

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ‘MORE THAN CONQUERORS’?

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Romans 8:31-39 (Psalm 44)

Prayer: Collect for the First Sunday after Easter

Joyce Meyer, a TV personality who uses the Bible for her teaching, wrote a brief article referencing *Romans 8:37* entitled “The Reality of Being More Than a Conqueror”. In her opening sentence, she states, “Romans 8:37 says that Christians are ‘more than conquerors’ in this world”. In the last sentence of this article, she writes, “Because in Christ, as He is, so are we in this world!” I think this is a reference to *1 John 4:17*. Reading through this article, Joyce Meyer gives me the impression she believes Christians are more than conquerors in this world in a way that Jesus was more than a conqueror in this world before us. Is this the point of Paul in Romans 8 – that we are “more than conquerors in this world” while in our mortal bodies? Within this article under a subheading entitled “Learning to Conquer”, Meyer states, “I really loved God and was a born-again believer, but I wasn’t experiencing victory over the problems in my life so that I could really live for God and help people. I came to understand what it means to be more than a conqueror and how I could get there. And if I can do it, so can you.” To be ‘more than a conqueror’ according to Meyer appears to entail the Christian’s subjective experience of victory over the problems we encounter in this world. Is this what Paul is saying in our passage under study today? Does being more than conquerors as Christians mean being victorious over our problems in this world, and, if so, how do we define such ‘victory’?

Joyce Meyer may have false expectations of experiencing aspects of our salvation presently while still in this world that should be reserved for the future when Jesus Returns. Remember, Paul has articulated that present suffering precedes future glory. Could Paul really be advocating for our pursuit of a victorious experience like that of Christ’s while we

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remain in this world in our mortal bodies? Does that sound like what Paul has been driving at? I don’t think so.

The Apostle Paul has been articulating our assurance of who we are as ‘children of God’. This assurance is a blessing when we encounter various problems that cause suffering in this world. For those “in Christ”, we are assured there is no condemnation (*Romans 8:1*) and nothing can separate us from the love of God (*Romans 8:39*) that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. This is a result of who we are “in Christ” by God’s gracious love. It is not anything we achieve or sustain. If assurance of our righteous and adopted status before God is something we have to somehow victoriously demonstrate when difficulty comes, then we will be left with no assurance; because, it would depend on us and not on the love of God toward us. And nothing can separate us from that divine and eternal love. This is what the Apostle wants to assure us of today.

1. Who Will Condemn Us and Separate us from God’s Love? (Verses 31-35 - READ)

a. Short Answer: “No one.” (*verse 34*)

- i. The problems and suffering experienced in this world in no way indicate that those “in Christ” are either condemned or that something has interfered with God’s love.
- ii. Gospel: *Romans 8:32a, 33b, 35a (READ)* Not only do we have the Father’s eternal and unchanging love out of which He gave us His Son to justify us by grace, but Jesus Himself loves us and laid down His life for us as His friends; His co-heirs, His joint rulers, His brothers and sisters of which He is the firstborn. King Jesus now intercedes for us at the Father’s right hand. Christ’s own eternal High Priestly intercession, with the Holy Spirit also interceding for us in our ignorance according to the

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perfect will of the Father, should assure us the we are indeed children of God no matter what comes our way.

- iii. **Verse 35b** lists difficulties that may occur in this disordered world and even at the hands of wicked people, but God is sovereign over all these events.
- iv. When Paul asks “who” will bring charges against us, condemn us as God’s chosen heirs, or separate us from His love in Christ and then answers that “no one” can, we can look at **verses 38-39** to see “who” might be in his mind (**READ** – commenting on observations).

1. While none of these things can condemn us or separate us from God’s love, they can try to make us doubt our status as justified children of God in Christ. They can try to rob us of our assurance by having us focus on our problems and suffering; either falsely accusing us that our trials are because we are condemned and unloved by God, or by tempting us to think we can be more than conquerors over these trials if we just believed a little harder. We can NOT look to ourselves for assurance. We must look to Christ and Him crucified for our assurance.

2. How Does Verse 36 Assist Assurance? (Verse 36 - READ)

- a. Paul is quoting **Psalm 44:22**. Let’s read **verses 17-22** of this Psalm again for context (**READ**).
- b. These verses highlight the innocence of God’s people even though they are suffering. Therefore, their suffering cannot be due to condemnation nor to God forsaking them. In this assurance, they cry out to God for deliverance from their circumstances; trusting in His sovereignty.
 - i. As children of God and heirs of His ruling promises in Christ, we do not “spread out our hands to foreign a god” or to the idols of this world that falsely promise us a victory by avoiding discomforts, difficulty and distress;

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because, Christians have our minds set on what the Spirit desires as slaves to righteousness.

3. What Does It Mean to be ‘More than Conquers’? (verse 37)

- a. “In all these things” in *verse 37* refers back the list in *verse 35*. Christians are ‘more than conquerors’ amid present suffering in the sense that all “these things” listed in *verse 35* actually work toward our good under the providential hand of God, and that good will be fully realized when Jesus Comes Again and we have been completely conformed to His image according to God’s predestined purpose (***Romans 8:28-29* READ**).
- b. Being conformed completely to the image of Jesus upon His Return means we are indeed “more than conquerors”; we are rulers with Him over the Renewed World. At that time, we will enjoy the fullness of Christ’s victory over Satan, sin, suffering and death. We are “more than conquerors” in the sense that, as *verse 32* states, the Father, who gave us the most precious gift of His Son, will also “graciously give us all things.” What are “all things” that we will receive that make us “more than conquerors”? **READ *verse 17***.

Christians are, indeed, more than conquerors, but this must be understood within the context of Paul’s flow of thought. First, it is nothing we do that makes us “more than conquerors”. No. We are “more than conquerors through Him Who loved us”, and no one can separate us from God’s love. Second, striving for subjective experiences of victory over suffering in this world will NOT grant us the assurance of our status as God’s children we desire. We do NOT look to ourselves and our performance. Instead, we turn to and trust in Christ’s accomplished objective victory on our behalf *in* our present suffering with confidence that we will gloriously experience the fullness of His victory when He Returns. This is our future hope, not our present experience.

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We have this sure hope, not because of what we do but, because of God's love for us demonstrated in Christ's death and resurrection by which He more than conquered Satan, sin, suffering and death. Jesus is Risen and at the right of God interceding for us. This Gospel of God's unhindered love assures us amid present trials with the hope of a future eternal personal experience of Christ's victory upon our own resurrection from the dead. AMEN.