

Christ is Victor

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“God into the heart”

“God is willing to enter into the heart, as light is willing to flood a room that is opened to its brightness”(Amy Carmichael).

Corrie Ten Boom, a Dutch Christian public speaker who had suffered in a Nazi concentration camp, once called on a woman in a London mental institution. She had opened her heart to hatred after the death of her husband, a death caused by a Jewish bomb on her home in Palestine. Corrie prayed for wisdom and love.

“I know exactly what you’re going to tell me. I must pray,” the woman began, “But I cannot pray.”

“I know exactly what you are going to say next; I must banish the hatred from my heart, because only then can I pray again.”

“Who has told you?”

“The chaplain.”

“No doubt the chaplain is still a very young man, and he does not yet know how powerful the demon of hatred is. You and I know. Once I was with my sister in a concentration camp. When they treated me cruelly I could stand it, but when I saw that they intended to beat my sister because she was too weak to shovel sand, then hatred tried to enter my heart. And then I experienced a miracle. Jesus had planted His love in my heart, and there was no room left for hatred. The only thing you can do is to open your heart to that love. That love is a reality. If it is dark in a room while the sun is shining outside, do I have to sweep the darkness out? Of course not. I merely have to draw the curtains aside, and as soon as the sunlight floods the room, the darkness vanishes.”

Corrie knelt down with the woman, and prayed, “Lord, here we are, weak, much weaker than the demon of hatred. But Thou art stronger than the demon of hatred, and now we open our hearts to Thee, and we give thanks to Thee that Thou art willing to enter into our hearts, as the sun is willing to flood a room that is opened to its brightness.”

One week later the woman was discharged from the mental institution. Her heart was full of the love of God.

—See Corrie Ten Boom, *Amazing Love: True Stories of the Power of Forgiveness*

“It is good to be with Jesus”

“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John [disciples of Jesus], and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi [teacher], it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’—because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.

“And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!’ Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves” (Mark 9:2-8).

“Master, it is good for us to be here.”

This will be the conclusion of everyone who sees Jesus in His heavenly glory with the old saints. We will ultimately come to this conclusion that it is good to be with Jesus. Peter was with Jesus when He fed the five thousand and when He performed the other miracles. But he did not say, “It is good to be here.”

When Peter saw this place of prayer where heaven and earth met, he wanted to be always there. He saw the glory of the new heaven and new earth. He wanted to retain that joy. He could only think of building three tabernacles. If we see heaven, we will not want to be in this world any more.

Peter was with Jesus in the storm and on the waters, but he could not stay by Him at the time of the Cross. He denied him. Peter was with Him on the mount of transfiguration. God can give us a vision of heaven. But it is good to suffer with Christ. How many of us are willing to be cruci-

fied with Christ? Peter, however, desired to be with Jesus on the day of His crucifixion, but he had not the faith. The queries of a girl frightened him because he would not pray. It is good to be with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, but it is best to be with Jesus on the mount of crucifixion, for then you will always be with Jesus. Do not desire glory but desire the nails and desire the Cross. Those who go up the hill of prayer will go up the hill of crucifixion. And they will go up into heaven with Him. The children of God will always be given the best.

—N. Daniel

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“The flesh profits nothing”

“The flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (Jesus, John 6:63).

Certain basic observations in practical life just do not get through to man, simply because they do not wish to know unsavoury facts. So they keep on experimenting with themselves and their bodies.

Many things which Jesus said made some of the camp-followers murmur—who were just there for the good times and the sensational miracles, which He did. Spiritual truths they found it hard to stomach.

When Jesus found that these camp-followers had no understanding, then He said: “You need the spirit which awakens you and gives life and if you want to see everything through the flesh, you will not profit spiritually at all.” “The flesh profiteth nothing” (John 6:63). Thoughts of the flesh, continual yearnings to indulge in the flesh, feeding on sex-magazines and obscene pictures, have made many morally unreliable and almost mentally unsound. They can’t get through their day’s work. Their nerves are weak, sleep deserts them, and they are very nearly beside themselves.

One English friend of mine, brought up among the Zulus of Africa, said: “The young men over there would never think of robbing or sexually assaulting a helpless old lady.” But in many cities in Europe and America that could easily happen. What a tragedy!

In my own country, I’m aghast at the influence which the cinema has on the masses. It seems to be their principal mental sustenance. They think the cinema, they act it on the streets, they dress like the stars, and very closely follow the pattern of their private lives too, replete with numerous affairs, divorces, domestic flights, and progeny of neurotics and moral driftwood.

“The flesh profiteth nothing.” How wise is the man who flies to the cross of Jesus and there finds release from the pent-up fury of his passions. The man whose time and strength is thereafter released to constructive and meaningful profits and aims is blessed.

But the man who lives from nine to ninety with the morbid preoccupations of illicit sex and impurity is a curse to his

family and society.

But the changeover from the dreadful wastage, misery, and heartache of life dominated by the flesh, to a life of power and usefulness is not achieved by wishful thinking. It is deep repentance at the cross, which brings about the release and the freedom from the guilt of having led many astray.

Being much in touch with the medical world, through having to give general direction to our clinics where many people get attention, and also through counselling doctors, nurses, and medical students, I find that some of the worst sex maniacs alive are to be found among doctors.

A woman told me in Europe that when her doctor began to make advances towards her, she resisted, but soon her defences were down and this mother of a little boy became both the patient and victim of this doctor. Her home is about to break up.

“The flesh profiteth nothing.” How sad and meaningless it is that men cultivate this one-sided overdrive for temporal things and totally neglect the things which are eternal.

The body is God’s property given to you for a short time to take care of, and to accomplish eternal triumphs while in it. No one scribbles on a university answer paper, or tears it up, if he wishes to pass, but uses every page carefully trying hard to score the highest grade or marks. Living in your body is a great occasion to be a blessing. The realisation that Jesus died to make you whole in spirit, soul and body makes your body very precious. You can do no less than dedicate the powers of your body to Jesus. Its strength, vitality, and its sacred function of sex are all to be put at the feet of Jesus. You are ready at all times unstintingly to expend the powers of your physical body for Jesus. Thus when you realise that your body is God’s instrument or vehicle through which He works, in a very real sense you hold it secure. It’s marked “Reserved”—“Reserved for Jesus” to employ as He pleases.

There are fantastic gains to be made when your mental and physical powers are placed under Jesus’ control. What a conservation of energy, time, and physical and mental wear and tear is effected!

When the flesh dominates a man or

woman, you will soon see it in his or her face. Sunken cheeks, black bags below the eyes, a jaded weary look, speak for themselves. How quickly the fresh bloom of youth disappears when men live the sordid, fast, and immoral life of our cities. In women, the deterioration in looks is much more rapid.

The flesh profiteth nothing. A young man known to me greatly injured his health through his masturbation. Then he became incapable of concentrated work. Then he became one who began to roam around like a mad man. I could not help this young man. He deliberately misled me and did not confess his sin. It’s perhaps the only case of the kind which I have met and it gives me great sorrow that I had failed to rescue him in time.

Dear people, you dare not dilly-dally with God and His loving laws, which are there to protect you and keep you from danger.

Now the Bible says: “the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, ... envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like” (Galatians 5:19-21).

When the human mind and the body are put into the devil’s hands, then they can become weapons of mass destruction. The devil is incessantly trying to drag you down to the fleshly level of life and pin you down there. He got through the eye-gate of King David (as John Bunyan would call the eye) and brought him low right down

Reality Check!

**“TRUST IN THE LORD
WITH ALL THINE HEART;
AND LEAN NOT UNTO
THINE OWN UNDER-
STANDING. IN ALL THY
WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE
HIM, AND HE SHALL
DIRECT THY PATHS. BE
NOT WISE IN THINE OWN
EYES: FEAR THE LORD,
AND DEPART FROM EVIL”**

(PROVERBS 3:5-7)

into adultery. But David humbled himself and rose up.

To the man dominated by the flesh, the idea of humbling himself and confessing his sin is most abhorrent. The devil whispers: “You will be disgraced, you’d rather end your life.”

No, do not listen to him. Jesus never says to the man who has fallen into a pit, “Now, look, you should not have fallen.”

Jesus reaches down and lifts up such a man and cleanses him and puts him beside Him on the Throne.

The life of the flesh makes you desperate. Now the Lord Jesus brings the strongest part of you, the spirit, to life and then He speaks to your spirit and strengthens you.

How many are being delivered, all the time, from their dark thoughts of despair

and suicide and are being led by the Spirit of God into a life of peace and joy. Now, dear people, let Jesus lift you and channel the powers of your spirit, soul, and body.

—Joshua Daniel

“Freedom in Christ”

Hating the free

Birds! Nicky hated them. So free. How he hated those who were free. David Wilkerson—the preacher who had told him “Nicky, Jesus loves you”—was free. Israel, his best friend, was coming close to freedom. Nicky could sense it. The bird he now held—grabbed from a pigeon cage on the roof above his room—was free. Yet Nicky was trapped in his cage of hate and fear.

Nicky’s hands tightened around the bird’s head, stretching it away from his body. “I’m not afraid,” he said. Then Nicky lost control. He ripped the head away and cried, “Now, you’re not free. No one is free.”

Nicky was lost, lost as leader of the Brooklyn street gang known as the Mau Maus, lost in drugs, alcohol, and brutal violence.

In July 1958, Israel told Nicky of a meeting that Wilkerson was holding at St. Nicholas Arena. Israel had informed Wilkerson that he would ensure the Mau Maus were there. Fear swept over Nicky. He began to turn away. Then Israel hit him at his weak spot: “Hey man, you ain’t

chicken are you?” “Nicky ain’t afraid of no one,” came the reply, “... that skinny preacher ... you ... not ... God.” Yet Nicky had seen others come down on their knees. All he knew to do was run, but, faced with Israel’s challenge, Nicky did not want his fear to show.

Afraid. Nicky was afraid. Someone or something more powerful could force him to his knees in front of people and he might cry; he had not cried since the age of eight.

Seeing the free

On the night of the meeting, the gang boarded a bus that would take them to the arena. The noise was deafening.

Dressed in Mau Mau uniforms, the gang swaggered into the arena with their canes, shouting, and whistling to the crowd.

When the preacher Wilkerson appeared, Nicky’s heart skipped a beat and the fear came flooding back. “Hey, Davie! Here I am. See, I told you I’d come,” Israel said, “And look who’s here,” he said, pointing to Nicky.

The fear in Nicky was intense. He jumped to his feet and shouted: “Hey Preach ... whatcha gonna do ... convert us

or something?”

Wilkerson began to speak. This is what he said: “This is the last night of our city-wide youth crusade. Tonight, we’re going to do something different. I’m going to ask my friends, the Mau Maus, to receive the offering.” People began to laugh and shout. Yet Nicky was up on his feet in a second; with five others, he would really do it.

To know that he had done something right gave Nicky a warm, satisfying feeling. For the first time he had done something right because he had wanted to do right. He liked the feeling. Something had come alive inside and it was growing, this new feeling of goodness, of nobleness, of righteousness.

Nicky’s thoughts were interrupted by a disturbance behind him. Wilkerson had been telling the crowd that they ought to love one another—Puerto Rican the Italian, the Italian the black man, the black man the whites, and they all ought to love one another.

Racial hatred erupted. A full-scale riot was in the making.

In the midst of near chaos, Nicky was

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compelled to look at Wilkerson. He was standing calmly on the stage, his head bowed, his hands clasped tightly in front of his chest. His lips were moving—praying.

Where did he get his power? Why was he not afraid like everyone else? Nicky felt shame, embarrassment, guilt. The only thing Nicky knew about God was what he had learned from seeing this man.

Nicky slumped down in his seat. The noise continued, but Israel was standing up looking backward. “Hey! Cool it!” he was shouting, “Let’s hear what the preacher has to say.”

The Mau Maus sat down. Israel continued to shout for quiet. The noise died. Silence swept over the arena.

Something was happening to Nicky. He was remembering—his childhood, the hate for his mother, the first days in New York when he ran like a wild animal set free from a cage. As if in a movie, his actions flashed in front of his eyes—the girls, the lust, the sex, the stabbings, the hurt, the hatred. It was almost more than he could stand. Guilt and shame grew in him. What he saw was repulsive within. He was afraid to open his eyes in case someone would then see inside.

Becoming free

Wilkerson was speaking again, something about repenting for your sin. Nicky was under the influence of an almighty power, and he could not resist. He did not understand what was taking place within, but the fear was gone. People were crying. Something like the wind was sweeping through that massive arena.

Wilkerson spoke again. “He’s here! He’s in this room. He’s come especially for you. If you want your life changed, now is the time.” He shouted with authority: “Stand up! Those who will receive Jesus Christ and be changed—stand up! Come forward!”

Israel stood to his feet, Nicky too. “Let’s go,” he said to the gang. More than 25 of the Mau Maus responded.

As Israel and Nicky headed to a back room for counselling, one of the girls stepped in front of them. Were they jealous, feeling that the boys would share their love with God and wanting it

all for themselves? It was all they—and Nicky—knew about love. Yet all Nicky now needed was to become a follower of Jesus Christ—Whoever He was.

After hearing about the Christian way of life, Wilkerson came into the room. “All right, fellows,” he said, “kneel down right here on this floor.”

Nicky had never knelt down before anyone, but an invisible force pressed down on him and his knees soon hit the floor.

When Israel smiled at Nicky through his tears, Nicky felt the tears welling up and spilling over. He was crying, and happy. He had absolutely no control over what was happening, and he was happy about it.

Then Wilkerson laid his hand on Nicky’s head. He was praying—praying for Nicky. The tears flowed more freely as Nicky bowed his head and shame and repentance and the wonderful joy of salvation mixed their ingredients in his soul.

“Go on, Nicky,” Wilkerson said, “Go ahead and cry. Pour it out to God. Call on Him.”

Nicky opened his mouth but the words that came out were not his. “O God, if you love me, come into my life. I’m tired of running. Come into my life and change me. Please change me.” Nicky felt himself being picked up and swept heavenward. None of the immortal thrills of a million lifetimes put together could equal what he felt. He was literally baptized with love.

Nicky had become new. It was as if he had died to the old way—and yet he was alive in a new kind of way.

Happiness. Joy. Gladness. Release. Relief. Freedom. Wonderful, wonderful freedom.

He had stopped running.

All Nicky’s fear was gone, all his anxieties, all his hatred. He was in love with God, in love with Jesus Christ, and in love with those around him. He even loved himself. He loved Wilkerson, too.

Being free

That night the streets had no more appeal to Nicky; he had no more need to be recognized as the Mau Mau gang leader, and he had no more fear of the night. He remembered that Jesus loved him, and would protect him. He knelt

beside the bed that night and threw his head back. “Jesus ...” Nothing else came out. “Jesus ...” And finally the words came. “Thank you, Jesus ... thank you.”

“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” (Jesus, John 3:16).

—See Nicky Cruz with Jamie Buckingham, **Run Baby Run: The story of Nicky Cruz**

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