

Revelation 12 (11) – You Will Overcome

In the book of Revelation, chapters 2-3, Jesus is speaking specific words to each of seven different churches. The content of each letter is different. But there is one common thread that ends each letter. At the end of each letter, Jesus says that it is possible to conquer, to be an overcomer. And the application of this is for every Christian, in every era, in every experience.

Yes, these letters are addressed to churches, but they are also addressed to each single individual in each individual church. And yes, what it means to overcome, to conquer, is seen by the context of each letter. But whatever the context, the idea of overcoming adversity applies to every church, and every person, in every era. Jesus is making the idea clear; whatever sin, trial, trouble, pain, problem, persecution, or hard providence you are going through, you can go through it as a conqueror, an overcomer.

Hear what Jesus says, again and again. Revelation 2:7 – *To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life.* Revelation 2:11 – *The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.* Revelation 2:17 – *To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna.* Revelation 2:26 – *The one who conquers...to him I will give authority over the nations.* Revelation 3:5 – *The one who conquers... I will never blot his name out of the book of life.* Revelation 3:12 – *The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.* Revelation 3:21 – *The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

The point is that conquering is something that can be done. You can conquer. You can be an overcomer. But it doesn't happen by applying the power of your will. It happens by embracing the power of God's will. It happens by faith. In John 16:33, Jesus said – *In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.* When Jesus says "take heart," he is telling you to have faith. Jesus has overcome the world, and he is applying that victory to those who are his. 1 John 5:4 shows this when it says – *And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.*

Make no mistake about it. Whether it is Revelation 2 and 3, or our text in Revelation 12:11, the truth is right there, again and again. Conquering is a possibility. But for the Christian, it is more than a possibility, and it is even more than a probability. It is a promise! You can overcome. Whatever the circumstance. And you will overcome. It is a guarantee.

But now we must ask – what does that mean? What does “overcoming” look like? Because you might think of overcoming, or conquering, as some sort of total victory in every circumstance, with no losses. Or something similar. But it really depends on how God defines it, not how we might like to think about it. But let me encourage you – it is even greater than you might imagine. So, we need to see what God says overcoming looks like.

And to do that, we turn again to the book of the Revelation.

In Revelation 12:11, Jesus speaks of saints overcoming the Devil. The verse says – *And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.* And people talk a lot about this. And we sang about it this morning. And this text clearly says that the saints overcame the Devil *by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.* But you need to be careful here, because the grounds of the victory, the belief in the victory, and the means of the victory are different things. And maybe not what you think.

So, let's break this down further.

In this verse, the blood of Christ is presented as the ground for the victory, but it is not said to be the means of victory. Revelation 1:5 says that Jesus *has freed us from our sins by his blood.* And as 1 John 5:18 says, the Devil cannot touch us, he cannot steal us from Christ. Why? Because Jesus has bought us with his blood. Jesus is victorious, and in him we have overcome the Devil's power over us. We overcome because of *the blood of the Lamb.*

This is why they were able to conquer; *the blood of the Lamb.* And they lived out what they believed in. This is what it means when it says that they

overcame *by the word of their testimony*. They had faith in Jesus. They believed in *the blood of the Lamb*. So, they overcame based on their faith. That is their testimony, their legacy. They were true to Jesus when they were tested.

What was the test? How did they act out their faith? How did they conquer? What was the means of their victory? What did overcoming look like?

This is where we need to see the rest of the verse. There, we see what the means of their victory was. We see how they conquered. We see what overcoming looked like for them. And this is so important, because you need the rest of this verse to understand exactly how these saints overcame the Devil. And how you will overcome the Devil.

Here is the whole verse – *And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death*. Do you see it now? They conquered by being martyrs. They achieved victory by dying. That is what their overcoming looked like.

But this immediately makes you wonder. How were they conquering by dying? This isn't what people usually think of when they think of conquering. It sounds like defeat, not victory. And it looks like they were overcome, not that they overcame. But this is scripture. And it says they overcame the Devil by dying. And this is the truth.

Think about how Jesus overcame. And how that applies to our overcoming. We read Revelation 3:21 before – *The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne*. And listen to Revelation 5:5-7 – *And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."* And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. Jesus conquered by dying. He conquered sin,

death, hell, and the Devil. He rose again, and ascended into Heaven. And he holds the future in his hand.

Talking about how Jesus conquered death, and thereby defeated the Devil, Hebrews 2:14 says that through his death Jesus will *destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil*. And then Hebrews 2:15 applies this to your life by saying that through his death Jesus has delivered his people from being slaves to the fear of death. That is the big picture and the bottom line.

Now, hear me clearly. Overcoming isn't just about physically dying for Jesus as a martyr. And the Bible doesn't teach that the only way you can overcome the troubles of life is through death. Hallelujah, we will overcome through death! But this power to overcome because of Jesus applies to living your life as well. In Christ you have overcome death. And because you have overcome, you can overcome, and you will overcome. It is past, present, and future. You have overcome, you can overcome, and you will overcome!

In Christ, you have conquered death, you can overcome life, and you will have the victory for all eternity! You will have a total triumph! This is what the Bible declares, and based on the authority of the word of God, this is what I proclaim!

Even in death, we are overcomers. Even if you die, you win! You still die, but you will rise again, with a new, glorious, perfected, eternal body. Now, understanding that, you can begin to see how that informs how you can overcome in this life. You don't have to fear death, so you don't have to fear life. In Christ you have conquered death, so you can conquer life. As a matter of fact, it is a guarantee. And you see it in Romans 8.

Romans 8:28 says – *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose*. God is controlling all things for our good and his glory. Paul says we *know* this. He is speaking in terms of a guarantee. Not a contingency. An absolute, unbreakable, unchanging, undeniable promise, *for those who love God*.

Now, who are *those who love God*? Is this some requirement that you must meet and you must maintain for God to work in your favor? Is this some contingent plan, based on your love for God? Like if you somehow don't love God enough, this promise is made null and void in your life? No, it isn't. Vs.28 tells you who *those who love God* are – *those who are called according to his purpose*. And who are those? Vs.29 tells you – *those whom he foreknew*. In other words, those whom God chose. We love God because he first loved us.

And so, how do we know that God is working all things together for the good of those whom he called? Vs.29 and then vs.30 tell you – those who are called were first foreknown and predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ, and they are now justified and will be glorified.

Romans 8:28-30 is called "The Golden Chain of Redemption." And we know that God is working all things together for our good because there are no breaks in this chain. The whole process is guaranteed. What God starts God finishes. All the people who are called by God make it all the way through.

Still, it sounds like the guarantee is just about the end result. We will overcome because we will win in the end. God is going to make sure it all works out for us. But what about everyday life, and everyday situations, and hard seasons? How does my final victory help me to overcome now?

Think about Romans 8:28, and the sovereignty of God. The promise is that if you are a Christian, you are overcoming, you are conquering, you have the victory. It is not that God is going to make sure that you will wind up winning. God is causing you to win the whole way through.

That is a bold claim, but that is what the Bible teaches. And it is wonderfully true, in a way that many don't realize. So, let me explain that. And prepare your heart to worship God.

You see, God working all things together for your good doesn't mean that God takes bad situations and makes them good, as if God is just making the

most of the worst. No, the bad is a means to the good. It follows a path established by God. This includes our own sin, as well as factors outside of us. God isn't just managing bad things. He is controlling all things.

People are still responsible for their bad motives, but God's motive was to use the bad to accomplish good. There are still consequences for sin. But God works through your bad so that good will happen. He designed this, not after the fact, but before the fact. God planned that your bad would work his good. God planned that all bad would work his good. God allows what he hates to accomplish what he loves.

Listen to how the Apostle Paul immediately applies the "Golden Chain of Redemption" to living your life in Romans 8:31-39. *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died – more than that, who was raised – who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

It is about a mindset of faith. In Christ, I have won the war. So now, in faith, I can fight the battles. And no matter how bad I lose, I still win. No matter how overcome I get, I still overcome. No matter how vulnerable I become, I'm still victorious. I believe in *the blood of the Lamb*. This is my testimony. Jesus conquered death, and I will conquer life, because Jesus has conquered me. Has he conquered you?

If you have surrendered to King Jesus, you will overcome. Amen.