

The Triumphs Of Christianity

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2 Cor. 2:14

2 Cor. 2:14, *“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.”*

In play, work, or war we like to be on the winning side; no one cares to admit defeat.

The epistles penned by the inspired Apostle Paul are filled with the spirit of triumph.

In the text there is an outburst of thankfulness from the apostle.

Paul may have thought of the triumphal entry of a Roman general, who after some victorious campaign, returned to the capital city of Rome, laden with the spoils of war to receive the honors of victory.

So it is with the Christian. His life is filled with conflicts and struggles, but the crown of life is promised to those who faithfully endure to the end.

The triumphs of the church

Over Judaism.

The church was born with this enemy.

The Pharisees had hounded Jesus to the death of the cross because He denounced their hypocrisy.

But scarcely had the blind fury of Calvary subsided in the hearts of the Jewish leaders, when it was aroused again by the wonderful happenings of Pentecost when 3000 Jews were added to the church.

Over Grecian philosophy.

This was not quite so long and bitter as the conflict with Judaism.

Paul encountered it at Mars Hill.

Acts 17:22-31, *“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that*

made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

Over Pagan persecution.

It seemed inevitable that the spread of the gospel would bring it into conflict with imperial Rome, and this conflict was long and bitter.

According to Foxes Book of Martyrs, from 67 A.D. to 323 A.D. Rome was ruled by ten cruel tyrants, which marked ten periods of persecution against the church.

Under the providence of God, however, the church met this crisis and triumphed over it.

The church encounters similar opposition today

Similar to the conflict with Judaism, the church today comes in conflict with the denominational world.

The preaching of the gospel is not merely a way, but the way of salvation.

- Acts 16:17, *"The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation."*
- John 14:6, *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

This naturally incurs the displeasure of those who maintain that there are different ways to be saved.

The Bible teaches that there is but one way to become a Christian.

- Acts 2:36-38, *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”*
- Acts 2:41, *“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”*
- Acts 2:47, *“Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”*

Naturally, this arouses opposition from those who contend for other forms of conversion.

The Bible gives us the religious name of “Christian” for God’s people to wear in honor of Christ our Saviour.

- Acts 11:26, *“And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”*
- Acts 26:28, *“Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”*
- 1 Pet. 4:16, *“Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”*

The contention for using the name of Christ to the exclusion of all human names incurs the criticism of those who persist in wearing human names.

- Acts 4:10, *“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.”*
- Acts 4:11-12, *“This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

The Bible teaches that Christians ought to be united in one body.

- John 17:20-21, *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”*
- 1 Cor. 1:10, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”*
- Eph. 4:4-6, *“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”*

This plea for unity of Christians in one body naturally means denouncing denominationalism, which, of course, incurs the wrath of the denominational world.

Similar to the conflict with Greek philosophy, the church today is in conflict with a modern theology called Modernism.

The New Testament teaches that Jesus was born of a virgin; worked miracle after miracle during His earthly ministry; died a terrible death on the cross for the sins of the world; was buried, but arose from the dead; and after ascending into heaven, sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles to guide them into all truth.

All of this is denied by those who are strong adherents of Modernism, and naturally those who contend for these fundamental truths will encounter the opposition of Modernism.

The triumphs of the gospel of Christ

It gave Christians victory over sin.

Over the guilt of sin.

Rom. 3:23, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,”*

Judaism could not take away sin.

Heb. 10:4, *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”*

It was God’s plan that through the death of Christ, man’s redemption from sin could be accomplished.

1 Pet. 1:18-19, *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

Over the power of sin — over temptation.

- 1 Cor. 10:13, *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”*
- 2 Pet. 2:9, *“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”*

It gave Christians victory over life’s trials.

Over sorrow.

2 Cor. 1:3-5, *“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.”*

Over difficulties.

Job 14:1, *“Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.”*

Hard, uphill roads may rise before you, but Jesus, who is unlimited in power and love has promised His presence and help in every time of need.

- Matt. 28:20, *“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*
- Heb. 13:5, *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”*
- Psalms 50:15, *“And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”*

Over fear.

- Psalms 27:1, *“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”*
- Psalms 46:1, *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”*
- Heb. 13:5-6, *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”*

Over the world.

1 John 5:4, *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”*

It gave Christians victory over death itself.

- 1 Cor. 15:20-22, *“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”*
- 1 Cor. 15:55-57, *“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
- 1 Thess. 4:13-17, *“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”*

Conclusion

Truly, the Christian can always say:

2 Cor. 2:14, “*Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, ...*”

Remember that this triumph in life, in death, and in eternity is only through Christ Jesus.

Are you in Christ? If not, come over on the Lord’s side; on the side of victory, the side of salvation.

Here's how you can make that happen:

- **Faith.** Heb. 11:6, “*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*” When I was in high school (I was about 17 years old), a neighbor boy my same age told me he was an atheist. Since I had been baptized, I took the opportunity to talk to him about the scriptures. He told me that he could see that living the life of a Christian was good, but he wasn’t sure if he believed there was a God. But to be on the safe side, maybe he should go to church, and when he dies and stands before God (if there is a God) on the day of Judgment (if there is a Judgment), maybe if God sees that he has gone to church and lived a good life that God would send him to heaven (if there is a heaven), and not to hell (if there is a hell). I told him, “It doesn’t work that way. You have to believe in Him with all your heart or you cannot please Him.”
- **Repentance.** Acts 2:38, “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*” Acts 11:18, “*... Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*” If while you were sleeping, you heard a noise in the other room, and you think to yourself, “There’s a burglar in my house!” So you reach for your cell phone, and as quietly as you can, you call the police, tell them there is a burglar in your house, and you give them your address. Soon, you heard them arrive and capture the thief. He yells, “I’m sorry; I’m sorry!” What is he sorry for? He is sorry that he got caught; not that he stole. In true repentance the thief would be sorry that he ever stole and wants to change his life so that he would never steal again. That is true repentance. It is a change of mind that brings

about a change of action. That is what we have to do before we can become a Christian.

- **Confession.** Rom. 10:9-10, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* What do we confess? That we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Note that in the above scriptures that faith (believing), repentance, and confession are “**UNTO**” righteousness, life, or salvation. “Unto” means toward something; not that one has already attained.

- **Baptism.** It is baptism where righteousness, life, and salvation are attained. Jesus, himself, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, *“But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* (Matt. 3:14-17). Jesus was baptized because God said it was the right thing to do. Did you see how pleased God was about Jesus being baptized? Jesus also said *“it becometh **us** to fulfil all righteousness.”* We are baptized because it fulfills His righteousness, not because it is of our righteousness.

In fact, if we are not baptized, we are still in our sins. *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* (Acts 2:38). Peter, what did you say the reason of baptism is? *“for the remission of sins”*. Why would anyone want to leave out the step that removes our sins?

Jesus commanded that to reach salvation we must be baptized. *“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth **and** is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* (Mark 16:15-16).

Ananias told Saul (before he was rename Paul) the very same thing, *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be*

baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16). Baptism is a requirement given by God.

Baptism is called a burial. *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Rom. 6:4). Our old man is to be dead to us. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Rom. 6:3-6). Baptism is God’s blueprint for applying the blood of Christ in our lives by baptism. We are free from our old sins only when we are baptized.*

This doesn’t mean “sprinkling. The scripture above says baptism is a burial. We don’t take a dead body to the cemetery and sprinkle a little dirt over it; we bury the body.

If you have not yet become a Christian, won't you consider it today?

