

by Commissioner Jennifer Walker

Despite this knowledge several years ago, 26 year old Sean Cole from Darwin, while attending a birthday party with his friends, swam in the river with his friend. He was attacked and killed by a five metre long crocodile. He was a local, he knew about the Mary River, but as his friends said 'he was having fun and let his guard down.'

The result is they are defeated and demoralised in their Christian journey.

- Dr Neil Anderson says, 'No more than 15% of the church community are enjoying the freedom and joy available to them in Jesus Christ.' Neil Anderson is the founder and president emeritus of Freedom in Christ Ministries.
- Ray C. Stedman comments that while it is true the devil can never totally defeat a Christian, he demoralises. He says, 'He can frighten us, make us miserable, and defeat us in many ways. He can make us weak and barren and unfruitful in the things of God. It is quite possible, at least occasionally, to be more miserable as a Christian that you ever were before.' Ray Stedman (1917–1992) was an American evangelical pastor and author.
- Eddie Smith writes, 'Many believers are happy that they're saved but not saved enough to be happy. They walk with one foot in darkness and the other in the light. Rather than marching from victory unto victory. They drag from one defeat to the next. They straddle the fence and continually struggle to live up to their kingdom potential. In their wake lies one failed good intention after another.' Eddie Smith is cofounder and president of the U.S. Prayer Centre in Houston, Texas.
- Ron Phillips says 'Jesus did not die for a church full of diseased, depressed Christians in bondage to the enemy. He wants His people to be victorious!' Ron Phillips is an author and the senior pastor at Abba's House in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

'Why should I be a slave to sin, to foes without or foes within? Sometimes I mount, sometimes cast down, sometimes all smile, sometimes all frown.

Chorus: There's victory for me! There's victory for me! Through the blood of the Lamb there is victory for me; he came to set his people free and give them perfect victory.'

Why do so many Christians live defeated lives? Up and down like a seesaw, bound to their past, spiritually stuck, overcome with guilt, shame and condemnation, stuck in their anger, fears, feelings of unworthiness and sinful habits, existing with mental and emotional torment. Let's be honest, we've been in those places.

Through the finished work of Jesus Christ we have been promised victory over the power of sin and the enemy.

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Jesus said, 'In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer (take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted)! For I **have overcome the world**. (I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you), John 16:33 Amp).

In our relationship with Jesus Christ we are more than conquerors, sharing in his victory. This should be the norm for God's people. But unfortunately as Vance Havner says, 'The average Christian is so subnormal that when he sees normal Christians he thinks they are abnormal!' What does it mean to live in Victory?

1. THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST

It is based solely on the finished work of Jesus Christ. The cross, where Jesus shed his blood for the sins of the world is the source of our salvation, the pinnacle of our faith and the place of victory! There is no other place.

*You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He cancelled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, **he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross**, (Colossians 2:13–15 NLT).*

Firstly through His death on the cross Jesus Christ has forgiven us all our sins, past, present and future. Verse 14 says, 'he cancelled the record of charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.'

When we go to the bank and take out a loan to buy a car or a house, we sign a contract that says we owe a certain amount of money to the bank and that the loan will be paid in instalments over a period of time at an agreed interest rate. The signed document is our IOU, we are in debt to the bank and we have signed to say that we will pay back the money.

As far as our sins go, we are in debt, in fact we are bankrupt, unable to pay the debt. However in his abundant mercy Jesus has taken our sins away by nailing them to the cross. The record (document) has been destroyed.

In ancient times they used to write on a type of paper called papyrus, made from vellum, a substance created from the skins of animals. The ink they used had no acid and so in order to save paper, they would take a wet sponge and wipe the writing out. This is the picture that Paul paints in this verse. When we receive the forgiveness of God, the written record of our sins on the slate is wiped clean.

Using a contemporary example, it could be likened to our sins being listed on Word document on the computer. When we repent, the writing is highlighted and then the delete button is pushed. The record of our sins disappears, the page is clean and Satan now has no base for accusations.

Verse 15 **he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross**.

When Roman generals went off to war and defeated their foes, on their return home a triumphant march was held through the streets of Rome. The victorious General with his troops would march out in front and behind them would trail the prisoners of war along with the booty. The enemy stripped of their weapons, wealth and power were put on display. This is the picture that Paul is painting here.

Satan and his demons have been defeated and disarmed, stripped of their authority and power (once and for all) and have been put on public display for all to see. No longer do they have any right to accuse, discourage or defeat the children of God. Hebrews 2:14 says it succinctly 'in dying he broke the power of the devil who had the power of death.'

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The key to walking in victory is to apply and enforce the victory of the Cross. We are fighting on the foundation of a victory that has already been won. We don't have to go through life feeling soiled, feeling as if we are damaged goods or drag the failures and regrets of the past behind us. (Mind you that is what Satan wants). At the cross we are forgiven, cleansed and set free, rescued from the kingdom of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of his dear son, (Colossians 1:13).

I know a lady who had to get married as a teenager because she became pregnant. Even though she was a committed Christian, for over forty years she couldn't break free from the guilt, condemnation and shame of that one mistake. It affected the whole of her life. It defined her. That's exactly the way the enemy wanted it. The enemy will always try and reduce you, make you look and feel dirty, inferior, insignificant, imperfect, unworthy, a sinner. Never adds anything good or positive to our lives.

It is only through the blood we are forgiven and cleansed, made righteous. That is enough. The power of the blood annuls all the enemy's accusations.

In what area of your life has the enemy pinned you down? What discourages, defeats you?

2. OUR UNION WITH CHRIST

The story doesn't end there. Jesus' post resurrection state is new and powerful.

'....seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come,' (Ephesians 1:20b-21).

Jesus has ascended back to heaven and has been given the seat of honour at the right hand of God. It is a position of pre-eminence, honour, majesty, authority and power. All things are under his feet, the angels, Satan and his hierarchy of demonic entities, every ruler and authority.

....God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (Philippians 2:9-10 NIV).

Here's the good news, this should excite you. In our union with Jesus Christ we are seated with him 'far above all' powers.

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, (Ephesians 2:6 NIV).

Are you familiar with the phrase, 'he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth'? It was once the tradition for the godfather to present a silver spoon to his godchild at baptism, and a silver spoon became a common christening present. But the children of wealthy or aristocratic parents didn't have to wait for the christening to receive the gift, because they were born into a position of privilege and had an abundance of silver spoons ready for use from birth. The saying, 'he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth' referenced the fact that a child was born into a family of wealth and privilege.

Kate and William's son, Prince George has been 'born with a silver spoon in his mouth.' He is a little boy born to be king; born into a palace and privilege, his future is preordained. He will have the best education, wear the most expensive clothes and meet the most important people. In a material sense he will want for nothing. The only downside is as one reporter said, 'he will be a prisoner of privilege' because he won't have freedom to choose his destiny.

Figuratively speaking in our spiritual birth, we have been 'born with a silver spoon in our mouth Holy Spirit! We were born again into a life of victory; victory is our birthright, it's the privilege of being in God's family. We are seated together with the exalted post resurrection Christ in the heavenly realms on victory ground. Everything under Christ's feet is under our feet. Our role is to enforce the victory that is already ours, (we're not fighting for victory, but from victory!).

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What that means is, there is no challenge big enough or no demon powerful enough to stop us walking in victory. We choose to meet each day either in the spirit of the tomb or the spirit of the resurrection.

For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God, (1 John 5:4-5).

Lieut.-Colonels Sam and Donni Pho returned home after serving as the Regional Commanders in the Hong Kong and Macau Command. During their time in Hong Kong they made regular visits to China to visit the remaining TSA officers still alive (and their families). In recent times the last two of these elderly officers were Promoted to Glory.

During the cultural revolution in China all foreign missionaries were forced to leave China, and all denominations were disbanded, their properties were confiscated and there was a unification of the churches (although the hidden agenda was the elimination of the church). The reality was many Christians were persecuted, treated cruelly and even martyred during these years.

TSA Officers were separated from their families and sent to communes, factories or prisoner camps. Major Yin Hung Shun, was sent to work on a commune for over 15 years and treated harshly, working long and arduous hours on the land, experiencing acute hunger on many occasions, interrogated and they consistently attempted to brainwash him.

During one period he was sent to work in the pig pens, which were almost bearable in the warm weather, but during the winter season, he was often working in the slime, swill and excrement. But Major Yin set about doing the best job he could during his work hours. Each evening when the work gang were marched home to their living quarters, he would fall behind the group and have his own church service, singing each day in English the words of a chorus that says:

All my days and all my hours, all my will and all my powers, all the passion of my soul, not a fragment but the whole, shall be thine dear Lord.

The author of Major Yin's biography says that he spoke little of his personal troubles, only the mercies of God. Despite his horrific circumstances this faithful officer positioned himself with Jesus Christ and lived in victory.

When we declare that we stand on victory ground there is a disturbance in the heavenly realm a power is unleashed over our lives and circumstances. Faith has a voice, we need to speak victory!

"Today is my day of victory. In Jesus name I declare victory over... or where appropriate – I cancel all agreements with and assignments of Satan," (Fears, anxieties, stress, worry, depression, oppression, grief, guilt, hatred, bitterness, unforgiveness, bitterness, resentment, tiredness, addictions, sexual issues, infirmity, sickness, death, suicide, poverty, witchcraft, generational curses).

3. THE FULLNESS AND POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The authority we have to overcome the enemy is exercised by the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power,(Ephesians 6:10 NIV).

Greek word translated as power= kratei, meaning a power that overcomes resistance; the same word used when Jesus performed miracles.

In our own strength we are no match for the enemy, the hosts of Satan's forces bent on pushing in against us hindering and obstructing the work of God. In the limitations of our humanness we cannot fulfil God's purposes in the world. Left to our own resources we cannot make ourselves a holy people. The Kingdom of God is supernatural ground and we require supernatural strength to overcome in this world. A divine power!

There is a mighty power available for us, it is the same power that was released when Jesus was raised from the dead.

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*I also pray that you will understand the **incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honour at God's right hand in the heavenly realms,** (Ephesians 1:19–20 NLT).*

Some of the superlative adjectives used to describe the word power in this verse are 'incredible, incomparable, exceeding greatness, surpassing greatness.' It is a power that is so great I doubt that we have even begun to fully comprehend and experience it. The church is like swimmers at the beach keeping a safe distance from the shore when there is an ocean of God's power to be explored.

Resurrection power has come to us through the promised Holy Spirit.

I have a very loving and thoughtful husband who when he wants to show his love will buy me a box of chocolates. I could receive those chocolates and place them in the fridge for an occasion in the future when I may feel like a chocolate. No, but that is not me, I can't wait to undo the wrapping and start appropriating the gift as it was intended.

At the moment of conversion, when we receive God's gift of salvation, God comes to live in the believer through His Spirit. But he never forces Himself on us, but waits to be appropriated in our lives. At some point we have to invite the Holy Spirit to have full control of our lives. Commissioner Edward Read states it like this: 'Christians ought to know that they become temples of the Spirit the moment they become Christians... but he who is resident must be invited to become president.'

Dennis Bennett (1917–1991) gives us another picture like this, "A man may push his way past my secretary and come into my office and sit down while I am busy at my desk. I know that he is there, but I keep working, not acknowledging his presence. After a few moments the telephone rings and someone on the other end of the line asks, 'Have you a man in your office? And proceeds to describe my visitor. I reply, 'Yes he is here, but I haven't laid aside my work to welcome him. I haven't received him yet.'

But then suppose I lay aside my work and give my visitor a cordial welcome and devote my undivided attention to him and ask him, 'Why are you here and how can I help you?' Then my visitor may rise to his feet and say, 'I'm so glad you've finally received me, I have a cheque here for a million dollars that I want to give you, I've got an important message for you from your friend and many other good things I want to share with you now that you have received me.'" Dennis Bennett was an American Episcopal Priest, theologian and author.

We have the Holy Spirit present in our lives, but he sits waiting to be received. As we welcome the Spirit, giving him our full attention, he releases His gifts and power into our lives. He equips and empowers us to reign in life, to live as conquerors as we were intended.

The unwrapping of the gift of the Holy Spirit is called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is a second subsequent work of God when we give the Spirit permission to invade the whole of our lives, to become the president and not the resident.

From its inception TSA has believed in a second work of grace whereby the believer welcomes the fullness of God's presence into their lives through the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately I don't believe it's always been effectively taught and explained, but it is one of the foundational truths of our movement.

TSA was born of a Holy Spirit revival. Originally William Booth named the Sunday morning meetings, 'Baptism of Fire', because it was the opportunity for the newly saved to get sanctified, immersed in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reports like the following abounded in the 'War Cry' of the day;

'After we had a few testimonies the glory came in a marvellous manner. Talk about a baptism of fire like they had at Pentecost, we were all filled and flooded and some overwhelmed with the Divine Presence. And then the Captain and the Lieutenant lay on the floor, both were filled unutterably full of glory and full of God. All of us got such a baptism we had not had for a long time.'

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A Spirit filled believer cannot be defeated by Satan and his forces.

But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world

We need the empowering of the Spirit to:

A. Give us power to act on Christ's behalf.

The Holy Spirit gifts the church with miracles and healing in order to heal the sick and cast out demons. Acts 3 records the story of Peter and John on their way to the temple for prayers encountering a lame beggar at the entrance gate. Peter looked at the man and said, 'I don't have silver or gold to give you, but what I do have I give you. In the Name of Jesus Christ stand up and walk.'

In and of ourselves we can do little, but in the Name and power of Jesus Christ we can bring radical transformation.

These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak in new languages. They will be able to handle snakes with safety, and if they drink anything poisonous, it won't hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick, and they will be healed," (Mark 16:17 NLT).

B. Guard and help us in our moments of Temptation

The power of the Holy Spirit helps us in our moment of temptation and enables us to resist and with Holy Spirit and temptation.

*We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for **God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them,*** (1 John 5:18 NLT).

*But the Lord is faithful; he will **strengthen you and guard you from the evil one,*** (2 Thesalonians 3:3 NLT).

*Yes, and the Lord will **deliver me from every evil attack** and will bring me safely into his heavenly Kingdom,* (2 Timothy 4:18 NLT).

When tempted, show you a way out so you can endure, (1 Cor 10:13).

David Wilkerson tells of a time when he was exhausted after a week of meetings and when he boarded a plane to return home he was seated in the middle seat. Either side of him were two men who separately proceeded to get out their pornographic magazines to entertain themselves on the journey. David said he closed his eyes and prayed 'Lord I can't cope with this today, please chase evil away.' David said suddenly the man on his right swore and folded up his magazine and put it away and the man on his left looked at him, swore loudly and did the same. David could find no apparent reason for their actions and began to laugh. When both the men asked what was so funny, he said 'You wouldn't believe me if I told you.'

C. Gives discernment and insight

Holy Spirit gives us eyes to see what is happening in the spiritual realm. In 2 Kings 6 there we read how the King of Aram sent his army out to find the prophet Elisha because he was continually thwarting his plans to attack the Israelites. When Elisha's servant came out one morning he found the town where they were staying surrounded by horses and chariots. In fear for his life he ran inside to inform his master. Elisha told him, 'Do not fear for those who are with us are more than those who are with them. He then prayed that the Lord would open his eyes so that he could see. The Lord answered his prayer and the servant was able to see into the invisible spiritual realm where there was a mountain full of horses, chariots and fire around them.

Prayer: The Holy Spirit helps us in our prayer life. He shows us what to pray for, how to pray and even goes before the Father on our behalf interpreting our unspoken prayers.

And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words, (Romans 8:26 NLT).

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Deliverance: The actual moment of Baptism or infilling of the Holy Spirit is a means of deliverance. No evil, no enemy, no power can stand when the glory of God invades a life.

In his book, 'The Cross and the Switchblade,' Reverend David Wilkerson tells of his ministry commenced in 1958 among the teenage gangsters, drug addicts and prostitutes of Brooklyn New York. He was the founder of Teen Challenge, a ministry that has grown to include 173 residential programs in the US and 241 Centres in other countries. And is credited in Christianity Today as being the most evangelical Christian of the 20th Century.

The program's cure rate of 86% has been recognized and substantiated by the US governments' National Institute on Drug Abuse. Teen Challenge graduates included former drug addicts, alcoholics, gang members, prostitutes and others with life-controlling habits.

What has been the secret of their success? The presence and power of God that transforms lives and breaks the power of the devil. Reverend David Wilkerson says that it is the supernatural experience of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit that has led to a dramatic deliverance from illness and addiction in these street kids. He says 'in order to be a good soldier in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ, it's not enough to be saved (wonderful as that is) we need to be baptized with the Holy Ghost.' We are saved through the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit, but there is also a second subsequent work when we are baptised, infilled, possessed by the Holy Spirit.

His ministry records countless incidents of troubled teenagers being dramatically delivered from illnesses and addictions (some being instantly healed from heroin addiction) when they received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit They were set free and given a power to live for God.

The eternal destiny of the devil and his army of evil spirits is fixed – they will be cast into a lake of fire (Revelation 20:10) As that day draws nearer our Adversary is fiercely determined to want have the last say, the world is becoming more godless, more secularised and demonic manifestations seem more prevalent. But the battle has already been won. We are victors through Him who loved us and we need to share that message with the world.

Wayne Goodall says 'If there has ever been a time when we need God's supernatural boldness and power, it is today. There has never been a day like the day in which we live. Evil seems more prevalent not than at any other time in history; and the enemy will do everything he can to stop the church from reaching more for Christ. But Satan's power is limited. He cannot stop Spirit filled Christians from doing all that God has asked them to do. You can have this power. Your hungry heart and your request is all that God needs to see and hear.' Wayne Goodall. Wayne Goodall is an author and senior pastor of First Assembly of God Church in Winston, Salem, North Carolina.

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Corinthians 15:57 NIV).

For a victorious life we can pray for deliverance of fear, anger, rejection, shame, guilt, condemnation, unforgiveness, bitterness, abuse (sexual, physical, emotional, spiritual), depression, witchcraft, addiction, sickness, occult involvement, sexual sin (immorality and pornography).