

## Conquering Life's Storms Part II

By Denise Bostic

Trials and tribulation will come to us as believers. We learn shortly after conversion that it is not "if trials come" but "when trials come". All believers in Christ face personal storms in our lives. At times, the trials and tribulations that we go through can severely test our faith in God. Although this may sometimes be the case, we can also learn a lot from the things we go through depending on our attitudes and *how* we handle them. Trials, tribulations, persecutions and tests can either draw us closer to or take us further away from God. They can strengthen or weaken our faith. They can refine our hearts and make them more pliable to God or they can harden our hearts and make us bitter. They can cause us to be left disappointed and disillusioned or cause us to rejoice and bear much spiritual fruit. (*1 Peter 4: 12-14, Hebrews 12:1-11*)

Jesus did not promise his followers a trouble free life. As a matter of fact he said,

**"In this world you will have trouble but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."**

Jesus is an over comer; he is a *conqueror*. (*Revelation 19:11-16*) Many in the body of Christ may not realize this but God has called you and I to be conquerors also. The Apostle Paul declared to the Church that no matter what we had to go through for the sake of Christ that we would be able to conquer it all. He said under the divine inspiration of the Spirit:

**"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (*Romans 8:35-39*)**

Jesus lived a victorious life. He set the example for us throughout his earthly life and now that we have received him, we are called not only to talk as he talked but also to walk as he walked. *We are called to conquer*. God wants us to conquer or overcome in all areas of our lives. He does not expect us to do this in our own might or power however. There is a key that will ensure our victory and ability to conquer the storms of our lives. The Apostle Paul knew the secret to victorious living:

**“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God...” (Galatians 2:20-21)**

Paul did not rely or depend on his own human effort; he relied on Christ and his power to live *through* him. Paul received this empowerment by the free gift of God’s grace. He recognized his total inability to perform all that God desired to in his life. By receiving God’s grace, this allowed God to have free reign in Paul’s life. This is how Paul was able to endure through multitudes of trials, tribulations, tests, hardships and persecutions. This enabled Paul to face death for the sake of Christ. (*II Corinthians 11:23-31 II Timothy 4:6-8*) As Paul said, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”** (*Philippians 4:13*) We can too.

Not many in today’s world could say today that they had to endure such things as Paul, especially in the free world. Since Paul, the twelve apostles and multitudes of saints endured such hardships for the sake of Christ; shouldn’t we be able to endure and overcome all things as well? If they could conquer in the face of such extreme adversity, can we not also?

Again, we are called to conquer. We do this by ruling and reigning with Christ. God wants us to take dominion in the earth today. He wants us to reign in life. Many in the Church believe that Kingdom dominion and authority will be given to us after the return of Christ but this is not something that the Lord is going to give us in the future, it is something *that he has already given* to the Church in this present world. All one must do is read the New Testament to learn of this truth.

“OK”, you may say, “so we are to rule and reign with Kingdom authority now, but how can we do this?” I’m glad you asked that. As was said earlier, Paul knew the secret to reigning in life and it is by the power of Christ. The Lord Jesus obtained the victory for us over the world, the devil, the law, sin and death but now he expects us to continuously walk in that victory in the here and now. How are we to do this? Well, before the Lord’s crucifixion and after his resurrection and departure, he told his disciples that he would send them another Comforter to help, lead and guide them. (*John 14:15-17, 26, 16:7-15*) That other Comforter’s name is the Holy Spirit.

The key to conquering life’s storms is to allow Christ to live through us. How does he do this? He does this through the power of his Spirit. There are many, many scriptures that teach us about our divine Helper that has been sent to us by God. If you listened to last months audio teachings on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, you received an introduction to some of the most elementary teachings about him. In this article I will be giving you practical examples of how we can follow the Holy Spirit’s guidance, direction and wisdom to be able to not only weather life’s storms, but also how he will lead us on to complete and total victory.

Many in the Church today may feel defeated by the storms in their lives but they do not have to be. Some brethren have such great difficulty because they are relying on self instead of the power of the Holy Spirit. Some do because they are ignorant of the fact that

the Holy Spirit wants to minister and move in their lives. Some do because they ignore or go against what the Holy Spirit is leading them to do. Others do because they have not yet surrendered to God and so the Holy Spirit can't do a work in their lives. Their flesh is at enmity with God. The equation for reliance upon the flesh is always the same: *surrender to the flesh = failure and defeat.*

The Lord is calling his Church to victory and it must first begin in our personal lives before we can have it as an entire, worldwide Body. In order for us to be the triumphant Church that God desires us to be, we must learn the secret to overcoming (conquering). The equation for this is: *surrender to the Holy Spirit = power and victory.* Brethren in the Church in the first century understood this. They lived and moved in the power of the Spirit. This made them mighty and effective witnesses for Christ. They overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. They yielded to God and in so doing became fit vessels for the Master's use. They overcame hardships, persecution, severe trials, testing and even death by the power of Christ and his Spirit.

Remember Paul said, **"I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."** As I have said before, Christ is not Jesus' last name; it is a divine title, which means: the anointed One and his anointing. Jesus is the Christ (*or Messiah*) sent by God into the world and *his anointing is the Holy Spirit.* When Paul said, "I know longer live, but Christ lives in me" he was speaking of the anointing of God that resided within him. The Apostle John understood this and said this to the Church:

**"But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth....As for you the anointing which you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit-just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:20, 27)**

The Holy Spirit is not only our divine teacher; he also leads and guides us into all truth. He anoints or empowers us to live the life of Christ, not only in our personal lives but also in our service to God both individually and as an entire Church body. For believers, this is where the rubber meets the road. The Spirit can direct us, instruct us, warn us and tell us of things to come. Can you see brothers and sisters in Christ, how valuable this divine help can be to us through life's storms? This kind of help can be found no where else on earth, it is *supernatural.* Yes, we can have supernatural help through the storm's or trials and tribulations of our lives. The Spirit is all knowing and all seeing. He knows, sees and hears what we cannot. He graciously gives us his help freely. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace. (*Hebrews 10:29*)

The Holy Spirit helps us to receive and walk in the victory obtained for us by Christ. John also told the Church:

**"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." (1 John 4:4)**

He who is in us is the Spirit of Christ. Because he lives in us, we can overcome **all** things. Whatever you may be going through, he has you answers, he has your solution. What we

must do as believers is to take the time to learn how to listen to the voice of God. Instead of bearing these burdens of life's storms, we must roll those burdens upon God and he will see us through them and bring us on to victory. When we allow God to steer our boat, he will safely navigate us through life's stormy seas. He wants us to come to him for his word says:

**“Cast all your cares on him because he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)**

Please note that right before verse seven that Peter admonishes the believers to humble themselves before the Lord. (Verse 6) It takes humility to cast all your cares upon the Lord and to admit that you don't have all the answers and the solutions to your problems. God cannot help those who are too proud to receive it. In fact, he resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. (James 4:6) We must confess to God that we need his divine help and be willing to receive it. God loves you and cares for you! He wants to help you in all our adversities and struggles. He wants to empower you to overcome or conquer all.

We will have troubles in this world. We are soldiers in the army of the Lord. We go from skirmish to skirmish and from battle to battle but through Christ, we win the war. Many struggle to conquer the storms in their lives because they do not recognize that their battle is in the spirit realm. They are trying to fight a spiritual battle with carnal or fleshly weapons. We cannot win our battles that way however. We can only win them by fighting with spiritual weapons. Paul understood this and gave away the secret to his success.

**“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (II Corinthians 10:3-5)**

We cannot use worldly tactics to conquer life's storms. Our power and success lies in bringing ourselves, first and foremost, under the submission of Christ and then by using his divine power and weaponry to demolish those things in our lives that would set itself up against the knowledge of God. Sometimes the skirmish turns into a great battle but when we consistently use the spiritual weapons that God gave us (prophecy, prayer, fasting, the word, the gifts and fruit of the Spirit, etc.) we will eventually win the battle. Even those things that have become a stronghold will be demolished completely. If God be for us, who can be against us? (*Romans 8:31*)

The Spirit will guide us through all of life's storms if we will allow him to work in our lives. God will personally teach us how to rule and reign over our circumstances if we take the time to seek him in prayer, wait upon him, hear him and obey what he instructs us to do. When we submit ourselves to the Headship of Christ, he will lead us to the victory. We must first bring ourselves under his authority in order to legitimately exercise ours in the earth. The Lord has given us dominion in the earth through the Cross. As the second Adam, he came to restore what the first Adam had lost. (*Genesis 1:26, Romans 5*) Jesus came to say and do. Jesus ruled and reigned over life. He came to show us how to walk in that dominion. You can conquer life's storms, all you must do is allow him to live and work through you.