

The Victory of FAITH

Tony H. Espinosa • James Fite

As believers in Christ, we live in two realms simultaneously: the physical realm of seen things, which is corruptible and decaying, and the spiritual realm of unseen things, where the eternal purpose of God is carried out according to His perfect will. Because we are in the world but not of the world, as the Lord indicated to us (John 17:11, 14-15), our hope should not be in the things that are seen but in the things that are not seen. Yet the unseen things are not merely a hope for the future. We can participate in them today and thus live in the spiritual realm of God's eternal purpose while sojourning in the corruptible, physical realm. For this we must exercise subjective faith as "the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1), which things are Christ and all the spiritual realities in Him.

We are, however, faced with a problem: Satan operates through many means to frustrate us from grasping the unseen spiritual realities in Christ and making them real in our subjective experience. How are we to prevail against this satanic assault? The apostle John tells us: "This is the victory which has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:4). Faith, then, not only enables us to substantiate the unseen realm; it empowers us to continue victoriously in it and to contend triumphantly for it. Although this realization in itself is enough to make any believer rejoice, we need to consider further how we can exercise our subjective faith unto victory in a practical, daily way.

Applying the Facts of Christ's Victory by Faith

The Bible records many divine facts regarding Christ's victory over every enemy. When we acknowledge and substantiate those accomplished facts by the exercise of faith, the Spirit of reality applies them to our inner being and makes them real in our subjective experience (John 16:13-15). Consequently, we spontaneously

overcome Satan, his work, and the world usurped by him. It is a fact that Christ was manifested to "destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). It is a fact that He destroyed the devil and his power of death on the cross (Heb. 2:14). It is a fact that His resurrection overcame death (Acts 2:24). It is a fact that His ascension placed Him far above the devil and his power (Eph. 1:20-22). It is a fact that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him (Matt. 28:18). It is a fact that He lives in us and that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world (Gal. 2:20; 1 John 4:4). It is a fact that He has crucified the world (Gal. 6:14), the old man (Rom. 6:6), and "the flesh with its passions and its lusts" (Gal. 5:24). Christ's many accomplishments are too numerous to list here, but they are fully unveiled in the New Testament, which is not only a record of God's saving work in Christ but also a book of bequests to the heirs of God's salvation. By daily acknowledging the facts of God's accomplished work in Christ and substantiating them by faith, we experience those facts as spiritual realities in our daily living.

For example, it is a fact that Christ has overcome the world (John 16:33). As we exercise our subjective faith to lay hold of Christ's objective victory over the world, the accomplished fact becomes our experience because faith ushers us into an organic union with the One who has already overcome the world: "You have overcome them [i.e., the false prophets as antichrists] because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Ultimately, our overcoming is effected by this union, as Witness Lee helps us to see:

Our faith brings us into an organic union, and it is this organic union, not the faith directly, that overcomes the world. We may say that faith is the means for us to be united with the Triune God. By believing in the Lord Jesus, we are brought into an organic union with the Triune God; this union, produced by faith, then overcomes the world. (3:4011)

Moreover, our faith overcomes the world because we,