

Vicarious Victory

By Charles Mwewa

*“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us,” (Romans 8:37 – NKJV);
“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (1 Corinthians 15:57, ESV)*

Introduction:

In the Law of Torts, in civil and employment settings, an employer may be vicariously liable. The employer succumbs to vicarious liability for the misdeeds of their employee if that misdeed was committed by the employee in the course of her employment. A similar event happens in Christianity. Christ Jesus won a victory against evil and the devil. The accruals of this victory are bequeathed directly upon those who neither fought in the battle nor deserved the victory. Victory was given to those who offended (sinned) as a reward for their acknowledgment of the victory. In this sermon, we will consider three points: Victory completed; villain defeated; and vassals seated. The three points will be discussed in that order, and then a conclusion and application will be drawn.

1. Victory Completed

Battles don't determine the end of conflicts. Because it is possible to win a battle and still lose the war. What determines victory is the completion of the war. The enemy surrenders or is captured and their instruments of war captured or destroyed. The war between Satan and God was centered on one issue: Returning the original authority man had back to man. That authority had been usurped by Satan when he used a subtle serpent to lure humanity into disobedience. Man succumbed, sold inheritance to the devil, and harvested death and Hell.

“But when [in God's plan] the proper time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the [regulations of the] Law, so that He might redeem and liberate those who were under the Law, that we [who believe] might be adopted as sons [as God's children with all rights as fully grown members of a family].”¹ The operative word is “redeem,” from where we derive the concept of redemption. Redemption is defined as, “The action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment or clearing a debt.”² God, through Christ's own blood, repaid the debt we owed Satan because of sin. And then, without forfeiting the victory, Christ died and rose again from the dead. If He had not risen, there would be no salvation: “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith doesn't mean anything.”³ In other words, Christ's sinlessness, His message, His life, His death, would mean nothing if He had not risen. His resurrection completed the victory.

2. Villain Defeated

In Christ dying for us, God demonstrated His true love for us (for scarcely a good man dies for another good man, but for a Righteous Man to have died for sinners, that is true and great love). But in resurrecting, Christ retook all authority and power from the devil. Christ has given that authority back to man: “Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy...”⁴

¹ Galatians 4:4-5, AV

² From Oxford Languages online

³ 1 Corinthians 15, NIRV

⁴ Luke 10:19, NLT

Here lies ultimate victory. Power and authority are not the same things. Surely, Satan has power. We see it in the infliction of disease (Covid-19, for example), in his presiding over death, his malicious imposition of misery through hate and wars, his procurement of men's souls for his own aggrandizement, and his unsolicited abuse of human bodies and wills, and so on. However, the province of authority belongs to believers in Christ. Thus, we have, "authority over all the power of the enemy." We acquired this authority vicariously, when we believed in the completed work of redemption of Christ. We have conquered in a war we didn't fight; and we have accumulated the trophies of the battle in which we didn't shed a single drop of blood. So, we are more than conquerors – because conquerors participate in a war; we did not.

Man (humanity) lost power to Satan through disobedience. Man (Jesus) grabbed back authority over the devil through obedience: "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."⁵ As we obey God, we also acquire the power to "crush Satan under [our] feet."⁶

Our victory is through Christ, and through Him alone.⁷ We win each battle we participate in, because we do so through Christ Jesus. Our victory is only certain through Christ. Without Christ, we have lost every spiritual battle we engage in, even before we fight. Because our war is not worldly; our weapons are not carnal.⁸ That is also why we pray "in the name of Jesus"; because we are nothing without Him. We know that if we pray or war against evil in our own strength, we come up short. Christ Himself said that in His name, believers shall have authority (and power) over devils, and they shall sharpen their tongues to welcome favor and blessings.⁹

3. Vassals Seated

In international warfare and relations, vassal states are those that hold land by feudal tenure on conditions of homage (worship) and allegiance (submission), usually to a superior or victorious state.¹⁰ This is the message of Grace, that us, who once had no name, no nation, and no identity, have been elevated to sit with Christ in the heavenly places: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms."¹¹

In other words, vassals have, ironically, become victors. This has given believers tremendous privileges. Believers in Christ will judge this world, this life, and angels (in the world to come): "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!"¹² And according to Peter, believers in Christ are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, and God-worshippers.¹³ At His glorious feast, it is not the powerful, the renown, or the deserved who are seated; it is vassals (whomsoever believe) who are seated.

⁵ Romans 5:19, NIV

⁶ Romans 16:20, ERV

⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:57, *supra*.

⁸ See 2 Corinthians 10:4

⁹ See Mark 16:17

¹⁰ See Oxford Languages online, *supra*.

¹¹ Ephesians 1:3, Berean Study Bible (BSB)

¹² 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, BSB

¹³ See 1 Peter 2:9

Conclusion & Application

“In Christ,” that phrase, should not just be a cliché; it is everything you need for victory and sustenance. You are guaranteed victory in and for everything you do or say in the name of Christ. This means, in essence, that if Christ Jesus can have victory, if you claim it in His name, that victory is yours as well. All you need is to trust Him through faith. Your victory in life is sure and amen in Christ. If you are experiencing spiritual defeats, it might mean that you are either not laying claim to Christ’s victory or you are defaulting in faith. Believe in Him, child of God, and all His victories are yours. In Christ, we have, do, and, in fact, enjoy vicarious victory.