

The Week of the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Sunday, September 4, 2022

Scripture: I Corinthians 15:57-58

"Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Some years ago, I encountered a crisis in my faith. Although I was a life-long believer in Jesus Christ, a regular worshipper, and deeply involved in ministries, I began to feel woefully inadequate. Living up to Jesus's standards seemed impossible. How could I be worthy of His love and forgiveness? I was surrounded by worldly goods while others locally and globally suffered from lack of food, clothing, and shelter.

A friend, who knew my troubled heart, spoke to our pastor. He responded immediately by coming to my home. As I poured out my heart, he repeated several times the following words:

"The victory has been won!"

As if a weight had been removed, my hope was renewed, and I felt free to serve and love generously without condemnation from myself or others. God is good...all the time.

Prayer: Into your hands, almighty God, we place ourselves: our minds to know you, our hearts to love you, our wills to serve you, for we are yours. Into your hands, Incarnate Savior, we place ourselves: receive us and draw us after you, that we may follow your steps; abide in us and enliven us by the power of your indwelling. Into your hands, O hovering Spirit, we place ourselves: take us and fashion us after your image; let your comfort strengthen, your grace renew, and your fire cleanse us, soul and body, in life and in death, in this world of shadows and in your changeless world of light eternal, now and forever. Amen.

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