

More Than Conquerors 4

God Is Working

Romans 8:26-30

Memory Verses: Romans 8:28

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

We are more than conquerors in Christ! Which means, we have victory in Jesus! A victory that proclaims, we are not condemned, and a victory accompanied by the power of the Spirit. We have a new station and a new support. Our past is settled, and our present is empowered! And, as we saw last week, our pain has a purpose! We have such a great victory in Christ, that even when we suffer, He enables us to overcome our trials in such an incredible and unexplainable way that he and we are given a measure of glory. And of course, though it is hard, we are willing to suffer for that glory, aren't we? We will leverage our lives for that glory!

But lets be honest, the hardest moments in life aren't always the most painful ones. Sometimes the hardest moments are the confusing ones. The times when the prayers seem to never be answered or heaven feels silent. The times when we have given all we have and yet its still not enough. The times when we have no answers... only more questions. And if we were honest, we all have those moments when we throw our hands up to the sky and ask; "God, what are you doing?" Not that we've lost faith in him.... but because we simply don't understand him.

In 1970, anti-war activists, protesting the Vietnam War, placed a pipe bomb at the foot of the pedestal of one of the most popular works of art, at the Cleveland Museum of Art in Cleveland, Ohio. The 6 foot bronze sculpture is called The Thinker, and I'm sure you have all seen pictures of it. It's a man sitting with his elbow on his knee and his chin on his wrist... doing the thinking pose. It's a very famous sculpture.

Well, when the bomb went off it it blew the Thinkers legs clean off causing hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage to a priceless and irreplaceable statue. For months the museum debated about trying to fix the sculpture, what it would take to repair it and how that might mess up the original. In the end they decided to display it in its damaged form. They said that even though it was damaged, it's new appearance told a greater story that many people found even more attractive. One observer said, he's bombed, but he's still beautiful.

The point is this. You don't understand why you had to go through what you went through. You see the broken pieces of your life; grief, disappointment, suffering, confusion. All you see is the damage. But

God sees how our story makes us better. It's not damage, its unexplained beauty! God always sees in us what we can't see. You may be bombed, but you are still beautiful.

And this is why this message means so much to us now. We are living in a time where people are exhausted. Mentally exhausted, emotionally exhausted, spiritually exhausted. People are anxious and fearful. And when life stops making sense, many people assume God has stopped working. But one of the greatest truths of Romans 8 is this; **God works most powerfully in places where we feel weakest.**

So what do we do when we still don't understand what God is doing? We hold onto victory! I may not understand what God is doing... but I know I'm not condemned. I may not understand what God is doing... but I know I have the power of His Spirit working in me. I may not understand what God is doing... but I know my pain is not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed in me. I may not understand what God is doing... but I know... I know... I know he is working! Let's read Romans **8:26-30** together. The main point this morning is simple... **Even when you can't... God is still working.** Today, I want us to see three ways God is working even when we can't.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first way God is working is... **Even When We Can't Pray, He Intercedes.** Look again at **vs. 26-27**. Have you ever been so weak that you couldn't even pray? I have. I've been so defeated in my soul that words couldn't even come out if I wanted them to. Sometimes the pain of this life can leave you speechless. It says we don't know how to pray as we should. When you are defeated and too weak for words... often the only words we can muster are the wrong words. Instead of words of submission and dependence and "thy will be done," we want to scream and shout and yell at God for being unfair to us. But we know we shouldn't do that either... so we remain silent. It is in that moment when God steps in and helps us.

Get this... God knows your heart wants to yell and scream and make a scene and blame him and maybe even curse him... but he won't let you. Instead the Spirit steps in and prays something else for you. The word "helps" means He comes alongside and carries our burden for us. Listen, the Spirit isn't watching your weakness from a distance, He is in you, working for you, and even praying for you! Why? Because, **even in your weakest moments, when, if left to yourself, you would falter, God makes a way for you to be more than a conqueror!**

Psalm 34:18 says the Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. When your spirit is crushed, THE Spirit comforts! **Psalm 34:19** says the afflictions of the righteous are many, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. Even when we are about to make a bad situation worse by saying things we shouldn't... God delivers us by praying for us! **In a very**

real sense, the Spirit becomes our power of attorney. When someone is so incapacitated through disability that they can't speak for themselves, someone else has to become their voice. We call this, power of attorney. When we can't pray the right words, when our communication with God is static at best. When all we can do is moan... The Spirit becomes our power of attorney and speaks on our behalf.

Listen, some of you feel guilty because your prayer life has struggled in these seasons. God is not disappointed in you. He knows you need help. While you are learning to pray again... the Spirit is praying for you! **Even when you can't... God is still working.**

The second way God is working is... **Even When We Can't Understand, He Intervenes.** Look again at vs. 28. In all honesty this might be one of the most quoted verses in all the Bible and for good reason. We need this verse! Things are going to happen to you in life that you can't comprehend or understand. These things could wreck you, make you bitter, steer you away from God. This verse shows us, perhaps more than any other, that... **when our life takes a hit... it's still part of the plan cause God is working through our mess.**

If you love God, if you are called according to his purposes... God is working these seemingly horrible things for good. Think of Joseph in Egypt. Look at **Genesis 50:20**. Think about Israel in captivity. Look at **Isaiah 61:3**. It makes me think of Joni Eareckson Tada who was paralyzed from the neck down at age 17 from a car wreck. For most of us, this would have probably caused us to lose hope and become angry at God. But Joni used this to tell of the goodness of God. God used her to speak to millions and write books that reached 10's of millions. All for the glory of God. When asked if she wished she could walk and use her arms she would always say, "I would never undo what God has used."

The thing is that we can't see the big picture. We can't see what God is doing with our lives. He's on another plane. Look at **Isaiah 55:8-9**. All we can do is have faith that God is working in ways that we can't see or understand. And if we have faith that God is working through our mess we can also have faith that he is working if for good. For our good and for his glory! Meaning... again, even when we are at our lowest, we are still more than conquerors in Christ! **Even when you can't... God is still working.**

The third way God is working is... **Even When We Can't See, He Interprets.** Look again at vs. 29-30. This passage is often called the "golden chain" of salvation. **First God foreknew us, then he predestined us, then he called us, then he justified us, and he will one day glorify us.** Again, we only see isolated events but God sees the whole story. He knew who we were before the world was created. He knew what we

would go through. And he knew it would lead to our glorification.

We can't see the plan... but God is constantly interpreting it to us as we walk through it. We say, why God. He says for my glory. We say, why God. He says for my eternal purposes. We say, why God. He says, be still and know I am God and you are not!

When I was a kid I remember seeing a glimpse of the end of Superman the movie. There's this horrible earthquake and Lois gets sucked under the dirt and debris and dies. I couldn't finish the movie and I didn't want to go watch what I had missed. Just that one scene gave me nightmares. But later as an adult I went back and watched the movie from beginning to end and realized that Superman actually turns back time by spinning around the earth really fast... its possible... and saves Lois and everyone else.

My point is this... some of us treat life like looking at 5 minutes of a movie and thinking we know the whole story. We see the pain and we think, well that's a wrap... life is pain. But if we let God interpret the rest of the story... there's way more to it than that... there is salvation, and joy, and glory! **Where we interpret life through present pain, God interprets life through eternal purpose.** **Philippians 1:6** says, "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion." Listen, God isn't through with you yet, don't be through with him! **Even when you can't... God is still working.**

Application

So what do we do with this? Simple; when you cannot pray, lean into the Spirit. When you cannot understand, trust God's intervention. When you cannot see the outcome, rest in God's eternal purposes. Stop demanding immediate explanations from God and start trusting his character. Because faith isn't about life making sense... its about knowing God is working when it doesn't. Its about knowing that God works all things together for those who love him and are called according to his purposes!

Conclusion

Do you remember the sculpture of the Thinker we began the sermon talking about. Its legs were blown off by a bomb. Still, today, millions of people come from around the world to see this statue. There's another part of this story I didn't tell you. This statue has 30 other brother statues. Full-size bronze castings in museums around the world. The original artist had 6 originals made and then other artists continued his work after he passed away. But of all of these 30 Thinkers... which one do you think gets the most visitors? The one that has endured the most damage! The one with blown off legs. God wants people to see you with your battle scars so he can shine his glory through you to the world. He's taking your mess and making something good out of it! I promise. **Even when you can't... God is still working.**