

THE POWER OF CHRIST

SERMONS BY TEXAS BAPTIST PASTORS

Compiled by

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SERMON THIRTEEN

THE VICTORIOUS CHRIST

By

Dr. C. E. Hereford,

Pastor, First Baptist Church, Lubbock, Texas

“He shall not fail” (Isaiah 42:4).

A group of young men came to Ralph Waldo Emerson and asked him how they might be successful in life. “Link yourself to some great cause and give your best to it,” was his reply. What cause is there greater than that of righteousness led by Jesus Christ? History speaks of a “Lost Cause,” but those who follow Jesus Christ will never be the ones who have followed a “Lost Cause.”

The world has seen many great conquerors. Three stand out above the rest, Alexander, Charlemagne, and Napoleon.

When Alexander was twenty-seven years of age he sat on the seashore and wept because his father, Philip of Macedon, had left no world for him to conquer. Today Philip of Macedon is only remembered because he is the father of Alexander the Great. When Alexander was thirty-two years of age, he had become a world conqueror. Caesar wept because he had not conquered as much territory at the same age as had Alexander. Without a map, he led his armies into India. Yet Alexander was defeated. He was defeated by drink. He died in a drunken debauch.

Charlemagne was a great conqueror. He is the father of modern Europe. Much of the enmity between the nations of Europe is simply the carry-over of a family feud. At Charlemagne's death his great kingdom was divided among his four sons. Thus we have the beginning of the modern war-fearing nations in Europe. Charlemagne knew defeat. He was defeated by death. After his death they placed his body on a throne of ivory. They draped about him the purple of royalty. They placed his crown upon his head, a sceptre in his hand, and a scroll of his mighty deeds in his lap. The cave tomb was sealed.

Three hundred years later it was opened again. Time had wasted all evidence of greatness. His scepter had fallen from his fleshless hands. The crown had slipped from his forehead and hung on his shoulder.

The scroll of his mighty deeds had fallen from his lap. The bones of his index finger pointed on the open scroll to the words of Scripture, “**What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?**” We see how completely death had conquered Charlemagne.

Napoleon is the other member of the triumvirate of world conquerors. Napoleon decided to conquer the world. He never lost that ambition. Although imprisoned on St. Helena, constantly he worked with maps of the world before him. On one occasion he said, “Alexander, Charlemagne and I built great empires with the sword. Jesus of Nazareth built a great empire with love. Today no one would die for us, but millions would die for Jesus of Nazareth.”

Waterloo has become a synonym for defeat; and I am following a conquerless conqueror. Jesus of Nazareth was never defeated.

I. The Victorious Record

Jesus was born in a stable and placed in a manger as His first crib. Satan had closed the doors of private homes and public houses to Him. The poet has said, “Born in another man’s stable, buried in another man’s tomb, His first companions cattle, and His last, thieves upon a cross,” but Jesus has completely overcome any stigma that may be attached to his humble birth.

Many have had the privilege of standing with uncovered heads before the log cabin in which Abraham Lincoln was born. It is said that*when his father first looked into his little face that he patted him on the head and said, “It’s too bad, it’s too bad. There’s not much chance for you, Sonny.”

We know Abraham Lincoln was the rail-splitter who became president and has become one of our greatest Americans. “From the log cabin to the White House” might well be the title of his biography.

Though Jesus was not welcomed by the people of Bethlehem, the angels came to announce His birth. The shepherds came happily into the city to search Him out, saying, “Let’s go and see this that has come to pass.” The wise men came to visit Him. They came seeking the King of the Jews. They brought gifts for a king and after worshiping Him they left their kingly gifts. At Christmas time one-half the world gathers in memory around the manger cradle of Jesus Christ.

As He lived Jesus was always victorious.

His enemies, hoping that they might entrap Him in His speech, approached Him with the question of tribute money. The Jews were vassals of the Romans. Taxation was a burning question in that day as it is in this day. They sought to hang Him on one horn or the other of a dilemma. The question put to Him was, “**Shall we render tribute to Caesar or not?**” Jesus asked for a coin. When presented with one, He asked whose superscription was upon it. They said it was Caesar’s. His answer was that they were to render unto Caesar the things that belonged to Caesar and unto God the things that belonged to God. It is no wonder the people said, “**Whence has this man all this wisdom?**”

One dark night Jesus with His disciples was rowing across the sea of Galilee. A storm quickly came down upon them. These fishermen, though traveling in familiar waters, soon despaired of their lives. They awakened Him from His slumber and said, "Carest thou not that we perish?" Jesus seeing their fright and the storm, arose, lassoed the wind, and stilled the waves. When calm had been restored they said one to another, "What manner of man is this that the wind and the waves obey him?"

In the wilderness after forty days of fasting, Satan came to tempt Him. He knew Jesus was hungry and weak. Satan challenged Him to a duel. This is the most famous duel that was ever fought, Satan using a false sword, Jesus using the Sword of the Spirit. It was not long until, with the Sword of the Spirit, which was the Word of God, Jesus had routed Satan. Satan had been unwilling for anyone less than himself to fight this duel with Jesus. We find Jesus victor.

Judas slipped out in the night while Jesus and His disciples were in Bethany to talk with the fathers of Israel. Judas had his price. His price was low. He sold the Master for thirty pieces of silver. While Judas was talking with the fathers of Israel, Jesus was talking with the Heavenly Father. In the Garden of Gethsemane we see Him struggling until the pores of His skin break forth from their bloody throats. Jesus is heard to say, "**Not my will, but thine be done.**"

He returns to His disciples and tells them that the betrayer is at hand. The soldiers and crowd who came with swords and staves were amazed when He stepped from the shadows of the Garden and asked, "**Whom seek ye?**" They said, "**Jesus of Nazareth.**" He answered, "**I am he.**" And they fell backward on the ground.

Jesus was victor on the cross. Jesus had always been giving. Before He came to the world He began to give.

- He had given up heaven for earth.
- He had given up the garments of glory for the garments of men.
- He gave up the riches of heaven for the poverty of earth, the glory of heaven for shame on the earth, the diadem of heaven for a crown of thorns, being known as God for the son of man.

During His ministry He had given Himself. He had given until all He had were the clothes He wore. But men are so greedy! They were not satisfied to take what He had given, but they demanded more. They demanded even His blood. The cry "Crucify" was made, and He was crucified at the time of the morning sacrifice.

Each morning at nine the priests in the Temple brought forth a lamb which was sacrificed as the morning offering. Each evening at three another lamb was sacrificed. Jesus, the Lamb of God, was nailed to the cross at the time of the morning sacrifice and cried, "**Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,**" at the time of the evening sacrifice, and the veil in Herod's Temple was rent in twain. The people worshiping in there during the three hours of darkness lifted up their eyes and looked upon that which was unlawful for them to behold, "**the Holy of Holies.**" Now we through Jesus are able to enter into the very presence of God, for He once for all went with His own blood into the Holy of Holies, there to make atonement for us.

The public executioners marveled that Jesus had died so quickly. Many who were crucified lingered for days. But since it was the day of preparation for the Passover feast, the death of the crucified was hurried by striking them over the chest or breaking their legs. Jesus needed not that one bone be broken, for He cried victoriously, "**It is finished,**" and gave up His spirit. In the darkness the Roman soldier pierced His side and, if we could have stood close enough to have heard the blood dropping into the pool for the cleansing of all men, we would have heard each precious drop crying, "Victory! Victory!"

Did He not say, "**I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me**"? Did He not say that "**As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up**"? His crucifixion was not defeat, but victory. He came not to live, but to die. The cross of Jesus has become the greatest conquering power among mankind. It is no wonder that Constantine saw a vision of the cross with the legend, "By this sign conquer." The cross has been the sign for these two thousand years of the world's greatest conqueror.

During the French Revolution, when cathedrals were being looted and crosses torn from their places, a mob entered a great cathedral to destroy it. As they opened the door, the candles were burning about the altar. Above the altar was a life-size crucifix. It was only a graven image of Him who hanged on the cross for us, but as the mob walked down the aisle, those in front dropped to their knees and the others followed. This was only a carved image of the conquering Christ. What happened in the hearts of the looting mob that day before the crucifix is only a shadow of what has happened in a multitude of hearts in the presence of the Christ Himself.

II. The Victorious Reign

He is dead? Yes! His enemies had desired His death. They cried out, "**Crucify Him**" because they desired it. He was hanged on the cross to die. John told Mary He was dead as he led her to his home. James went to tell Peter that He was dead. The centurion pronounced Him dead and ordered the soldiers back to their barracks. Judas said to himself, "He is dead." Annas told Caiaphas they were through with Jesus, for He was dead. Nicodemus told Joseph and they sought His body from Pilate. The centurion gave his report saying He was dead.

But many that day were repeating what the angels had said, "**Unto you is born Christ the Lord.**" They recalled what Joseph had told them about the visit of the angel Gabriel who had told him to call Him Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. The gifts of the wise men were remembered. And also the word of the prophet who had said, "**Of his government there shall be no end,**" and of the statement of Isaiah, "**He shall not fail or be discouraged.**" He is alive? Yes! The angels in talking to the women in the early morning at the tomb had said, "**Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen.**"

The angels first told the women. The women hastened to tell the disciples. Mary lingered. She saw Him alive and rushed breathlessly to tell the disciples. Some of the disciples told Thomas He was alive and Thomas said, "**I will not believe until I put my fingers into the nail prints in his hands and thrust my hand into his side.**"

Peter told John and they rushed to the tomb. Two disciples came rushing in to tell how He had walked with them by the way and how He had been made known to them in the breaking of bread. He came into the midst of the disciples in the upper room and said, “**It is I, I am alive,**” and proved it by eating before them all. He had laid aside His grave clothes so gracefully that each piece was in its place. He no longer had need for the habiliments of death. He was alive.

“Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o’er His foes,
He arose a victor from the dark domain
And He lives forever with His saints to reign,
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah, Christ arose!”

He took charge of the leaderless disciples. For three days now they had been leaderless and in the utmost confusion. Forty days He remained with them to convince them that He was the same Jesus who had died upon the cross and was alive forever. Ten days after His ascension He sent them out on a campaign to win the world. The Holy Spirit took charge in the name of Jesus.

Jesus began with two and then four and then twelve and He sent out the seventy. There were 500 who saw Him ascend into heaven. At the end of the first century there were 500,000 Christians; at the end of the eighth century there were 30,000,000. At the beginning of the Reformation it is estimated there were 100,000,000 Christians. Voltaire said he was living in the twilight of Christianity and yet there were 200,000,000 Christians in the world during his lifetime. Today there are over 600,000,000 who acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God. In the last 150 years since the day of Voltaire, Christianity has increased three hundred per cent.

Let us walk with our victorious Christ among the critics.

In the first century there were critics. Thomas, one of the disciples, was a doubter. He very emphatically said he would not believe unless it could be proven to him by his physical senses that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was alive from the grave, but Thomas was the first one after the Resurrection to acknowledge Jesus as “**My Lord and my God.**”

It has been thus through the centuries, from the first to the twentieth, that Jesus has convinced His critics.

Two men were once on a Pullman together. They were talking about Christianity. Bob Ingersoll said to Lew Wallace, “The truth ought to be told about Jesus Christ of Nazareth and you are the man to do it.” Lew Wallace began writing a book to tell the truth about Jesus. From his effort to tell the truth about Jesus came the noble book, “*Ben Hur.*” When “*Ben Hur*” was finished, Lew Wallace had become an avowed Christian, a worshiper of Jesus of Nazareth.

Let us walk with Jesus through the countries of the earth. Julian the apostate, a Roman emperor, was determined to stamp out Christianity in his empire. He had a coffin made for Jesus. He said the body of Jesus was hidden somewhere and he would find it. He commanded his legions against the Christians.

A Roman soldier once asked a captured Christian, "What is your carpenter Jesus doing now?"

The Christian replied, "Making a coffin for your emperor."

Julian the Apostate was thrust through with a spear as he rode into battle. Falling from his horse, picking up his own blood mingled with the dust of the earth, and throwing it toward heaven, he cried, with his last breath, "Oh, Galilean, thou hast conquered."

Thus we may walk with Jesus in not only one country but all the countries of the earth.

He startled the disciples by telling them that they were to preach His gospel to the ends of the earth and so the prophet, seeing what has come to pass in our own day, said, "**He hath dominion from sea to sea, from the regions to the ends of the earth.**"

We often sing, "Let every kindred, every tribe on this terrestrial ball to Him all majesty ascribe and crown Him Lord of all."

We cannot label Jesus as to race. Each of us are labeled by our birth.

- No one can say that Jesus was only a Jew. He is the man of all races.
- We cannot say that He was oriental or occidental. He lived only on one continent but He is a citizen of all continents.
- We cannot limit Him to one age, for in history He is ageless.

He may equally be called ancient, medieval, and modern. Jesus is the universal man. This is one of the greatest proofs of His deity. No one of us can account for the fact of the universality of Jesus except that He was the Son of God. He was an individual man and more. He is the universal man. Today around this world people of all colors and classes are asking "What would Jesus do?"

Let us walk with Jesus among the cultured of the earth. He was not a poet. He was not a painter. He was not a builder. He was not a writer. He was not a musician. Yet He is the inspiration for the greatest poets, the greatest painters, the greatest writers, the greatest builders, and the greatest musicians. Without the inspiration of Jesus we would not recognize the art of the world, the music of the world, the poems of the world, or its majestic buildings. The great poets have made Him the center of their poems, the great painters have left their thoughts of Him on canvas. The great musicians have sung of Him. The great builders have piled up their stone because they desired to hear the name of Jesus.

Let us walk with Jesus through the centuries of the Christian era. Hume, a gifted historian, attempted to write a history of the world, leaving out every reference and influence of Jesus of Nazareth. He gave it up as a hopeless task. He found, as someone has expressed, that history is simply "His-story."

H. G. Wells says that Jesus of Nazareth is the world's greatest individual by reason of His contribution to the individual man.

In the first century Stephen, as he died looking up into heaven, saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God and amidst the hailstones of persecution he said, "**Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.**"

In this century an old saint was dying. He had given long years of service to Christ. The end of life was drawing near. He insisted on talking. His nurse said, "Whisper." But the old saint said, "Let the angels whisper. A soul redeemed from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ and standing on the threshold of eternal glory, if I had a voice that would reach from pole to pole, I would shout it so that all the world might hear, 'Victory! Victory! through Jesus Christ!'"

Thus we see Jesus has been winning victory after victory through the past nineteen hundred years.

III. The Victorious Return

Jesus will come to earth again. What if it were today? Jesus comes to conquer. Every eye shall see Him. Those who pierced Him shall look upon Him. He shall never go again to Bethlehem's stable. He shall come as a king. The wise men of the earth in seeking Him shall seek Him on a throne. No longer need they look for Him in the stable of Bethlehem. He was born to be a king.

He returns to rule as a king. In Jerusalem once He was called king, but in mockery. They placed a common soldier's cape about His shoulders. They put a weed in His hand as a sceptre and platted a thorny crown for His head. They fell down and made mock obeisance. But He is a king. He comes to earth again conquering and to conquer.

When Edward of Windsor was Edward the Eighth, he opened Parliament. It was the first parliament during his brief reign as king of England. Entering the halls of Parliament, He walked behind the crown and sceptre. These were borne before, for he was the uncrowned king of England. Jesus will be crowned. There shall be on his head the royal diadem. He shall be crowned with many crowns. The royal diadem shall be made up of the crown of the conqueror of Satan, the crown of the conqueror of sin, the crown of the conqueror of sorrow, and the crown of the conqueror of death. He comes this time not as Saviour but as King. He shall conquer every enemy. He must reign until every enemy is put under His feet. Death is the last enemy that shall be conquered. Satan shall be bound. His enemies will bite the dust.

On the eve of the battle of Waterloo, England was on tiptoes of expectancy. Englishmen realized that the crisis was at hand. They knew that Napoleon must be stopped at Waterloo or soon he would establish himself in the court of St. James. On the evening of the battle, signals were being sent by semaphore across the English Channel from France to London. The signaler began to spell out the message, "Wellington defeated," and at this moment a cloud came down and a fog arose and closed in over the channel. That night London was on the verge of hysteria. Consternation and fear reigned throughout the city. The worst that could possibly happen had happened to Wellington.

But the next morning as the sun arose and the fog lifted the message began again. This time it was completed and the news was flashed to London, "Wellington defeated the enemy." Joy unbounded swept over the city. A holiday was declared and the streets were soon filled with the happy, cheering throngs.

When the dust of battle has cleared, Jesus Christ will be declared victor over all His enemies.

Jesus comes to complete the work He began. He not only comes to conquer but He comes to complete His work. The Bible begins right and ends right. That certainly is not true of all our books. But it is true of our Blessed Book.

- In Genesis we find ruin; in Revelation we find restoration.
- In Genesis we find the earth created; in the book of Revelation the earth is cleansed.
- In Genesis we find the entrance of Satan; in Revelation we find his exit.
- In Genesis the sun is created; in Revelation there is no need of the sun.
- In Genesis we have night, but in Revelation we find no night there.
- Sorrow began in Genesis, but in Revelation there is an end of sorrow.
- A curse is pronounced on man in Genesis, but in Revelation no more curse.
- Tears began to flow in Genesis, but in Revelation God wipes away all tears.
- Death invades the human family in Genesis, but in Revelation there is no more death.
- There is the marriage of the first Adam in Genesis and the marriage of the last Adam in Revelation.
- In Genesis man is in Eden; in Revelation he is in Paradise with God.
- In the book of Genesis and in the book of Revelation there is the tree of life.
- The tree of life was taken from man in Genesis but restored to him in Revelation.
- In Genesis we find God with man and in Revelation we find man with God eternally.

It is no wonder that the men in white apparel said to the Galileans who were gazing into the heavens, "**Why gaze ye into the heavens? Know ye not that this same Jesus whom you see go into heaven shall return in like manner as you have seen Him go?**" They remembered how Jesus said to them, "**Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature and lo, I am with you unto the end of the earth.**"

Queen Victoria once said to her chaplain, "Chaplain, I wish Jesus would come during my life."

"Why, your majesty, you have been a faithful queen. Why do you wish He would come during your life?"

"I wish," she said, "I might put the crown of Great Britain and India on His head with my hands."

"All hail, the power of Jesus; name,
Let angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all.

“Let every kindred, every tribe
On this terrestrial ball
To Him all majesty ascribe
And crown Him Lord of all.”

Dr. Carl Eugene Hereford was born at Ashton, W. Va., May 10, 1901. Education, Marshall College, W. Va., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Ordained, Oct. 15, 1921. Pastorates: Walker Memorial, Huntington, W. Va., 1921-23; Englewood Heights, Ft. Worth, Tex., 1924-25; Handley, Tex., 1925-28; north Ft. Worth Baptist Church, 1928-32; Columbus Ave., Waco, Tex., 1932-36; Lubbock, Tex., Oct. 1, 1936 to date.

First Baptist Church, Lubbock, has 3,396 members. Since Oct. 1, 1936, under Dr. Hereford's ministry, there have been 633 additions. Total contributions have been \$39,171.13. Their record S. S. attendance is 1,355. Total value of all church property is \$142,575 (All statistics as of Dec. 15, 1937).

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