

More Than Overcomers

Sunday, May 10, 2020 at The First Congregational Church of Marshalltown, Iowa
Romans 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him
who loved us.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In
the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the
world.

1 Samuel 17:45-51 David and Goliath

✚ *Introduction: My irrational fear of flight and the rational fear of covid 19*

I've taken many flights over the years, and my enjoyment of them has lessened over time. A lot of that has to do with the fact that Economy class has shrunk and I have expanded, but not I find that I don't say "I love to fly" anymore. Instead I say, "I love to look out the window during the flight." I've definitely developed a distaste for turbulence, which is not common and is almost never severe. Still, I get tense when it takes place and I've tried to analyze that. After all, when flying I'm sitting in a large metal tube with wings and jet engines attached moving through the air at 350 miles an hour, is it really surprising that the whole thing "shimmies" every once in awhile. Upon reflection, I've come to two conclusions. First, I have this irrational idea that the plane is bolted to the sky and when it shakes it is because it is at risk of coming loose and falling to the ground. This, of course, is not true but in the back of my mind that is the source of tension. The tension lessens when I consider how irrational that it. Second, I tell myself to count to 100 it will be finished by the time I reach 100. It almost always works.

Any fear of flying I may have is irrational, but a fear of covid 19 is rational. Some of the response is irrational and some people may take their response to an extreme, but it is a very serious disease and we cannot spread it to others without risking someone's life. Still we do well to be hopeful even in this season. Last Sunday I spoke a little of the general symbolism of the cup, in addition to the specific symbolism of the cup in the Sacrament of Communion. I mentioned that "cup" can refer to destiny, or even the wrath of God. But Scripture tells us that we need not fear the future, and I want to share a few of them today.

✚ *More than Conquerors*

The Apostle Paul used this rare phrase, "more than conquerors" or "abundant conquerors" or "super conquerors" only in this one passage in Romans. Some scholars think that he may have made the word up, and he wrote it right after quoting Psalm 44:22; one that rabbis used to describe the danger of those risking

martyrdom. Even when things are at their worse, we are still "more than conquerors". The ancient story of David and Goliath can shed some light on this.

David and Goliath

When the future King David (1 Samuel 17:45-51) entered the Valley of Elah to fight Goliath, he did so with the Israeli army behind him and the army of the Philistines behind Goliath and they engaged in battle as the two representatives, or champions of their peoples. Goliath, supremely confident, was angry that Israel would send a mere child with a slingshot against him, one of the mightiest warriors of the ancient world. They rushed toward each other and when David released a stone, it struck Goliath with such force that the stone sank into the forehead, killing him. When the Philistine army saw what happened they did not rush the battlefield to avenge their fallen warrior. They fled. They ran for their lives, because in situations like that, the champions represented their people. As the champion goes, so goes the people. If the champion loses, then the people lose: If the champion wins, the people win. David was the champion of his people, and Jesus is ours. He may have had this principle in mind when He told His disciples "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." You may be facing troubles, enemies and situations that are to you what Goliath was to the Israelis; powerful, frightening and overwhelming. You may think, do I have the courage, strength and wisdom to overcome this? The answer is, probably not; but that is not the most important question. The most important question is, "do you have a champion, and is that champion courageous, strong and wise enough to overcome. Jesus is our champion. We don't have to be strong, wise and courageous enough to overcome all difficulties. He has overcome and we can smile at the future.

Conclusion

Last week I spoke of the symbolism of "cup" involves fate or destiny in our lives, and that can be something that is a little unnerving, sort of like my fear of turbulence while flying. But, while we choose to follow Christ, whatever comes, we do so knowing that we follow a Christ who has overcome the world. He is our champion, and because of Him we are declared "more than over comers" regardless of any challenges before us. When we consider what it means to "drink the cup" we do so in the context of our Savior and His triumph over evil.