

# Power Over Sin



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By Jonathan Mukwiri

**P**ower over sin is achieved by Christ abiding in the heart and His grace exemplified in the life. Power over sin is only possible in Christ. It is Christ, the Son of God, the one to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, who does the work of overcoming sin. The secret of overcoming sin is to have Christ in us. If Christ is in the heart to do the overcoming, continual victory is gained. Christ lives in us by faith. “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17). Faith brings Christ’s victory. “For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). In that living faith, we can say: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

The Bible defines sin as “the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). Sin is the disobedience to the law of God. Sin separates us from God: “Your iniquities have separated you from your God” (Isaiah 59:2). The Son of God died to save us from disobedience.

God calls man back to holiness. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16). But without divine aid, of himself man is incapable of realising the sinfulness of sin, and incapable of reaching the high standard of perfection. "Without me," Jesus said, "ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Through Christ and in Christ alone can man, dead in sins, receive newness of life. Thus man is called to live by faith to overcome sin.

Living by faith reveals that Christ has long given us power over sin. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue; Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:1-4). Christ "hath given unto us all things," which includes power over sin. Victory is ours to take by faith, and the only reason why we may not have victory is because we do not take it. By believing God's promises, they become effectual.

## **Power of forgiveness of sin**

This passage illustrates the power of forgiveness of sin: “And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, this man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men” (Matthew 9:2-8).

The scribes did not believe that Jesus could forgive sin. In order to show that He had power to forgive sins, He healed the palsied man. This miracle was done for the express purpose of illustrating the work of forgiving sin, and demonstrating its power. Jesus said to the palsied man, “Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house,” that they and we might know His power to

forgive sin. The power exhibited in healing of that man is the power bestowed in the forgiveness of sin.

Note particularly that the effect of the words of Jesus continued after they were spoken. They made a change in the man, and that change was permanent. Even so it must be in the forgiveness of sin. The common idea is that when God forgives sin the change is in Himself, and not in the man. It is thought that God finally ceases to hold anything against the one who has sinned. But this is to imply that God had hardness against the man, which is not the case. God is not a man; He does not cherish enmity. It is not because God has a hard feeling in His heart against a sinner that He forgives him, but because the sinner has something in his heart. God is all right, – the man is all wrong, therefore God forgave the man that he also may be all right.

When Jesus, illustrating the forgiveness of sin, said to the man, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house," the man arose obedient to his voice. The power that was in the words of Jesus raised him up and made him well. That power remained in him, and it was in the strength that was given him on removing the palsy that he walked in all the time to come, provided, of course, that he kept the faith. The Psalmist illustrates it this way: "I waited patiently

for the LORD; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings” (Psalm 40:1-2).

There is life in the words of God. Jesus said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). The word received in faith brings the life of God to the soul. So when the penitent soul hears the words, “Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee,” and receives those words as living words of the living God, he is a different man, because a new life has begun in him. It is the power of God’s forgiveness, and that alone, is what keeps him from sin. If he continues in sin after receiving pardon, it is because he has not grasped the fullness of the blessing that was given him in the forgiveness of his sins.

In the case before us, the man received new life. His palsied condition was simply the wasting away of the natural life. He was partially dead. The words of Christ gave him fresh life. But this new life that was given to his body, and which enabled him to walk was but an illustration, both to him and to the scribes, of the unseen life of God, which he had received in the words, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” and which had made him a new creature in Christ.

With this simple and clear illustration before us, we may understand some of the words of the apostle Paul, which otherwise are “hard to be understood.” First read Colossians 1:12-14: “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” See the same statement concerning redemption through Christ’s blood, in 1 Peter 1:18-19; and in Revelation 5:9.

Mark two points: We have redemption through Christ’s blood, and this redemption is the forgiveness of sins. But the blood is the life (See Genesis 9:4; Revelation 17:13-14). Hence Colossians 1:14 really tells us we have redemption through Christ’s life. But does not the Scripture say that we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son? It does, and that is just what is here taught. Christ “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity” (Titus 2:14). He “gave Himself for our sins” (Galatians 1:4). In giving Himself, He gives His life. In shedding His blood, He pours out His life. But in giving up His life, He gives it to us. That life is righteousness, even the perfect righteousness of



God, so that when we receive it we are “made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Now we may read Romans 3:23-25, and find that it is not so very difficult: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified” [that is, made righteous and doers of the law] “freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission” [sending away] “of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”

All have sinned. The whole life has become sin. Even the thoughts have become evil (Mark 7:21). And to be carnally minded is death. Therefore the life of sin is a living death. If the soul is not freed from this, it will end in eternal death. There is no power in man to get righteousness out of the holy law of God; therefore God in His mercy puts His own righteousness into all that believe. He makes us righteous as a free gift out of the riches of His grace. He does this by His words, for He declares – speaks – His righteousness upon and into all who have faith in the blood of Christ, in Him is God’s righteousness, for in Him dwells all the Divine fullness (Colossians 1:19; 2:9). This declaring the righteousness of God upon us is the remission or taking away of sin. Thus

God takes away the sinful life by putting His own righteous life in its place; it is power of forgiveness of sin – “the power of an endless life” (Hebrews 7:16).

It is the beginning of Christian life. It is receiving the life of God by faith. How is it continued? – Just as it is begun. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him” (Colossians 2:6). For “the just shall live by faith.” The secret of living the Christian life is simply that of holding fast the life which, received at the beginning, forgives the sin. God forgives sin by taking it away. He justifies the ungodly by making him godly. He reconciles the rebel sinner to Himself by taking away his rebellion, and making him a loyal and law-abiding subject.

Often people are defensive of sin because they have not been able to stop doing it in their own strength. But this needs not be. Look not to yourself to overcome sin. Christ says, “Without Me, ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Without Christ, you are literally without strength. Christ says, “No man can come unto Me except my Father draw him” (John 6:44). God draws all men. He desires all men to be saved. He calls unto all men, “Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 45:22). God draws us by His love; He gives us strength to

accept His drawing; He freely accepts us when we come. The drawing, the victory and glory, is of God.

No one who reads the sixth chapter of Romans intelligently can believe that the Christian is free to practice sin. Paul utterly devastates the doctrine that a believer should keep on falling into sin. It is true that provision is made for cleansing in case sin is committed, but “the just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17) makes it possible to overcome temptation and to live a life of perfect obedience in Christ Jesus.

In fact, the promises of the Bible are so clear and specific on this point that it is hard to get confused. And just because one may not have grown into that fullness of faith that brings constant victory, he should not, therefore, deny the power of God to give such deliverance. When Peter began sinking in the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:28-30), it was not because God’s plan or power had failed. Peter could have rationalised, like so many modern Christians, and said, ‘God did not want me to walk on the water, and besides, it is impossible for anybody to do such a thing anyway.’ Like Adam, we tend to place the ultimate blame on God when we fail to follow His plan for holiness (Genesis 3:11-12).

## **Victory is only in Christ**

Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed. It was the tempter's purpose to thwart the divine plan in man's creation, and fill the earth with woe and desolation. And he would point to all this evil as the result of God's work in creating man.

In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). But after his sin, he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God. Such is still the condition of the unrenewed heart. It is not in harmony with God, and finds no joy in communion with Him. The sinner could not be happy in God's presence; he would shrink from that companionship.

It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken; for our

hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one” (Job 14:4). “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). We must trust all unto Christ.

Education, culture, the exercise of the will, or human effort – all have their proper sphere, but they are powerless to cleanse us of sin. They may produce an outward correctness of behaviour, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.

Victory is in the life of Christ. The life of Christ is divine power. In the time of temptation the victory is won beforehand. When Christ is abiding in us, we are justified by faith, and we have His life abiding in us. But in that life He gained the victory over all sin, so the victory is ours before the temptation comes. When Satan comes with his temptation, he has no power, for we have the life of Christ, and that in us wards him off every time. Oh, the glory of the thought, that there is victory in the life of Christ, and that we may have it! “The just live by faith” because

Christ lives in them. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Yes, we are in this flesh, but in this flesh there dwells the divine life of Christ.

The Saviour said, "Except a man be born from above," unless he shall receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life, "he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The idea that it is necessary only to develop the good that exists in man by nature, is a fatal deception. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). Of Christ it is written, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4) – the only "name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

It is not enough to perceive the loving-kindness of God, to see the benevolence, the fatherly tenderness, of His character. It is not enough to discern the wisdom and justice of His law, to see that it is founded upon the eternal principle of love.

Paul the apostle saw all this when he exclaimed, "I consent unto the law that it is good." "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." But he added, in the bitterness of his soul-anguish and despair, "I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:16, 12, 14). He longed for the purity, the righteousness, to which in himself he was powerless to attain, and cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24). Such is the cry that has gone up from burdened hearts in all lands and in all ages. To all, there is but one answer, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Victory is ours in Christ for taking by faith.

Only in Christ can we overcome sin. In vain are men's dreams of progress, in vain all efforts for the uplifting of humanity, if they neglect the one Source of hope and help for the fallen race. "Every good gift and every perfect gift" (James 1:17) is from God. There is no true excellence of character apart from Him. And the only way to God is Christ. He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6).

## **Power to keep the law**

Power to keep the law is found only in Christ, and by faith we obtain it. “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:4). “The law of the LORD is perfect” (Psalm 19:7), “the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12), and its standard so high that man in himself cannot fulfil it! Christ has the law dwelling in Him, for He is the author of the law. Only Christ, dwelling in us, can keep His own law in us. Many fail to obtain righteousness because they fail to seek it by faith. The obedience of faith is the only obedience that God accept since man’s fall.

The law is “made known to all nations for the obedience of faith” (Romans 16:26). The faith here is a working faith. The great characteristic of faith is, that it works. Not that works are attached to it, but works come from it. “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26). Faith “worketh by love” (Galatians 5:6). If you call it faith, but if no works come from it, it is not faith. It says, “Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4). In other words, the just man, he who obeys the law, shall live an obedient life by his faith. The obedience of a just man springs from his



faith; hence he is not lifted up, for the obedience is not his personal action, but rather action of faith.

Keeping the law is always a work of faith, and it is from faith to faith. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). The gospel of Christ is God's power unto salvation, but only "to every one that believeth" (verse 16); in it the righteousness of God is revealed. The righteousness of God is the perfect law of God, which is but the transcript of His own righteous will. This true gospel is God's remedy to sin; its work, therefore, must be to bring men into harmony with the law, – to cause the workings of the righteous law to be manifested in their lives. But this is wholly a work of faith, – the righteousness of God is revealed from "faith to faith," – faith in the beginning, and faith to the end, – "as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (verse 17).

Keeping the law by faith in Christ is true in all ages since the fall of man, and will be true until the saints of God have His name in their foreheads, and see Him as He is. It was from Habakkuk 2:4 that Paul quoted Romans 1:17. If the prophets had not revealed it, the first Christians could not have known of it; for they had only the Old Testament. To say that in the most ancient times men had but imperfect

idea of faith in Christ is to say that there were no just men in those times. But Paul goes back to the very beginning and cites an instance of saving faith. He says: “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous” (Hebrews 11:4). He says of Noah, also, that it was by faith that he built the ark to the saving of his house; “by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (verse 7). We say, their faith was in Christ, because it was faith unto salvation, and besides the name of Jesus “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Keeping the law is wholly of faith, for “without faith *it is impossible to please*” God (Hebrews 11:6). And without faith, no attempt to keep the law can meet the approval of God. Without faith any deeds of the law will come infinitely short of perfect righteousness of God, which is the only standard. Many Christians find it hard to fulfill the requirements of the law, and mournfully say they have almost lost confidence in themselves – if only they would fully lose confidence in themselves and put their whole confidence in the Lord, “Mighty; He will save” them (Zephaniah 3:17)!

## All power in Christ Jesus

We hear of Satan, that he is against us, to cause us to sin. “What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?” (Romans 8:31) – this is a verse you need to firmly hold. In the end, all who overcame Satan “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony” (Revelation 12:11). Christ overcame Satan by the word of His testimony, for each time He responded, “It is written” (Matthew 4:4). Whenever Satan approaches, remember to say, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” God gave us His Son; Christ is Emmanuel, “God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

If God be for us, it makes no difference that Satan is against us. Christ already defeated Satan. After He resurrected, for Satan could not hold Him in the grave, Christ declared, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). Then if all power has been given to Christ in heaven and in earth, where is there any left for Satan? None! In a contest with Christ, Satan has no power; so if we have Christ in us, Satan cannot prevail against us.

The important point is that when Christ is in your life, you have everything else you could ever desire. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely

give us all things” (Romans 8:32). There is that term again – “all things.” You will find it also in 2 Peter 1:3: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.”

When you put those texts together, an incredible picture emerges. By claiming the presence of Christ in your life, you also receive everything that Christ possesses. The apostle Paul described it this way: “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Those Christians who doubt the possibility of overcoming sin completely should read these verses carefully. The words “righteousness,” “redemption,” and “sanctification” promises us more than deliverance from the guilt of our past sins. The word “redemption” is not limited to redemption from the guilt of sin, but from the power of sin also. The word “sanctification” refers to continued justification. A man is justified as soon as he exercises true faith in Christ, and can only retain his state of justification by continuing in faith-obedience to the law. It may then be said that sanctification is continued justification. As truth is revealed, each new duty only makes the performance of others possible, and so “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and

more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18). The word “righteousness” literally means right doing and applies to a dynamic fulfilment of God’s will. They are big words; they have the connotation of being set free, both from the guilt and the practice of sin.

The idea that full deliverance from the guilt of sin is included in Christ’s work of our redemption, but only partial deliverance from the power of sin, is a perversion of the gospel. Jesus did not come to save us from the consequences of sin only, but to save us from the sin itself. Salvation is not a negative thing – not just the absence of something.

He did not come just to take away something – our guilt – but also to give us something – victory over sin. For God to forgive us and leave us under the power of continued sin would make God an accomplice to sin. He not only counts us righteous through the imputation of His atoning death, but He makes us righteous through the impartation of His victorious life – justification and sanctification twined.

As already mentioned, a thoughtful reading of the entire sixth chapter of Romans should produce assurance that victory is ours. We can add the following five verses. First, 1 Corinthians 15:57 – “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Second, 1 John 5:4

– “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Third, Philippians 2:5 – “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” Fourth, 2 Corinthians 5:21 – “... that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Fifth, 1 John 3:6 – “Whatsoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.” Victory is ours in Christ to take by faith.

All who feel their need of a Saviour, and respond in faith to His kind invitation, will gain the victory over sin. That brings us to an interesting question: Can a person believe that there is no way to stop sinning, and yet make plans not to sin? It is impossible. The Bible commands us to “make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14). We make provision for sin by holding that it is impossible to have victory over sin. But if you are not gaining victory over sin, then sin is making victory over you.

## **Obedience and overcoming**

The book of Revelation is addressed to the seven churches of Asia. In each of the churches certain ones received high commendation and glorious promises of heavenly reward. Without exception the

blessing was extended “He that overcometh shall inherit all things” (Revelation 21:7). Those seven churches symbolise every period of the Christian church from the apostles to the end of time. If victory over sin is not possible, no soul will be saved from those centuries of time. To deny total victory over sin is to rob God of the glory of His mission.

Christ says, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things.” To overcome is to gain victory. Inheriting is not the overcoming, for it comes after overcoming. The overcoming is now. Those that inherit all things will have gained victories now. And how do we gain the victory over sin? “And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

Our faith does not negate obedience. “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law” (Romans 3:31). Faith establishes the law in our hearts. This is because true faith brings Christ into the heart, and the law of God being in Christ, the law is thus, with Christ in us, firmly established in our hearts. And thus “as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous” (Romans 5:19). The “One” who obeys is the Lord Jesus Christ, and His obedience is done in the heart of everyone who believes. It is by the

obedience of One that many are justified and made righteous. Thus we can in faith say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

When the Lord commands, it is not you who are to do that, that the Lord pleases; but His own word "shall accomplish that which I please" (Isaiah 55:11). You are not to read or hear the word of God and say, 'I must do that, I will do that.' You are to open the heart to that word, that it may accomplish the will of God in you. The word of God itself is to do it, and you are to let it. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you" (Colossians 3:16). If then Christ lives in you, and He obeys His own law in you, there is no boasting about obedience. If you are asked, are you without sin? If Christ lives in you, your only reply will be, "Not I, but Christ." If asked, do you keep the law? "Not I, but Christ." As it is by His obedience alone that men are made doers of the law, to Christ alone be the glory.

## **Steps to victory over sin**

Faith is the first step to victory over sin. Faith is the subsequent and final step to victory over sin. It



is faith from beginning to finish! Faith that we are in Christ born of God – "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

What is faith? Faith is "the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). By faith we know that which is true in the things that pertain to our salvation, but which we cannot perceive by our natural senses. It constitutes an avenue through which we receive the most important information, which could not come to us by any means over which we have control.

Mark this: No one can overcome the world and gain eternal life, save he that is born of God. And no one can know that he is born of God except by faith. Without the evidence which faith supplies, we should be without power to withstand the forces of evil.

Faith is the point at which Satan makes his attack. He caused Adam and Eve to fall by getting them to doubt God's word. He presented before Eve appearances which made his story plausible. He, a serpent, had eaten of the forbidden tree, and had, he said, acquired great wisdom and the power of speech; and therefore it was not true that in the day one ate of it he would surely die. He succeeded with Eve, and he has tried the same tactics with great success upon her descendants. Faith is the

connecting link between the soul and God; and when that is broken by doubt, you are Satan's prey.

Yet our faith is not in a vacuum. God has said, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1). This is true, because God has spoken it; and upon His word, faith rests. And it is just here that the devil makes his attack. Upon this point he thought to overcome the Saviour of the world. When Christ had been in the wilderness and had fasted forty days, the tempter came and said to Him, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matthew 4:3). Satan was in effect saying to the man Jesus, 'You are not the Son of God; if you are, do something to prove it.'

And what was the evidence that the Saviour had that He was the Son of God? He had come to earth and had been born a babe in Bethlehem, and we are told that He grew up and developed in mind and physical stature like any other baby that has come into the world. He had been made in all things like unto His brethren in mortal flesh (Hebrews 2:17).

There was no outward evidence, nothing that the natural senses could grasp, that Jesus was indeed the Christ. Isaiah had prophesied of Him, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isaiah

53:2); and when Peter said to Him, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus answered, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:16-17).

The Jews looked for a deliverer who would show in his outward appearance that he was of Divine origin, and they did not find him. And when Jesus was alone in the wilderness, at the end of His long fast, weak and emaciated, there was certainly nothing about Him to afford any outward evidence whatever of His Divinity. Under such circumstances it was that the tempter said to Him, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread;" and the temptation to Jesus to doubt, and to do something to prove to Himself that He was indeed the Son of God, must have been very strong.

But if Jesus had done as Satan suggested, He would have manifested a lack of faith. He stood just where we must then, – upon the evidence of faith. God had said, "This is My beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17), to have done something to prove to Himself that this was true, would have been doubting God.

As Satan came to Jesus (see Matthew 4), so he comes to us. God has said, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1). But Satan says, 'You are not born of God; all the

appearance is against it. Look at the sins that you have committed! If you are the son of God, what is your evidence?’ And just as Jesus resisted Satan, so must we resist him; not by essaying to prove by doing something or to produce some tangible proof that we are sons of God, but by resting upon the evidence of faith, which grasps the word of God.

Living faith brings further evidence of our Divine relationship; for when Jesus said to Satan, after the latter had sought to induce Him to worship him, “Get thee hence” (Matthew 4:10), Satan had no power to withstand His word; and he left Him, and angels came and ministered unto Him. His faith gained the victory; and so will it be with us. Thus, “from faith to faith” (Romans 1:17), are steps to victory over sin.

“Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world,” and when we get the victory over the world by faith, it is an evidence of our sonship which Satan cannot question. “Resist the devil” – resist the devil “steadfast in the faith” – “and he will flee from you.” “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ” – that is, “confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” – yea, Christ has come into your flesh, He lives in your heart – “is born of God,” and “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (see 1 John 5:1-5; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9; 1 John 4:2).

To resist temptation constantly, "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). The battle against sin is not won until sin has "become exceedingly sinful" and you "have resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (Romans 7:13; Hebrews 12:4). You "can do all things through Christ which strengthenth" you (Philippians 4:13).

## **Concluding Remarks**

Power over sin has been presented to you in its simplicity! Victory over sin is yours by faith in Christ.

"Faith without works is dead" (James 2:26); and on the other hand, obedience without faith is impossible, as is shown by our Saviour's words in John 15:4-5 "Abide in Me, and I in you ... without Me ye can do nothing;" and the apostle says, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:8).

The man who is destitute of faith in Christ cannot keep the law or do any act that is really good. In our best efforts there is so much imperfection, that but for the continual imputation of Christ's righteousness to make up for our deficiencies, we should be lost.

The best that we alone can do is bad. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). We see the force of the words: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

If faith brings victory, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith" (Romans 3:27). The redeemed saint will have no cause for boasting over the lost sinner. True, the law, when applied to their lives, reports perfection in the one case, and only sin in the other; but the saint cannot boast, for without Christ he would have been nothing. If Christ had not put his own righteousness into him, he would be in as hopeless a condition as the sinner. For eternity the redeemed will join with the heavenly choir in saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Revelation 5:12).

"That no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:29-30). Faith is power over sin. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17); Christ is "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jeremiah 23:6).

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