



## A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: JANUARY 2024

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### DELIVERED FROM EVERY EVIL WORK

What Paul wrote to Timothy is very interesting. He said, "... *the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work*" (2 Timothy 4:18). How can Paul say this? It appears that he suffered from every evil work. His list of afflictions, persecutions, dangers, and troubles is enough to make any man shutter. He confessed to Timothy that his difficult departure was imminent. Paul was not naive about how he would die; it would be a gruesome death. He called his departure an offering, knowing he would be made a sacrifice.

His personal eulogy was one of fighting. "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith...*" (2 Timothy 4: 6-7). Paul's decision to follow Jesus would make his life extremely difficult. He almost begs Timothy to reach him quickly, knowing his departure is soon. He longed for Timothy because the Church had forsaken him; most likely, it was embarrassed of him. If his death would be after winter, Paul had no help or provision, but that which Timothy could get to him. So, he instructs Timothy to reach him before winter, listing several items needed: bring my coat and books, especially the parchments. He told Timothy to beware of Alexander, for he caused him much evil. "*Much evil.*" Then, Paul is audacious to say, "*And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen*" (2 Timothy 4:18).

Unless Paul knows something most are unaware of, how could he say that God would deliver him from every evil work? Paul even confessed that if in this life only we have hope in Jesus, we are, of all men, most miserable. Deliverance and victory are something different than what many are seeking

today. Surely, believers today would disagree with Paul about God delivering him from every evil work; he is dying in the morning from a beheading! Therefore, how can he declare that God will deliver him from every evil work? So, what did Paul know? Believers today must realize this revelation of victory. What did Paul mean when he said God would deliver him from every evil work? What is deliverance? The revelation of victory and deliverance from every evil work is found in his testimony to the Romans. In Romans, Paul triumphantly boasts that God works all things together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. The purpose of God is to conform believers to the image of Jesus.

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit bears the responsibility of accomplishing this in believers and, therefore, intercedes within the believer with unutterable groanings of prayers. These prayers of the Spirit will not go unanswered. Because of this assurance, Paul rests in this undeniable fact that no devil in hell or force on earth can prevent him from being like Christ and living forever in God's love – this is deliverance! Paul even resounds the deliverance by proclaiming that God has already accomplished this in the believer: "*Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified*" (Romans 8:30). The deliverance is sound: who can be against us if God is for us? God is undoubtedly for us. God is the judge, the One before Whom we must be examined; however, if He spared not His Son for us, He will also provide all that is needed to be justified before Him. Who can condemn us? Where is the evidence of our crime? God has washed it all away through the blood of His dear Son. God refuses to remember our sins and iniquities.

Even Jesus, who died for us, is teamed up with the Holy Spirit to pray for us. Jesus intercedes for us in heaven at the Father's right hand as the Holy Spirit prays in us. "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us*" (Romans 8:35-37). Now, that is what I call deliverance! Praise God. What rest to the soul. Such abundant assurance is given to the believer. There it is – delivered from every evil work.

And victory, what is victory? "*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 8:38-39). Our victory is that nothing can separate us from God's love, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Now, if you consider deliverance or victory something different than this, then you will probably be very disappointed with God. You will find yourself questioning His goodness and faithfulness. But if you are a believer and a follower of Jesus who knows the Word, then you will fight the good fight as Paul. You will rejoice in the face of persecution, knowing God will deliver you from every evil work. Overcoming defeat is understanding victory. If your idea of victory is different than that which God assures us of, you might have the opportunity to return to the life you knew before you met Jesus.

## **DO YOU HAVE VICTORY?**

Beloved, hear me as I ask, "Do you have the victory?" Do you have the love of God in Christ? I am not asking if you believe God loves you, but do you know He loves you? Do you know God has taken you up in His care? Do you know the groanings of the Holy Spirit inside of you? Do you know that Jesus is before the Father, calling out your name with His sacrifice of blood? Do you know that you are justified, sanctified, and glorified by what Jesus has accomplished for you on the cross?

How important it is to know that God loves you. This is the victory. Victory is not the theology of love but love itself. It is not the hope that God will love you one day, but that God loves you now. If you do not know God loves you, then you will be like Israel when she cried the Lord has forsaken me; the Lord has forgotten me. Though God assuredly cried out to her, My love is stronger for you than a mother for her nursing baby. I could never forget you. You are continually before Me. I have engraved you into My hands. Sadly, though God loved so fiercely, Israel did not believe it. She missed her deliverance when He came and wept for her before Jerusalem.

Please pay attention to the multitudes of those who walked in victory, fighting for their faith. Look at Martha and Mary demanding the stone to be removed from the mouth of the tomb that housed their dead brother. They will not let death separate them from the love of God. Look at Peter forsaking his boats to meet the resurrected Jesus on the shore, refusing to let his sin of denial

separate him from the love of God. Look at Paul, rejected by the Church, forsaken by friends, offering his life to God in death, refusing to let demons separate him from the love of God.

There is your victory. Don't let that abuse separate you from the love of God. Don't let that loss separate you from the love of God. Don't let that sickness separate you from the love of God. Don't let that trial separate you from the love of God. Don't let that sin separate you from the love of God. Fight the challenges with faith.

You will fight the fight of faith. Even Jesus wrestled. Fiery darts were filling the spiritual night ... the tranquility of His soul was broken, *"Now is my soul troubled"* (John 12: 27).

He taught us in Gethsemane to fight back by believing God. We do not look at Gethsemane and justify our troubles, but we learn how to fight!

Understand the faith. Our faith must agree with God's purposes, agreeing with Him to accomplish in us what He promised. And that purpose is clearly stated in Romans 8 - to be conformed to the image of Jesus! This is the calling and purpose of God for us. This is the goal of saving faith (Romans 8). If we do not desire to be like Jesus, laboring in grace to be like Jesus, we should be concerned about our faith getting us to heaven. We may not have the faith to overcome.