

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

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More than Conquerors!

Dan Huff

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37).

To get a full understanding of what this truly means, one needs to read **Romans 6–8**. This promise is to those who have responded to the Gospel call, being buried, united with Christ through immersion into death, set free from the bondage of sin and guilt, and raised by the glory of the Father to walk in newness of life (**Romans 6:3-7**). *"To Him who loved us and washed us from our sin in His own blood" (Revelation 1:5b)*. On the one hand, we have the love of Christ providing everything for our salvation. But, on the other hand, we must cherish, strengthen, nurture, and protect that relationship with the Lord. *"More than conquerors"* has to do with our relationship with, in, and through Christ.

God, who freely gave His Son, did not withhold Himself and the greatest treasure heaven has to offer: the Son of His love. The Lord saw and does see the potential that lies within each one of us. He knows what we can become with His help. He gives us the strength, tools, and wisdom to succeed. His desire is for our eternal good! He has invested Himself in our lives and our success. It stands to reason He will freely provide all things we need for our salvation from sin, complete our race, fight the good fight of faith, and stand with Him as victors at the end (**Romans 8:31-32**)!

As I ponder and marvel at this wonderful promise and glorious hope the Christian has in Jesus Christ, I think about the Apostles of Christ. History tells us that all but one died unnatural deaths because of their faith in the Master and His Cause. Many died gruesome deaths, except for the Apostle John, and that wasn't for lack of trying. History tells us that Roman Emperor Domitian had John thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. When that did not work, he had him banished to the Island of Patmos, where he received the contents in the Book of Revelation (see *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, chapter 1). Not only the Apostles but also numerous saints through the ages

have lived for Christ under many difficult and strenuous circumstances and never recanted the Savior (**Romans 8:35-36**). *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death" (Revelation 12:11)*. They have shown that it can be done!

Worldly wisdom would scoff at calling these men and women conquerors, and more than conquerors. *"Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ... it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe... Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:20–25)*. This is where the eye of faith must be employed. As Paul said, the Christian must walk and live by faith and not by our physical sight (**2 Corinthians 5:7**). *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)*. There is the wisdom from above: these men and women died for and became more than conquerors through Christ! Even in the eye of the storm. He is more than enough!

Does this mean there will never be trials, temptations, or persecutions? No. But it does mean that there is nothing with Him that we cannot handle! Since Jesus gave His blood to cleanse and justify us before God, not even Satan, our adversary, and accuser, can bring an accusation against a child of God who is standing with the Lord (**Romans 8:33**). He can accuse, but it won't stick because of Christ! *"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:9)*.

Paul warns us that the mind and heart are ground zero in the Christian's spiritual war. Therefore, be careful what we allow in our hearts and minds. He has made us conquerors with the ability to cast down every imagination and high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity. Reject, don't entertain or embrace, that we may obey Christ (**2 Corinthians 10:3–5**). The Lord has given His people power to reign over self and sin to enable us to be "overcomers" in this life (**Romans 6:12-18; Galatians 5:22-24; Revelation 1:5-6**). In Christ, there is the fortitude to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and make the daily commitment to follow Him (**Luke 9:23**).

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For the Christian, His blood is a constant, ever-present cleansing agent when we are walking in the light. When we strive to please and serve Him, and when we do falter, there is power to repent and confess our sins. He is just to forgive us and intercede in heaven on our behalf (**1 John 1:7- 2:6**). Christ has conquered the devil and the fear of death. We, through Christ and His work, can conquer the fear of death, for He gives aid and intercession on our behalf (**Hebrews 2:14-17**)!

"Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place" (2 Corinthians 2:14). May this be said of us, who follow and apply the Apostles' doctrine in our lives: through Christ, more than conquerors!

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A Redacted God

Kevin Crittenden

Imagine the appeal of a drive-thru church tailored to fit today's culture:

"Welcome to McChurch's, where you can have Him your way. May I take your petition, please?"

"Hello, yes, I'd like to order a Savory Savior Burger with extra blessings and a side of forgiveness. Um. . . better super-size that this week. Oh, and hold the wrath. Nobody likes that; I don't even know why you offer it."

"Certainly, sir, would you like something to drink with that?"

"Oh, right, let me have a large Living Water please. . . and some toys for the kiddies; that manger set with Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, and a plush Jonah whale. Thanks!"

"Yes, sir! That'll be a 12% tithe at the first window, please."

Let's not be too quick to scoff at this scenario. We live in a culture where many sophisticated people view the Bible as "quaint." They are quick to say that certain Biblical events (e.g., a floating ax head?) could not have happened as recorded

but instead reflect a magical view of things typical of primitive cultures. We now know better. We now know that the God of the Old Testament is different than the Father of Jesus in whom we have come to believe.

Again, we may scoff at this modern attitude, but . . . are we really immune from this Cultural COVID? Aren't we now more inclined to preach God's NICENESS, hardly mentioning His wrath? Do we tend to separate God's wrath from His love? About God's wrath, do we inwardly think, "That's the God of the Old Testament?"

But in Romans (located in the New Testament in MY Bible), we see the COMPLETE God, both His love AND His wrath.

*For the **wrath** of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth (Romans 1:18).*

Also, in Romans:

*What if God, desiring to show his **wrath** and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? (Romans 9:22-24).*

And what is contained in those bowls mentioned in Revelation?

Anyway, there are huge cultural and secular forces in play today that influence the church. To speak out against sin (sin that incurs God's wrath) is to risk offending congregants who might leave.

Visitors, like consumers, audition churches to see which best fits their comfort zone. Does the church have an entertaining worship band or choir? Is the pastor personable? Are his sermons comforting? Are there many parishioners? Is there daycare? People our age? Kids?

When did comfort become the deciding factor in choosing a place to glorify and worship God?

Does the church need to change with the times or risk fading into irrelevance? As an example, we may give sermons about the sin of adultery, but how much teaching is given to guide those not married who are struggling with their carnal

temptations? Society rather encourages these people to give in to those pressures. But what about the church? Is the church silent on many such contemporary moral issues?

We DO need to find ways to address ALL concerns of our modern society in a godly fashion. We need to rely on the timeless guidance of the Bible, the complete Bible, which is just as relevant today as it was millennia ago. The Bible is the Word of God disclosed in a book, just as Jesus is the Word of God disclosed in a person. If we cannot see how the Word relates to a “modern” situation, perhaps the fault lies within us. We need to rely on the COMPLETENESS of God to fully provide guidance through these morally troubled times.

Some thirty years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, known to us as the Jefferson Bible. This was his private declaration of independence from historic Christian theology. He merely removed all parts of the Gospels which didn’t fit his deistic theology. Out went supernaturalism, including references to the Trinity, as well as the divinity, miracles, and the resurrection of Jesus. His Bible begins with the birth story without mentioning angels or prophecy. It concludes with the cross and the tomb (but not an empty tomb). The last words in his Bible are these: “There laid they Jesus. And rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed.”

That’s it. Jesus died and was buried – period. End of story.

Have we done the same things with our conception of God today? Keep the parts that seem culturally acceptable (to keep people coming to church) and redact the rest?

Perhaps the songs we sing today, which rarely mention God’s wrath, are a collage of our culture, a mirror of our conceptions of God and justice and salvation. Certainly, some churches preach the “niceness” of God as if it were His ONLY attribute; that it is somehow “evil” to punish evil, and I’m okay, and you’re okay, and God’s okay with us being okay. Let’s just all get along.

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked... (Galatians 6:7a).

Jesus, the Word of God, is not artificially split into Old and New; His Love separated from His Wrath. Indeed, His wrath IS one facet of His great love for us. When we grapple with the issues facing the church today, let us use His examples and

follow His guidance. Let us lean on ALL of Him.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight (Proverbs 9:10).

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Glory to God!

The church in **Vandalia, IA** joined the heavenly chorus in praise when **Easton Klein** was buried with Christ on April 1.

Two more souls were added to the church on **Riverside Road, Ozark, MO** when **Malex** and **Jennady Welte** were clothed with Christ on April 3.

The angels rejoiced with the brethren on **Prince Road, Alton, IL** when **Willow McMurray** was baptized April 7.

Blessed Are the Dead

Albert W. Dowdy, 87, of Lyons, IN passed away March 31, 2022. Albert was born June 8, 1934, in Dexter, MO the son of **Charles Newton Dowdy** and **Ollie Edith (Waggoner) Dowdy**. Albert worked for International Harvester as a machine operator. Albert was a member of the **New Castle, IN Church of Christ** at the time of his death. Albert loved spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren. Surviving relatives include his three children, **Cindy (Grant) Riggins**, **Gregg (Dianna) Dowdy** and **Ron (Editha) Dowdy**; thirteen grandchildren and twenty-one great grandchildren. Albert was preceded in death by his first wife **Wilma L. (Blevens) Dowdy**, the mother of his three children; a son, **James Douglas “Doug” Dowdy**; three brothers and one sister.

Marjorie Jean Worthington, 91, of Pueblo, CO, went to be with Jesus on October 26, 2021. She was born in Topeka, KS on June 2, 1930, to **Albert** and **Pauline Kreipe**, the second of four daughters. Marjorie met **Wayne Worthington** at a softball game and following graduation from Highland Park High School, married him on June 9, 1948. They farmed in the Topeka area until 1969 when they relocated to Colorado

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Springs, where they lived until moving to Pueblo in 2007. Sister Marjorie was a lifelong member of the Church of Christ, having been a member in **Stull, KS**, **Colorado Springs, CO**, and **Pueblo, CO**. Marjorie joins in heaven her husband Wayne, her parents and three sisters. She is survived by her son, **William (Frances) Worthington** of Colorado Springs; daughter, **Georgia Jean (Tony) White** of Pueblo; two granddaughters and two great grandchildren.

Here and There

Several subscribers have expressed interest in subscribing to the digital edition of *The Gospel Message*. The digital edition is not available at this time. However, for those who are interested, here is a brief update on our progress.

Your editor and publisher are coordinating with **Richard Garbi**, a brother in Christ from the church in **Blue Springs, MO**. Richard is the Chief Technical Officer of a technology startup in Kansas City, MO. Among his many responsibilities, Richard has designed smartphone apps that allow municipalities and states to collect money for government fees. Richard is lending his expertise to *The Gospel Message* by designing a signup system that will protect the privacy of our subscribers.

Please look for announcements about the digital edition's availability in future issues, Lord willing.

Special Meetings

The South Fairfax Church of Christ, 2834 South Fairfax Road, Bakersfield, CA plans a Memorial Day weekend meeting. The theme is "The Incredible Journey." The meeting begins with

a continental breakfast at 10:00 a.m., May 28 and concludes with a farewell breakfast Monday morning, May 30.

2022 Meetings

May 28-30.....Bakersfield, CA
May 28-29.....Murray Rd., Lee's Summit, MO
June 11-12.....Vandalia, IA
July 4-8.....Midwest Bible Campout, Eminence, MO
July 24-29.....Excelsior Springs, MO
September 3-4.....Pleasant Hill, IA
Sept 30-Oct 2.....North MO Fall Campout, Unionville, MO
October 15-16.....Nixa, MO

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:24-25).

The Gospel Message

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