

There is Victory at the Cross **By Rev. Jack Rupert, Executive Director**

You may remember the ministry of Jimmy Swaggart in the 1980's. He preached to packed auditoriums and stadiums all around the world. Many thousands of decisions were made for Christ. However, everything came to a screeching halt when the evangelist was accused of a moral failure.

Fast forward to 2011. Jimmy Swaggart's ministry has experienced tremendous growth. His television ministry, The Sonlife Broadcasting Network (SBN) televises original programming 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Because of technology and God's anointing, the Gospel message is being seen and heard in hundreds of countries around the world. It is the message of the cross.

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

The message of the cross is not something new. It is the same message the Apostle Paul received from God in the 1st century. It says that we, as followers of Christ, can have victory over the sin nature, which resides in each one of us. The key is faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ at the cross.

I would encourage you to read the 6th and 7th chapters of the book of Romans. In his letter to the Christian church at Rome, the great Apostle shares his personal struggle with the **SIN NATURE**. He says, ***“the evil that I don't want to do, this I do. And, the good which I desire to do, I don't do.”*** In chapter 7 verse 24 he writes, ***“O wretched man that I am, who will rescue me from this body of death?”***

Then in the first verse of chapter 8 of Romans he says, ***“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”***. Victory over sin's power does not come from our own strength or ability, but through our faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross. The Holy Spirit brings about the victory.

THE STRUGGLE WITH SIN

I am praying that this article will be helpful to believers who are struggling to find victory over sin. There are Christians who are **bound** by some sin or habit they can't defeat. You want to stop. You pray for help. You promise God and yourself that you will quit, but you can't seem to find victory no matter how hard you try. Mark 8:34 says, ***“Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”***

The Lord says we must deny ourselves. That means deny our own strength and ability, our talent and intelligence, and take up His cross. Not His suffering, as many suppose, but rather the benefits of the cross, and follow Him. This implies that Jesus cannot be followed unless it is by way of the cross.

The Apostle Paul said in I Corinthians 1:17, ***“Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.”*** The cross of Christ must always be the emphasis of the message.

In I Corinthians, chapter 1, Paul says, ***“But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”***

The Lord tells us in these verses that Spiritual things can't be understood by unredeemed people – those who aren't saved. But the cross is to those who are saved, the power of God. The cross is the power of God because it was there that our **SIN DEBT** was paid in full. Now, the Holy Spirit, in whom the Power resides, has latitude to work mightily within our lives. All because of what Christ did on the cross.

He goes on to speak about the wisdom of the world. He is speaking to those who are wise in their own eyes, yet have forsaken the ways of the Lord. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe. But, we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews, a stumbling block, and to the Greeks, foolishness. All the wisdom of the world couldn't do what Christ did on the cross. The best wisdom man has to offer couldn't help us to know God. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them who believe.

REJECTED BY THE WORLD

The message of the cross is not readily received by the world, or the church because it strikes at the heart of all spiritual pride and self-righteousness. Many believers take great pride in their self-effort. Self-effort will never bring us victory over the sin nature. No matter how often we go to church or how much we pray or fast, or how much scripture we read, we cannot find victory on our own.

Putting our faith in Christ, and what He did on the cross, enables the Holy Spirit to accomplish that which is needed in our lives. It's what Christ did plus nothing. We are redeemed, saved, by what Christ did at Calvary. We are sanctified, set apart, to live holy lives in Christ. All because of what Christ accomplished at the cross.

Some believers understand the cross as it regards salvation, but don't see that the cross is also God's answer to sanctification; for living a righteous life before God. I'm not talking about sinlessness or perfection. I believe it is possible for us to live victorious lives; to come to a place where we are no longer battling everyday with the same sins.

WHY DO WE SO OFTEN FAIL?

How many Christians are struggling with secret sins, hoping they don't get found out? The bondage may be different from person to person. It may be lust, pride, alcohol, pornography, drugs, anger, hatred, envy, or jealousy. It is not something you or I do which brings the victory. It is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. On our own there is nothing we can do. What we must do is yield to the work of the Holy Spirit. Allow Christ to change you from the inside out.

Some final thoughts on this message of the cross. Why, if we have the Holy Spirit, do we so often fail and sin? The Holy Spirit must not automatically give us victory. What are we missing? People who love God and genuinely want to serve Him, find themselves unable to keep from sinning. They seem to have no power over the sin nature.

II Peter 1:4, he tells us about a divine nature within believers. ***“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these, you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”*** If we can live for the Lord by any means other than by faith in Christ and the cross, then the death of Christ was in vain. The grace of God through faith in Christ and the cross is our only hope. **There is victory for the child of God.**