

The Power of Conviction

By
Elder Enoch Ofori Jnr
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A Caged, Defeated Satan is your spiritual military Trophy

It sounds like make-believe but it's as real as the sun shining on a bright day. You are not a decorated officer. You are not a war hero. You have no military rank - not a Field Marshal, not a Sergeant, or a Captain or Warrant Officer Class I or II. But you are greater than all of history's military heroes and warriors. Because in Christ you are more than a conqueror! You have overcome the universe's greatest villain, Satan!

Don't sell yourself short. Your conqueror status is a truth to take by faith! And it's a truth that rests on an unshakeable solid foundation--Christ. Only we must remain resolute and not be shaken in confidence in the face of satanic attacks. We must not beat a retreat when the battle with the forces of evil gets intense.

In Christ our conqueror status is for keeps, incapable of being lost--unless we fail to believe and trust any more that the foundation of our victorious life is UNCONQUERABLE and so are we!

Personal Conviction is Key

Our God is "the God of all flesh" (Jer. 32:27). He loves all humanity; He seeks all humanity. Yet throughout history, He has never revealed Himself to the sea of peoples at the same time but to individuals - Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses and you. One at a time. Even if you were 'born in the church' and brought up as a Christian, you have got to come to a point in your life when you truly turn over your life to the Lord Jesus and enter into a personal relationship with Him whereby you depend on Him for your salvation and wellbeing everyday of your life. Salvation is a deeply personal experience. This is the truth the apostle John emphasizes in 1 John 5:10:

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.

Faith in the Son of God, as taught in scripture, is an intensely personal thing. The believer's whole being, his soul, testifies to and is convinced and assures him that Jesus is His Saviour and the Lord of his life. It's a deeply felt conviction. It's nothing superficial; neither is it an ambiguous feeling. Anything short of this unshakeable personal belief makes one guilty of calling God, "who cannot lie" (Tit. 1:2), a liar, since the testimony He gave of His Son that He has given us eternal life through Him (vv. 11-12) - both in the form of prophecy and personal oral affirmations from heaven ("This is My Son in whom I'm well pleased", Matt. 3:17; 17:5) - has

been dismissed as incredible. It betrays us as having a low view of God- that He too, after all, dabbles in lies. And all because we were not sure of what we claimed to believe!

That was why the Lord on one occasion asked His disciples: "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" and then redirected the question at them: "whom say ye that I am?" (Matt. 16:13, 15).

Peter alone was ready with an answer. No hesitation, no prevarication. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16).

Then disciple Peter spoke from the depth of his soul; he spoke a deeply felt conviction revealed to and impressed on him by the Father, a truth that would be the unassailable foundation of his Christian life and all others of like faith (v. 17-18). Years later, the apostle would write:

2 Peter 1:16-18

¹⁶... we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

¹⁷ For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

¹⁸ And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount.

He spoke of his experience at the *Transfiguration* when the Lord "was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light" (Matt. 17:1-5). As awesome as this experience was, however, it only reinforced Peter's personal faith in Christ (it was not the genesis of it). This is because prior to the Transfiguration, he had already confessed Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.

Personal conviction is critical or we can never have a personal relationship with the Lord or appreciate what we have in Him. And we have eternal life in Him; we have peace in Him; we have healing in Him, and we have victory in Him. These are realities of the life in Christ we should never let go by refusing to believe in them any longer because of some unpleasant prevailing circumstances we find ourselves in. So long as we believe, they are realities that remain true for us. This is because they are true in Christ and in God but only become real to us by the medium of faith since to the physical senses they are unseen and unknown. Herein lies the crucial importance of faith:

Hebrews 11

Now faith is the substance [reality] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Everything rests on faith. The "things not seen" but "hoped for" are the truths we have come to believe about God: His existence, His love, His power, His faithfulness, His redemption, and His victory among others. We only take possession of them when we exercise faith that they are real and therefore are sure to manifest themselves in our lives. Once we come to such

conviction and understanding, no contrary view or situation should be allowed to undermine it. We should "believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 11:39). The salvation in Him is real but only attained by faith.

No circumstance, no matter how dire, can undo what is true in Him and what He has ordained for us. Just watch out for the treachery of the human mind so that it does not begin to doubt or upset your faith. As long as you continue to believe in the face of all physical and psychological odds you are a conqueror!

Adverse circumstances only prove the strength of our faith and our bond of love with the Lord.

Our Victory is Eternally Secure through Him

The apostle Paul powerfully articulates the truth of our eternal love and victory in Christ in Rom. 8:35-39:

Rom. 8:35-9:1

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

³⁶ As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

³⁷ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

³⁸ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

³⁹ 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.

The love Christ has for us in God, and we for Him, is unbending and unending. And it's the source and foundation of our victory in Christ, equally unyielding and unending. How?

"We are more than conquerors", although "we are killed all day long", we endure tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or the sword. The enemy never wins and will never win no matter the lengths he goes. Hence "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹ 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".

"In all things" victory in Christ is guaranteed. And the sweet part is that God never disappoints the strong in faith at the time of trial and temptation, however grave the situation is. The case of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego readily springs to mind. Threatened with burning by great King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon unless they bowed to his gods, these three faithful Jewish saints would not forsake their God, firm in their conviction that He was able to deliver them and would deliver them, if not at that particular moment, at a future time. Amazingly, the fire of

Nebuchadnezzar failed to overcome them, and they ended up the heroes of the day because the love of their God was unyielding and unending and so was their victory.

Dan 3:14-25

¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

¹⁵ Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

¹⁷ If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

¹⁸ But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

¹⁹ Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

²⁰ And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

²¹ Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

²² Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

²⁴ Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

²⁵ He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the "fiery furnace" and the fire even killed those 'macho-men' who threw them into the fire, but the three lived to praise God in the fire and out of the fire. They were "more than conquerors" that day "through Him that loved" them--the Son of God who was with them in the midst of the fire (Isa. 43:2) in fulfilment of His promise to be with His own in trouble (Ps 91:15).

They lived the absolute truth of the victorious life in Christ. They were killed that day for His sake, but death found its match and conqueror in the pre-incarnate Christ, the Son of God.

In Christ, we are destined never to lose come what may! He's conqueror of all and has made us partakers of His victory. Make this truth the foundation of your life, and you shall never suffer

defeat. Yes, distress will come and so tribulation, persecution, and the unknown trouble but the victory belongs to Christ--and to you as long as you believe and continue to make Him the Lord of your life whom you love unconditionally because He first loved and ordained you a conqueror in Him! Halleluiah!