

The background of the entire cover is an abstract, ethereal composition. It features swirling, smoke-like or ink-like patterns in shades of brown, tan, and cream. These patterns are set against a light, hazy background that is peppered with numerous small, dark brown dots of varying sizes, creating a sense of depth and movement.

THE SAYINGS

vGroup Study

VINTAGE  PRESS

The Sayings: vGroup Study

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VICTORY

In the popular children's novel *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* the author C. S. Lewis provides an excellent allegory which helps us look at the victory of Christ through his death and resurrection. While in the twenty-first century we are familiar with Jesus Christ standing in our place as a sacrifice on our behalf, we are probably not as familiar with reflecting on the victory that Christ achieved over his enemies. Lewis helps us to look at this somewhat foreign idea.

In the story, a boy named Edmund betrays his siblings to an evil witch. Because of this betrayal, the witch has claim on Edmund's life. Aslan the lion offers himself in the place of Edmund. The witch is only too happy because she and Aslan are bitter enemies. Aslan is killed but is resurrected and immediately sets about undoing the work of the witch and seeing to her personal destruction. When explaining what happened Aslan says, "She would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backwards."¹ While discussions of the atonement usually focus on how our relationship to God is altered, focusing on the victory of Jesus through the cross looks at how Jesus overcame his enemies, similarly to Lewis's depiction of Aslan and the witch in his novel.

- Are there other examples of good defeating evil you can think of? Think about literature, movies, real life, etc.
- Why do you think we have a natural desire to see good triumph over evil? (Hint: Think about what it means to be created in the image of God. Because we are like God, perhaps we desire what God desires, that good would triumph over evil).
- Why is it important for us to understand that Jesus is victorious over evil?

Jesus won a great victory through dying on the cross and rising from the grave. Believe it or not, that victory changes everything about our world. We are about to look at the implications of that victory for us as we endeavor to live a life fitting with our calling and what it means for the world that we live in. Let's turn to Colossians 2:13-15 and see what Paul says about Christ's victory!

¹³And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he

set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Colossians 2:13–15

- According to this passage, what was our condition before Christ saved us? (Hint: Look at verse 13). What does it mean to be "dead?"
- What caused us to be "dead in our trespasses?" (Hint: Think about yourself and what occurred in Genesis 3).
- According to this passage, how did Jesus have victory over our sin? (Hint: Look at verse 14).
- What does Paul mean by "cancelling our debts?"
- Why could the "record of debt" be cancelled? (Hint: Think back to last week's study and our discussion of atonement and substitution).

Christ's victory over sin is something we speak of and celebrate often, and rightly so. The call to salvation is a call to freedom from sin, a freedom bought with the blood of Christ. Freedom from sin, however, is not the only freedom Christ won. Through his death on the cross, Jesus won the victory over Satan and his power.

- Who are the rulers and authorities in verse 15? (Hint: Look back at Colossians 1:13 and Ephesians 2:2. Paul is referring to Satan and his power over creation).
- How did Jesus have victory over Satan? What did the cross and the resurrection accomplish? (Hint: Think about how the cross and resurrection defeated evil once and for all).

- Why was it important for Jesus to have victory, not only over sin, but over Satan as well? (Hint: If only sin is defeated, Satan is still left to create evil and opportunities for sin).
- How did Jesus put them to open shame by triumphing over them? (Hint: The cross might have looked as though Christ lost. The resurrection, however, demonstrates the opposite. Reflect on how the resurrection was Christ's triumph over Satan and his evil power).

Anytime we discuss the cross, we should be driven to application. The cross has so much for us to think about and apply to our own lives. If Christ was victorious on the cross, then that means he provided victory in the Christian life. That victory is not just theory! It demands action. As we close our discussion, let's think about how the victory of Jesus on the cross changes how we think, feel, and act.

- Discuss what you were like before Jesus. How did you operate in sin and darkness?
- With your past in mind, how does Christ's victory on the cross give us confidence for the Christian life today?
- When do you feel most defeated in the Christian life? How should Christ's victory change how you feel?
- How should Christ's victory change how we live? For example, does Christ's victory change how we fight sin, share the gospel, pursue justice, etc? What are other examples in your life?

Close your time of discussion, praying for one another. If Christ has secured us victory, then we should live in that victory. Pray for one another to live in that victory this week!

REFERENCES

¹C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, in *The Essential C. S. Lewis*, ed. Lyle W. Dorsett (New York: Collier Books, 1988), 128.