

21 March 2008
Christ Church – Good Friday
VICTORY

I love Good Friday, it's my favourite celebration, remembering that Jesus has won. In Jesus we are victorious. Sin, death and the devil don't win because Jesus has won. I love to be reminded that in Jesus we too are winners. We are victorious, for Jesus has won the victory.

Jesus has died, once for all. "We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Heb. 10:10)

Once you've brought something from the shop, you don't keep going back to pay for it. When you purchase it you receive a receipt as proof of ownership. You only have to buy it once. Jesus death is payment in full, he now owns us. "You are not your own; you were bought at a price." (1 Cor. 6:19,20) And Jesus' life was the price. The nail marks in his body are his receipt of ownership – paid in full. Once you've paid for something, you don't have to worry about having enough to buy it, you simply have the opportunity to enjoy it. Jesus wants to enjoy sharing his life with you, and to have you enjoy sharing your life with him.

There is no more to pay, Jesus has won the victory – Yeh!

How can we live the victory we have in Jesus. How can we live the victory not existing as survivors, or victims? In Jesus we're not victims, we're victors.

What can we glean from the account of Jesus' crucifixion to help us live the victory he has won?

I've picked out three for today, but I'd like to encourage you to each have a read and see what other points Jesus gives on how we can live his victory.

The first way to live victoriously I'd like to highlight is when Peter pulled out his sword and attacked. To which Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" (John

18:11) We live victoriously by putting away our swords and doing things Jesus' way.

But when I'm attacked I find this urge rising in me to attack. Then I'm existing as a victim and not a victor. Jesus reached out and healed the man who was attacked. Do you reckon that slave would have been different after that encounter with Jesus?

In Jesus' crucifixion there is horrific violence done to Jesus, but he only gives back forgiveness. He lives victoriously, not finding his motivation for action from those who are harming him, but from his trust in the Father. Jesus motivation was the Father's will.

Instead of wasting our time and energy in attacking, Jesus leads us down the path of freedom, as we live out the Father's will in our lives, using Jesus' power and authority to do it.

So we seek to love our enemy. "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse... Do not repay anyone evil for evil.... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12:14,17,21)

Let's live victorious, Jesus has been crucified, once for all, we don't need to crucify anyone else. There's been enough violence for one life-time.

The second way to live victoriously I'd like to highlight comes from the name of the hill on which Jesus is crucified – Golgotha. Golgotha means; place of the skull.

What resides in your skull? Your brain. We want to make decisions about life based upon our reasoning ability. My brain, my reasoning ability tries to take over at times. I reason, is it logical, but Jesus death puts to death logic as my master. I live Jesus victory not by being logical but when I'm Christological!

I live Jesus' victory when I do what I see him doing. That's at the heart of being a disciple of Jesus. After Jesus washed his disciples feet he said; "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also

should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." (John 13:14,15)

I can't think my way into acting like Jesus, I need to see him and follow his lead. If I could think my way to freedom then Jesus died for nothing. But I can't, thank God Jesus was crucified so that I might daily crucify trying to think my way to good health, a life worth living. I can live victoriously, receiving from Jesus the gift of worth, his way of living good health, especially good mental health.

In Jesus my mind gets set free to serve and not enslave me or others. It gets set free to answer this basic question; 'What would Jesus do?'

The third way to live victoriously I'd like to highlight is shown in the way people treasured things over other people. The soldiers take more care over a piece of clothe than they do over Jesus. The clothe is too good to tear so they gamble for it, at the foot of the cross. What a contrast. A fellow human being hanging there and all they can think of is not tearing a piece of clothe.

The Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath. Three people died and they worried about a tradition. A tradition which was meant to remind them of God's promises, that they could rely on him to come good with his promises. Promises made to people, not to customs. Jesus died for people, not for customs.

I live victorious as I follow Jesus' example, living to love people as I am loved by him. I don't exist to serve any custom or tradition at the expense of people. Jesus leads me to ask; 'What's the most loving, Christ-like action for this person?' 'How can I use the gifts and resources Jesus has given me to grow this person to greater maturity in Jesus?'

This might be especially important in a consumer society where we are daily being conditioned to buy our way to life. People are used as the means for accumulating things, when Jesus lived using things to love people, freeing them to live victoriously, not at victim of the latest consumer craze.

This weekend I'd like to encourage you to reflect on the victory we have in Jesus and how we can be living it.

Let us pray.

Jesus, accept our thanks, our praise, our adoration for having paid the price to win the victory for us. Show us were we have be existing as victims, that we might reject that way. Show us how we might continue to grow living the victory you have won. Open our hearts and minds so that we might live your victory in all we do. Especially lead us to share this Good News to those who don't know the victory you have won for them, so that they too might join us in living from the victory you have won. Amen.