

**THE
BON AIR
PULPIT**

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March 5, 2000

Scripture: 1 John 5:3-5

Sermon: *Find the Victory Regularly*

We observe the supper of our Lord once a month in our congregation and it has been the tradition of our congregation that after the supper of our Lord we take up what we call our second offering. Men just stand at the doors and the money that is given on that occasion is then distributed throughout our community for people who have physical needs. Through your kindness each year we are able to help people to the amount of about \$10,000. People who have medical bills or utility bills, other kinds of things, with food, but occasionally there comes a need so great that we take this money that we give and use it for that.

All of you have been reading in the paper or seeing on the television about the horrific floods in Mozambique about a million people displaced. Thousands of people, they'll never know how many, are dead and so I wanted to tell you that when you leave the auditorium today there will be people at the door as is our custom but you will be aware today that that money will go to Mozambique. We already, as Southern Baptists, have some of our people on the ground there handing out food and water and providing shelter and so this money will go directly to them to enable them to get the help that they need. My understanding is that for about \$2000 that you are able to take care of 800 people. And so, we are hoping today that as you go out you will think about this and in the way in which we

can help.

Christians are aware that we face enemies from two directions. First direction is from the inside. The Bible says temptation comes along and some of our desires then begin to follow it and so at times we are our own worst enemy. Other times the temptation comes from without. And when temptation bubbles up from the culture and comes to us, the Bible calls that the world. And that one of the difficulties that we have is that people dream up things that are not in keeping with God's will and then they pass it on to us and we follow them. So, Christians need to understand how then can I deal with the temptations that arise out of myself. How can I face the temptations that come from the outside? And in the Book of 1 John, Chapter 5, it gives us a wonderful word about how we can find the victory of the temptations that come. So I wanted to read the passage of Scripture and then call our attention to how you can find victory in your life on a regular basis. Let me read, beginning in Verse 4. For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. Three times in these few verses it says the word "overcome". Now the word has the meaning only when you face a difficulty in you are able to rise above it and three times the word has this is how you can be an overcomer in your life.

Now it makes all the difference in the world how you view yourself. If you always say, well, I'm a failure, I'm no good, I could never do that. Then that's probably where you will end up. But if someone can come to you and say, listen, here is the hope, here is the encouragement, here is the help. Begin to view yourself differently, then you begin to enter into difficulties with a new sense of enthusiasm. I wanted today to come to you to

pin on your shoulder a badge that will say, you can be a winner. You can achieve victory. You can be an overcomer. Now listen to what the Bible says. The Bible says that it comes through Jesus Christ. In fact, it says it comes only through Jesus Christ. So how do I find victory in my life is not a plan it is a person. It is not a how, it is a who. But through him you are going to be able to know that from this day forward you can find victory on a regular basis in your life.

Now I want to tell you how he does it in your life. The first thing that Christ does in your life is that he does something for you. Now listen carefully, all of us understand that Jesus died on a cross for our sins. But so many people think that that's back in history somewhere. Now what you need to recognize is that while it was an historical event that when you trust in Christ it becomes a very powerful event in your life. So that when Christ died for your sins, when you trust in him you are able to die to your sins. You are able to find a new strength and a new power in your life that enables you to be able to find the strength that you never knew was available.

There is a silly little story about a man who went on vacation and he came back home and he had left a faucet on in his bathroom and his whole house was flooded. Rushed down immediately, got a mop and started mopping frantically. He couldn't get all the water so he went out and bought him a bigger mop and worked harder. That didn't do any good so he took a course on effective mopping techniques. He got a diploma and a gold seal. He learned how to mop faster than anybody else. Still couldn't keep up with the water. He rededicated himself to greater mopping. He made a commitment that he would never leave that faucet on again. And then he came to the decision that God never meant for us to live in a dry house anyway so he bought a pair of galoshes and he settled

down to live in a wet house. What he forgot to do was cut off the faucet. That indicates what is wrong with us? We have got a faucet running. The Bible says that we are sinners. And sinners sin. And we just keep pumping out the water. And until something comes into our life to cut off the faucet we are always going to be dealing with this force inside of us that is making us do things that are wrong.

Now hear it again. When Christ died on the Cross for our sins, and when I trust him he comes into my life and he cuts off the faucet. He gives me the power to be able to say, I am not going to do that anymore. It is not my strength it is his. It is not something I can do it is something he performs in my life. Christ enables me to die to my sins.

There is a beautiful story in the Old Testament that will help us to understand it. When the children of Israel were going from Egypt from their slavery to their promised land they disobeyed God. In their disobedience God said, I will send to you a plague of snakes. Now for those of us who hate snakes, I can't imagine anything worse. Snakes in your clothes, snakes under your bed, snakes everywhere. People started crying out to God. They began to say, Oh God, save us! Now listen to what God did. God said, gather us some brass and heat it and mold it in the form of a snake. Lift it up as high as you can and he said that if you will believe that God can heal you by looking at that snake you will be healed. Now notice what he did not do. He did not give them band-aids for the snakebites. He gave them a judgment on the snake. I don't need band-aids for my snakebites. I need for somebody to kill the snake. And what happens to you in Jesus Christ is that he goes after the snake. I love the

little story about the man who used to go to church all the time and he would pray publicly, "Oh Lord, I've got spider webs all in my life. Take care of the spider webs." Finally, his wife had all she could take. She said, "Lord, don't just take care of the spider webs, kill the spider." We need to have the spider killed. And what I wanted to inform you about today is that when you put your faith in Jesus Christ he takes care of the spider. He enables you to have strength to overcome in your life.

The second thing is, he does something in us. He does something for us but he does something in us. And what he does is that he sends his spirit to come to live inside of you. And what that means is no longer is it just you facing temptations, but it is Jesus and you. And you are depending on his strength and his power and he is able to provide for you what you need to be able to find the strength.

Now I think all of you remember from your high school science that on every square inch of your body there is gravity and it is pushing on every square inch of your body at 14.7 pounds a square inch. Now, I don't know how many square inches you've got but if you begin to multiply that up you realize that there is an enormous power pushing against you all the time. So you remember your high school teacher who said, what keeps you then, from caving in? Then she told you because gravity is also inside you at 14.7 pounds per square inch is pushing out. Now, if you are going to face the temptation that comes to you then what you have got to have is a power inside of you pushing back out. And what Christ wants to provide for you is that he wants to provide this power inside of you. You begin to live in his strength and live in his power.

Now let me just help you to be as

clear on that as you can. It is utterly impossible for you to do it by yourself. You are always going to fail. And not just you but everybody. And what happens to most of the people in this congregation is that in a church somewhere like this we walked down the aisle of the church and what we said was we cannot live in our own strength. We need to find strength from God. And people who are Christians are those who are living in his strength. It is his gift that he gives to us. I have said before to you that occasionally I attack a golf course. It is always an experience for people who play with me. Suppose I said, "You know what I'm going to be? I'm going to be the next Tiger Woods. I'm going to rededicate myself to play and I'm going to take lessons and I am going to spend money." I don't care what I do I'm never going to be the next Tiger Woods. But suppose by some miracle the abilities of Tiger Woods came to live inside of me. And when I got up to hit the first ball it went 300 yards. And then I began to play in the strength of Tiger Woods. Do you understand that is exactly what happens when you give your life to Christ. The spirit of Christ comes to live inside of you.

Steven Oldford, one of America's great preachers, said it this way. "There's not a demand made on my life that is not a demand made on the life of Christ who lives inside of me. And whatever the resources, he comes to be able to give me the strength that I need."

When you cut your finger you begin to find all kinds of blood that will come there because what it is trying to do is rush to meet all the strength of your body to that one cut. When temptation comes, all of the power of heaven comes rushing to that temptation to say to you, you can be an overcomer. How wonderful to be able to know that Christ is inside of us and he gives us the strength that we need. Someone said it this way. If Christ

is inside of me it is not that I have strength but that he has the ability and all he wants from me is my availability.

Another has said that in him there are not problems only plans. Christ can come to live inside of you. Now let me tell you how you can appropriate that for your life. #1 - you begin to claim the victory. Listen to me carefully. You don't try to win it yourself because you can't. You claim what has already been won for you. So if you say, Lord here is temptation, I need strength to overcome it. There is always going to be a problem. But if you say Lord, here is a problem and here is temptation, and Lord, you have already provided for me the strength and I thank you for that, then you will be able to find this new strength that will come into your life.

The second thing you need to do. Every day, you need to make yourself available to him to depend upon his strength. You begin to recognize Lord I cannot but I begin to depend upon you. Our passage of scripture said, this is the victory that overcomes the world even our faith. Now some people think faith is what you believe. Faith is dependence. Faith is recognizing you cannot so you depend upon God. Every day, Lord, I cannot, but with you I can.

Third one - you just simply every day make yourself available unto him. Lord, not in my strength but in yours. Not in my ability but in your power. And maybe a good illustration is the Mother of Jesus. You will recall the angel came to her one day and said, you have been chosen of all the women in the world to bear the Son on God into the world. And I know that you have never slept with a man but the Holy Spirit is going to come upon you and you are going to bring forth a baby. And that little teenage girl looked up at the angel and said, how can that be? Then you will recall, she turned and she said, but whatever you

want to do with me I give myself to you. You may say, I can't find victory. I've tried that before and I have been defeated. What you need to do is to come to him and say, "Lord, I don't know how it works but I know better now that it does. And I want to let you do your will in my life." And you just give yourself unto him. Some of you are in this room who have said, "You know, I would give my life to Christ but I don't want to fail." I'm not offering you a life of failure. I am offering you a life of victory. And that in Jesus Christ if you will give your life to him he'll come rushing to you to do something inside of you to change you and to give you a power you never knew you could have. Surely, that is what you would want. To know that you can find victory.

I hope today that if you have never given your life to Christ that you will give it to him. You are not any different than the rest of us in the room. All of us are failures. Christ alone is the answer. I hope you will give your life to him.