



ENCOURAGEMENT ALONG THE WAY

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Jesus' Flesh

by Mike Rule

I have been pondering whether Jesus had flesh to deal with as you and I do. Scripture says that He was tempted in all things but knew no sin... but did He have flesh? That's a good question, isn't it?

If flesh is the residue of my sin nature, Jesus couldn't have had it since He never knew sin. But if flesh is the residue of living in this world, then He must have had it. Did "stuff" happen to Jesus as He lived in this world? And if it did, did He carry the memories and hurts with Him through His life? We don't know what happened to Jesus from the time he was 12 until he was 30, but we would have to assume some painful things happened in His life. I also would dare to say that He must have remembered those events both mentally and emotionally. Of course, Jesus never had a sin nature, as I already mentioned. He knew NO sin. Are we in an unfair position since He didn't have a sin nature while we do?

It is true that we were born in sin, but as believers, sin is no longer natural to

us. Because we are new creations, it is NOT our nature any more. We are part-takers of the divine nature – we have received a new nature. We have everything we need pertaining to life and Godliness.



Jesus may never have had the residue of the sin nature in His flesh, but He certainly must have battled the lusts of His own flesh that wanted to make Him turn from His Father and choose actions that did not line up with who He really is. Like-

wise, our flesh carries the stuff of this life – the memories of experiences and the resulting emotions. We have the residue of that old sin nature there. Yet now, as believers, we are working from the

(Continued on page 2)

Welcome to *...by the Way*

I thought I heard wrongly when I began putting this issue together and God told me the theme was on *victory*. As I considered other topics and continued praying, it became clear that victory was indeed God's intended focus. At that point I realized that victory was not something I had thought much about, and I knew I would have little input into this issue. However, I suddenly became curious to see what surfaced as we moved ahead.

Over the past several weeks I have oftentimes been frustrated in our attempts to prepare and send *...by the Way*. A variety of situations slowed our progress, yet I

had an underlying peace that all was going according to God's plan. I could see that in the midst of my mental and emotional "static" I was learning about victory – the false assumptions I had, and the true definition of victory that is very simple and so life-changing. Though we missed our intended deadline, I trust this issue is being delivered right on time. The whole experience has helped me see I cannot claim to rely on His guidance while fighting His direction when it doesn't line up with my intentions and plans. When I say that I intend to show up each day to follow God's leading and allow Him to direct my steps, I had better be prepared for Him to take me at my word.

~Becky

Jesus' Flesh (continued from page 1)

same complete state that Jesus had when He was walking on this earth.

In overcoming those lusts, He could not do it in and of Himself; neither can we. He relied on His Father to do it through Him, and He wants us to live in the same way – to rely upon Him to do what we could never do.

Jesus was victorious over His own flesh. He is also victorious over your flesh. Jesus made it clear that greater things than He did, we will do. Living in victory over the sin dwelling in the flesh is just one “greater thing.” He overcame sin once for all so that

He could express Himself through a holy and righteous people – a people whose greatest treasure lies within earthen vessels – that the excellency of the power would be of God and not us. When we see true victory in our lives, it is not we who are doing the overcoming. It is the Father doing it through us. Will you let Him do through you what you can never do? Christ's life was not only victorious over His own flesh, but He is victorious over yours as well. To me, that truly is GOOD news. Will you believe it today? Will you let Him live victoriously over your flesh so that

your spirit expresses His Spirit through a human soul and body?

Scripture references:

John 8:28, 42
 John 14:10
 Acts 2:22
 Romans 1:20
 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21
 Colossians 2:9-12
 Hebrews 4:15
 I Peter 2:21-24
 2 Peter 1:2-4
 I John 3:3, 5



Our God is... **VICTORIOUS**

Join us in celebrating the VICTORY of our great God. We encourage you to look up some or all of the following verses, focusing specifically on how God is VICTORIOUS. Meditate on the ways your life is personally impacted by the fact that God is triumphant. May He minister to you and may you see His heart.

DEFINITIONS TO CONSIDER

Victory:

1. final and complete supremacy or superiority in battle or war
2. a specific military engagement ending in triumph
3. success in any contest or struggle involving the defeat of an opponent or the overcoming of obstacles

Victorious: conquering, triumphant; characterized by victory.

Victory implies the winning of a contest or struggle of any kind.

Conquest implies a victory in which one subjugates others and brings them under complete control.

Triumph implies a victory in which one exults because of its outstanding

and decisive character.

Sometimes words are better understood by looking at their opposites. Here are some antonyms to consider when thinking about victory: *failure, defeat, frustration, disappointment*. If you can relate to those words more than you care to, God has something special to say to you!

- Exodus 14:14
- Exodus 15:2-6
- Deuteronomy 1:30
- Deuteronomy 3:22
- Deuteronomy 7:7-8, 21-24
- Deuteronomy 20:1-4
- Deuteronomy 31:6, 8
- Joshua 1:5, 9
- Joshua 21:43-45
- Joshua 23:10
- I Chronicles 29:11-12
- 2 Chronicles 32:7,8
- Psalm 44:1-8
- Psalm 60:12
- Psalm 68:20,21a
- Psalm 74:12
- Psalm 108:13
- Psalm 118:14-16
- Psalm 144:1,2
- Proverbs 21:30-31
- Isaiah 14:27
- Hosea 1:7
- John 16:33
- Romans 8:37
- Romans 16:20
- 1 Corinthians 15:51-57
- 2 Corinthians 2:14
- 2 Corinthians 12:9
- I John 5:4,5
- Revelation 5:5

ON THE WAY...WITH JENNIFER

Redefining Victory

Our God is victorious... What comes to your mind when you think of victory in the Christian life? Whenever I have thought about victory in the past I have always been immediately intimidated and defeated. Because Paul says in II Cor. 2:14, "Now thanks be to God, who *always* causes us to triumph in Christ..." I knew I ought to expect continual victory in my life. But I could never measure up in spite of how well I followed everything I was taught. David says in Psalm 119:11, "I have hidden Your Word in my heart, so that I might not sin against You." There is the formula, right? I should memorize a Bible verse for every temptation that might come my way; and when I'm tempted I can fight off sin by meditating on that verse. However, I have memorized well over 50 whole chapters of the Bible as well as innumerable individual verses. If anyone is successfully winning every time they're tempted it should be me. Yet, I don't. I began to realize why the concept of victory makes me so discouraged.

Jesus showed me something at this point. My definition of victory was: successfully avoiding sin. I equated victory with proper Christian behavior. It was all about image, whether the image I portrayed to people on

the outside or the image of myself I wanted to be on the inside. I wanted victory in my life so that I would look like a good Christian, or so that I could feel that I was right with God all the time. Either way it was comfort I sought, wanting to feel good about myself. In trying to attain this kind of victory the result is that my focus is entirely on whether or not I am walking in victory; it is on *me!*

So what is victory? I knew Jesus wanted to redefine it for me, so I started by looking up the Hebrew words that are translated as "victory" in the Old Testament. The first word I found, "tshuah," means *rescue*, and is most often translated as *salvation* and *deliverance*. A root Hebrew word that is used for victory is "yasha." It means *to be open, wide or free* and is translated as *help, save, rescue, deliver, defend, avenge, preserve, savior, get the victory, be safe, and bring salvation*. What struck me about these definitions is that the concept of avoiding sin does not fit in any of them. Save, rescue, and deliver imply

neediness. Victory isn't the absence of struggle; it is salvation in the midst of the struggle. Having to do everything you can to avoid sin doesn't fit with open, wide, and free either. If I believe that victory is avoiding sin and work very hard every day to rearrange my life so that I don't fall into it, that is not freedom. Freedom is simply living and trusting Jesus for my behavior. Finally, as I looked at some of the verses where these He-

brew words are used I found that they are actually titles for God. "My God is my rock; I shall take refuge in Him; my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge! My Savior (or literally, *My Vic-*

tory), You shall save me from violence" (II Samuel 22:3). And in Isaiah 43:3, "For I am Jehovah your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior (or *your Victory*)..." What is victory? Victory is Jesus. It is not a system; it is a Person. Whether or not He rescues us from a certain behavior is up to Him. The question is: will we still trust Him?

"What struck me about these definitions is that the concept of avoiding sin does not fit in any of them."

***"The LORD your God is in your midst,
A victorious warrior.
He will exult over you with joy,
He will be quiet in His love,
He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.***



Zephaniah 3:17 NASB

ON THE WAY...WITH BECKY

Believing, No Matter What

By Becky Rule

Over and over again in my life, God has had to show me what something is NOT before He can show me what it IS. Victory has been no different. I thought victory had to do with overcoming spiritual obstacles, weeding sin from my life, avoiding bad, and choosing good. I don't know about you, but after years of trying to live up to those expectations, that list is an instant discouragement.

In researching *victory* in the Bible, I ended up focusing on 1 John 5:4 and its cross-references. I discovered that the majority of those verses had to do with overcoming, but it left me with this question: Overcoming *what*?

As I continued searching, the answer materialized and I wondered how I had missed it. Victory is simply overcoming unbelief! Our intense struggles to trust God and believe what He says are proof that unbelief is what continuously needs conquering. Jesus repeatedly addressed our unbelief and challenged us to believe and trust Him.

As I have continued to mull and digest what God has shown me, I see people from the Scriptures in a different light. For example, look at John the Baptist. Not John the Baptist when he preached to the crowds and baptized people. Look at John the Baptist when he was no longer sure of himself... or God... or Jesus. I'm talking about the John the Baptist we find sending messages to Jesus from prison asking, "Are You the One?". Normally when that passage is used, the focus is on Jesus' words which triumphantly list all that is being done for the lame, the blind, the deaf. Yet, Jesus' final words to John stop us short: *Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me* (Matthew 11:6). Of all the things to offend us, Jesus sur-

prises us by suggesting that we could potentially be offended by HIM and His ways. In other words, "John, you're doing well if you can still trust Me when things don't turn out like you thought they would, when it looks like I'm not coming through for you." Jesus was encouraging John to overcome unbelief.

Contrast Judas and Peter. They both failed where Jesus was concerned and they knew it. Highly disappointed with Jesus, themselves, and the way life turned out, they had different responses to their circumstances. While Peter stubbornly clung to a shred of faith, it appears that Judas couldn't

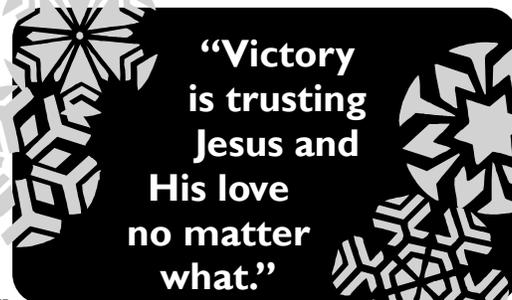
see past his failure, dashed hopes and dreams. Did Peter somehow trust the Person of Jesus while Judas placed his trust only in what he perceived was Jesus' plan? I don't know. All we know is that one broken-hearted man trusted Jesus to mean what He said — that He loved him — while the other was filled with remorse and hanged himself. Peter conquered unbelief. Judas gave in to it.

After listing our faith heroes, Hebrews 11:13 says, "These all died in faith, without obtaining the promises..." Do you see that? They ALL died without receiving what God had promised (which is exactly why they made it into that chapter). While not receiving, they still trusted. *Blessed is he who is not offended by Me*. How many times is the victory in a situation the

fact that we still choose to believe, follow and walk with Jesus in spite of our pain-filled questions and confusion? Being saved from hell is not the point of the salvation Jesus came to give. Victory is being saved moment by moment from the unbelief and self-protection that threaten to keep us turned away from God and His powerful love. Misery, sin, and hell are all results of unconquered unbelief in our lives. Unbelief steals, kills, and destroys. That is why believing is so significant and why victory is "still believing" no matter what. No matter my failures, no matter other's failures, we can trust that Jesus still loves us and that we do not have to improve before He will accept us.

I dread failure as much as anyone. In fact, maybe like you, failure, and the potential rejection because of it, is my greatest fear. When we fail, we feel exposed, and we want to hide. The pattern has been there from the beginning (see Genesis 3). The hardest thing we will ever do is turn to Him without trying to first "fix" ourselves to be presentable, useful, and right. I'm not saying sin is okay; I am saying it is easy to get locked in on the wrong issue. Because of Christ in us, it is a given that we do not want to fail, but IF and WHEN we do, what then? Victory refuses to self-protect due to the pain and terror of rejection. It does not insist on being safe and comfortable. Victory is living with our hearts wide open in spite of being scared and feeling insecure. Victory is trusting Jesus and His love *no matter what*.

Sound too big to manage? As the Author and Perfector of our Faith, Jesus has it in hand. Keep trusting. He has you.



Glimpses of God at Work

For you will be His witness to all people of what you have seen and heard.

*Acts 22:15
ALT*

I just wanted to say “thank you” so much for our awesome visits. Thanks to you and God’s mercy this was the first set of holidays in 3 years that I didn’t purge. All that talk about my “anxiety meter” really helped, and when I feel it getting to be too much I’ll do one of those activities [to work off the pressure]. I hardly even binge eat anymore, too! You have no idea how grateful I am to you. It feels so good to look in the mirror and be happy.

ON THE WAY...WITH MIKE

Victorious

Webster defines victorious as *having conquered in battle or contest; having overcome an enemy or antagonist; conquering; vanquishing; as a victorious general; victorious troops; a victorious admiral or navy.*

In the above definition, victory is basically related to war. Many of us believe that the Christian life is a battle of good versus evil, and in that daily battle we must fight the good fight so that good will reign in our lives. Nothing could be further from the truth! The battle today is not good against evil! The real battle has already been fought, and the challenge is for us to recognize that the

battle has already been won in Christ. *But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:57 MKJV)*

For many years I had believed that victory was mine so long as I kept my eyes on Jesus; however, if I took my eyes off Jesus then I would fall into defeat. God has renewed my mind by revealing that victory is not something to be gained but is something to be recognized. Victory is recognized as I discover how Jesus is using ALL things to keep my eyes drawn to the Father.

The Christian life is really not a

struggle for us to live; it is an impossible life for us to live. It is literally Christ’s life, and He is working in our lives and through our lives to reveal what is already ours in Him. *But in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39 MKJV)*

Christians who are living defeated

(Continued on page 6)

REQUESTS... WORSHIP... INTERCESSION... THANKS...

(see 1 Timothy 2:1)

We are grateful!*Join us in praise and worship that...*

God is the ultimate and enduring Victor
 God daily blesses us with His presence
 God gives the Holy Spirit without measure
 We are more than conquerors through Jesus
 God's victory spills over into our lives because He is our life Source
 God has given us all we need pertaining to life and godliness
 God has rescued us from the domain of darkness,
 and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son

**We are needy!***Please pray that:*

Jesus is lifted up in our lives and the lives of those God touches through us
 We would clearly understand and follow God's guidance in 2007
 We would stand strong as individuals and in our relationships
 Our hearts would be open to those we encounter and God's ways as He works through us
 Our many hurting clients and contacts would know and experience God's love and presence
 God's wisdom would reign as we discern between distractions and God-ordained appointments

And for:

Financial provision
 Health, strength, and safety as we fulfill our callings and assignments
 Wise management of all resources (physical, emotional, relational, mental, financial, time)
 Peaceful, orderly and efficient everyday operations both at home and at the office
 God's blessing on LCMP's Support Partners, Board of Directors, and their families
 (in all aspects of their well-being: spiritual, intellectual, emotional, relational and social, occupational, and physical)

But now, I pray, let the power of the Lord be great...*Numbers 14:17*

Victorious (continued from page 5)

lives are really not defeated; they are caught in a web of deception. Defeat is an illusion and is not based in reality. Remember that God is truly the only reality there is, and He has already secured victory for all men from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8). Christ overcame sin once for all men (John 1:29, Hebrews 9:26).

Victory flows in our lives as Christ reveals Himself in and through all things. This victory does not mean that all weakness, struggle, problems,

and temptations are removed. This victory FLOWS in the midst of our weakness, struggles, problems and temptations. In fact, this is the very life that Christ lived on this earth.

**“This victory
 FLOWS in the midst
 of our weakness,
 struggles, problems
 and temptations.”**

Since then we have a great High Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted just as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find

grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16 MKJV)

Therefore, one of the purposes of life is not to GAIN victory but to grow in the revelation of just how victorious you really are! The misery that comes when we are caught in the illusion of defeat reveals our true condition. Christ is your life (Deut. 30:20, Col. 3:4). Christ's life is VICTORIOUS! (Zech. 9:9) Because Christ is your life, you ARE victorious! You cannot be happy living as though you are not. You are more than a conqueror in Him (Romans 8:37-39).



THANK YOU

A big THANK YOU to all who remembered us with cards, notes, phone calls, and gifts over the Christmas season. Your thoughtful encouragement blessed us greatly. May His joy be made full in each of you during 2007!

FINANCE CORNER



Here is a brief report of LCMI's funds:

	2006	January 2007
Budget	\$138,360.00	\$11,690.32
Funds Received	\$52,479.53	\$2,533.00
Funds Disbursed	\$51,699.11	\$2,257.51
Balance	\$780.42	\$275.49

HOSTING

We are available to speak at gatherings. Whether a family gathering, Bible study, prayer group or larger event, the content can be customized to fit any group's needs, size and ages. Check out our website or request brochures from our office to view the opportunities, then contact our office to discuss details and scheduling. There is no charge beyond the limited materials necessary for an event. However, provision to help cover long distance travel expenses, local transportation, housing and/or meals is appreciated.



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Truth - Grace = Legalism

Grace - Truth = License

Grace + Truth = JESUS!