

Characteristics That Define Our Transformation Part #4

Characteristics of True Radical Christianity Part 4 - Characteristics That Define Our Victory

In this series of messages we have been looking at the characteristics of true Christianity.

- In the first message we looked at characteristics that define the transformation process in our lives.
- In the second message we looked at those characteristics that define who we are in Christ.
- In the last message we looked at those characteristics that define our actions.

We have been using Peter, one of Christ's early followers and disciples, as our example of true Christianity.

Peter's life was transformed from a profane fisherman to a mature Christian,

- Who had all of these defining characteristics operating in his life.
- **Peter was not perfect...**
- Yet we see him as one who was striving to walk in these Christ-like characteristics.

2 Corinthians 2:14 - But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere.

In the final message in this series, I want to look at those characteristics that define the victory we have in Jesus Christ.

One of the most important characteristics of a Christian is that we are called to be victorious.

- We have the victory...
- Christ wants us to walk in a manner that characterizes this victory in our lives.

What is it that causes us to be people of victory?

Characteristics That Define Our Victory

1. **Victory Is Characterized By Running The Race With A Winning Attitude.**

We must understand that as Christians, Christ has entered us into a great race.

- It's the longest marathon that has ever been known to mankind,
- Because it stretches into eternity.

Columnist Herb Caen wrote: "Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed.

Every morning a lion wakes up. It knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death.

It ***doesn't matter*** whether you are a *lion or a gazelle*; when the sun comes up, you'd better be running."

Spurgeon wrote likewise: "If you are not seeking the Lord, *the Devil is seeking you*. If you are not seeking the Lord, judgment is at your heels."

- In the Christian life, *it's not enough too simply wake up*.
- ***We are called to run***, to become more like Christ, to press ahead in godliness.

1 Corinthians 9:24 - Do you not know that in a race *all* the runners run, but ***only one gets the prize***? *Run in such a way as to get the prize*.

- We are told here that we are all entered into the race,
- But there is *only one kind of a person who actually wins*.

I believe this is the person who is running *with the winning attitude*.

- ***He knows*** that *no matter what obstacle* may present itself in the race,
- ***Christ has given*** him the sufficiency *to overcome and win*.

The writer of Hebrews gives us some helpful hints on how to win.

Hebrews 12:1-2 - Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us *throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles*. And let us *run with perseverance* the race marked out for us, 2 *fixing our eyes on Jesus*, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

In this part of the passage there are -

Three key elements that ***help us to maintain a winning attitude in the race***. ***They are:***

A. Throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles

- We must be *willing* to ***be honest and brutal with ourselves*** in dealing with those sins that are hindering us,
- Because ***Christ has given us the victory*** over sin.
- *Allowing known sins* to persist in your life *affects your confidence* of who you are in Christ
- And *makes you feel like a loser* rather than a winner.

Romans 6:12-14 ***Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.***

¹³ Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

B. We must run with perseverance

Perseverance is Endurance, has to do with taking the time to pace ourselves.

It is a long marathon; therefore **we must** take the time to **mend our wounds as we go.**

There are **many obstacles along the way** that have a tendency to break us down.

We must **constantly** be taking the time to **refresh ourselves in the Lord,** otherwise we burn out.

Hebrews 10:36 - You need to **persevere** so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

C. We must fix our eyes on Jesus and the goals that He has for our lives

Many people have heard of the outstanding exploits of Blondin, the tightrope walker.

Blondin **amused and amazed** thousands of people as he made his way over Niagara Falls on a slender rope stretched from shore to shore.

He never faltered or failed. But Blondin had a secret.

As he made his way over the rope, **he would keep his eyes fixed on a large silver star which he had erected at the far end.**

The star was the center of his attention and guided him to the other side.

In running the heavenly race the believer must look to his Star - the bright and morning Star, the Lord Jesus.

He **has run the race** and now bids his followers to run the race, **keeping their eyes fixed on Jesus as the goal.**

Paul talks about the importance of keeping our focus in the midst of this great race.

1 Corinthians 9:25-26 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.²⁶ **Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.**

To stay focused we should **ask ourselves these questions** and **then listen seriously to the answers:**

What do I want? What will it cost? Am I willing to pay the price? When should I start paying the price?

If you don't have ***an answer*** to the last question and ***haven't made a commitment to start***, the ***first three questions don't really matter***.

Keep in mind that if you are scattered in your focus,

- It will be ***extremely hard*** to maintain ***a winning attitude*** in the race.
- We have been ***designed*** in such a way that ***we need goals to focus our attention***.
- The mind ***will not*** ***reach toward achievement until it has clear objectives***.

To focus correctly there are four things you need to do:

1. Recognize your strengths. 2. Establish your priorities. 3. Recognize your limitations. 4. Organize your journey.

2. Victory Is Characterized By Faith, Belief & Obedience.

1 John 5:3-5 - In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, ⁴for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵Who is it that overcomes the world?

Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God!!!

- Once again, we see that it is truly ***God's desire that we be overcomers***.
- If we have truly been born of God, then ***one of our major characteristics is that of being an overcomer***.

But it says here that it is ***our obedience to Christ*** and ***our faith and belief in Him*** that characterizes our victory. ***These three are all connected***.

Our belief gives birth to faith and faith produces the obedience!!!

It's important to understand that being ***an overcomer does not mean*** that we walk with a sense of ***pride and arrogance***, but rather just the opposite.

An overcomer is one who walks in a deep sense of humility, putting ***your confidence and trust*** in Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

1 John 4:4 - 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.

It is the Holy Spirit working in us who causes us to triumph in Christ!!!

3. Victory Is Characterized By Our Assured Immortality

1 Corinthians 15:54 - When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "**Death has been swallowed up in victory.**"

CLOSE: As we conclude this series, we need to **take inventory of our lives** and **ask God:**

In what areas do I need to be strengthened in true Christian characteristics

- **Are we growing in God's transforming grace** and putting on the new man as God has ordained?
- **Are we acting like true sons and daughters of God**, putting our relationship with God and his family first and foremost in our lives, or do our relationships with our naturally families overshadow our spiritual relationships?
- **Are we walking in the kind of true fellowship with God** and one another that He desires for your life or are we simply existing?
- **Are you growing in a continuous revelation knowledge of Christ** and His word or have you lost your desire for a higher education in the Spirit?
- **Is your life testimony of sacrifice and serving** / a testimony of filling your needs?
- **Are you waging a good warfare** or is the enemy getting all the victory?
- **Are you walking as a victorious Christian** who has entered the race with a winning attitude! **And finally ----**

Is your life characterized by faith, belief and obedience or is it characterized more by unbelief and disobedience?

PRAISE TEAM: Whatever area you are falling short in, I encourage you to come to Christ and receive the grace and mercy that is needed to finish the race as the apostle Paul did.

2 Timothy 4:7 - I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.