

Session 6

April 10, 2022

A LIFE OF VICTORY

John 16:19-22; 27-33

Inherently, everybody wants to win. Whether it's the thrill of competition to secure it, or the sense of satisfaction that comes with it, victory is indeed sweet. But like patience, which requires tribulation to produce it (see Rom. 5:3), victory can't exist without opposition.

As the disciples made their way toward Gethsemane, the despair they felt must have been overwhelming. So many questions swirled in their minds. But rather than give them detailed explanations, Jesus chose to encourage them with the simple truth that in the end, their side wins. In our text, Jesus emphasized victory over three opponents that all Christ-followers would one day face.

Victory over death (vv. 19-22). That Jesus knew what the disciples were discussing among themselves (v. 19) is not surprising. It may have been accomplished by His omniscience, but more likely was accomplished by simple observation! They had been fretting all evening about His declaration of pending departure from them, and their consternation was obvious. His encouragement to them was one of contrasts. That they would weep and wail over the events to come was clear. But what of the reaction by the world? That the world would rejoice (v. 20) can be taken in two ways. If the point of view is *temporal* (i.e., relating to time), then the world rejoicing might signify the ultimate joy of salvation by all who believe. In other words, the disciples would weep over Christ's death, but ultimately the world would rejoice because of the salvation that resulted. But the clearest rendering is that of *attitude*. While the disciples wept over the tragic death of Christ, the scornful and skeptic would be rejoicing that Jesus was being crucified. In any case, the sorrow they felt would be short-lived. In three short days, they would be overflowing with joy. Jesus used the example of a mother giving birth to illustrate His point (v. 21). While the hours of labor are terribly painful, the joy that accompanies the birth of a baby makes her quickly forget the pain. And so the sorrow of the disciples seeing Him die would be replaced by great joy at seeing Him resurrected (v. 22). For reflection: *How does Jesus' resurrection from the dead impact us? How do we share in that victory?*

Victory over doubt (vv. 27-29). In these verses, Jesus dealt with the nagging doubts the disciples had been entertaining. His simple explanation seems to have satisfied them. God the Father loved them because they loved Christ the Son and believed in His deity (v. 27). His departure from them would involve His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension back to the Father, from Whom He came. That Jesus spoke this clearly to them (as opposed to the figurative language of His parables, v. 25) was further evidence that He was Who He said He was and worthy of acceptance (v. 30). Here, finally, their fears gave way to faith. For reflection: *Why do you think it took the disciples so long to accept Christ? And why did Jesus use parables anyway?*

Victory over defeat (vv. 31-33). I realize that technically victory is the *opposite* of defeat, but what I mean here is victory over the *feelings* of defeat. Just because they *believed* what Jesus said, doesn't mean they *understood* it all! The mustard seed of faith they just expressed would

soon be tested. In a few short hours, the Lord would be arrested, and the disciples would scatter (v. 32). No doubt, in those hours, they would think back to the Lord they left *alone*. Yet Jesus encouraged them that His union with the Father was enough, both for Him and for them. Notice that Jesus indicates a coming separation: He would be separated from them (v. 32); they would be separated from the world (v. 33). Yet rather than feeling defeat, they should feel victory; for He had conquered the world! For reflection: *How would this discourse be a source of comfort to the disciples? (v. 33). If the world brings suffering, why does God not deliver us from it? Or does He?*