a General Motors lawyer. When Jim moved in, he began to play on Marvyn’s emotions and borrow money which was rarely returned. In the spring of 1976, Marvyn lent him a huge sum of money: \$2,000. This, Jim claimed, was needed for a trip to Holland where he would meet a Dutch fiancée. It was an outright lie, for when Marvyn spotted him on the street some weeks later, he knew he had been tricked. A vicious argument—and Jim’s brutal murder—followed.

When the famous Christian evangelist, Billy Graham, came to Detroit, his wife Ruth—a former Sunday School teacher of Marvyn—paid the prisoner a visit. In the visitation room, she gave him a loving hug.

‘You were wrong,’ she told him, ‘But you still have a chance. The Lord can forgive you. You can be a witness.’

Marvyn told Ruth, ‘I have been living disobediently. But I have truly repented. And though I cannot undo this horrible deed I am grateful I can at least pay my debt to society. I can accept God’s forgiveness but it’s hard to forgive myself.’

‘There is nothing that God cannot forgive except for the rejection of Christ,’ Ruth replied. ‘No matter how black the sin, how hideous the sin, if we but confess it to Him in true repentance and faith, He will forgive. He will accept and forgive. Marvyn, let me tell you a story:

‘Some fishermen in the highlands of Scotland came back to an inn for tea. Just as the waitress was serving them, one of the men began describing the day’s catch in the typical fisherman’s gestures, and his right hand collided with a teacup. The contents splashed all over the white-washed wall, and an ugly brown stain emerged. “I’m so terribly sorry,” the fisherman apologized repeatedly.

“Never mind,” said a man who jumped up from a nearby table. Pulling a crayon from his pocket, he began to sketch around the tea stain, and there emerged a magnificent royal stag with his antlers spread. The artist was Sir Edward Henry Landseer, England’s foremost painter of animals.

‘If an artist can do that with an ugly brown stain, what can God do with my stains and my mistakes if I but turn them over to Him?’

The Lord used both Ruth’s words and

caring example to pull Marvyn out of the pit of despair, guilt and suicidal thoughts into which he had sunk. Five years later he was granted an early parole.

—See Vance Christie, *Timeless Stories* (Christian Focus Publications)

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