

Luke 11:21-22 (William (Bill) Prost) 210938

St. Thomas Conference: 2008, Overcoming (11:21-22)

YP Sing Address—B. Prost

Please help me. I will pray. I will be healed. By my husband.

Well, let's just have a word of prayer before we start. Loving God our Father, we do thank Thee again for the happy time we have had today, for the privilege of having so many of Thy people gather together, the privilege of having Thy word open before us, the privilege of singing these hymns together. Now we look to Thee once more as we open Thy word and pray for help. We pray too, that now will use Thy word to speak to each one of us, the speaker included. Where we ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, I'd like to speak for a few minutes on a subject that is very close to my heart, and if you've heard me speak on it before, maybe you'll pardon the repetition, but I want to speak for a few minutes on the subject of overcoming. Overcoming. And I hope that even if we say a few things that have been said before, that it will be fresh, even if it's repetitive. Overcoming What does it mean? It means to get the victory. It means to win, doesn't it? And the world has a little bit of a saying with a touch of humor to it, that winning isn't the most important thing, but then somebody puts A twist on it and says it's the only thing. The only thing, and of course sad to say, in many parts of the world, that means winning by whatever means you can. Even if you have to cheat, even have, even if you have to break the rules and get away with it, you win, whatever the cost. But when God presents the subject of overcoming in His Word, it's not in the worldly sense of the term. It's in the sense of you and me being victorious in our Christian lives. And it's not easy, and the Word of God never tries to pretend that it's easy. But at the same time. And I say this with all confidence. God wouldn't talk to us about overcoming if it were something impossible to do. I have heard believers talk like that. They have said it's just too difficult. The Christian pathway is just too difficult. And you know, if you try and do it in your own strength, it is too difficult. Somebody made a remark one time. He said it is not that Christianity has been tried. And found to be difficult, he said. It's rather the other way round, that because it's difficult, it has been left untried. And that's all right up to a point, because the devil delights to present to us all the difficulties, so that even without trying. I will say that's going to be too difficult. I won't even try. But it's very interesting that as far as I recall, and somebody can correct me if I'm wrong, I'm never told, at least in the New Testament, to try to do anything. Is that right? If somebody can show me a place in the New Testament where a believer is told to try to do something, now there are reference to believers. Trying to do something. But not with the mind of the Lord. When the Lord tells us to do something, He never says to try. He just says do it because He's given everything to enable us to do it. Do we fail? Yes, we do. Do we sometimes not finish what we start out to do? That happens. But God never contemplates that because He's giving us every reason to get the victory. And so I'd like to look at 3 verses. Three different kinds of overcoming, the first one in Luke Chapter 11.

Look Gospel Chapter 11. And this is very precious to our hearts because this is in connection with the Lord Jesus. Luke Chapter 11 and verse 21. Here's the Lord Jesus speaking. Notice what he says. When a strongman armed, keepeth his palace. His goods are in peace, but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted. And divided his spoils. Maybe this is kind of mean, but I would like somebody under 20 years old to tell me when this happened and what it refers to in about one or two sentences. When did this happen? What was the Lord Jesus referring to and when did it occur? Anybody want to offer a suggestion? And I won't be upset if nobody volunteers, but does anybody want to tell me OK. James. Yes. Exactly when the Lord Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, that is what is referred to here, the temptation at the beginning of the Lords pathway. He was tempted of the devil and you'll remember the devil brought three different temptations before him, one after the other. OK, here's another question. Then again, somebody under 20 tell me. How did the Lord Jesus deal with those temptations? In a simple answer, what did the Lord Jesus do? How did he deal with those temptations one after the other? Anyone that is anyone. Oh. Oh, Mr. Hebert, come on, you're under 20. There's a boy behind you, can I let him try first? Thank you. Did everyone hear that he quoted verses from the Bible? I'm sure Mr. Hebert was going to say that too. He quoted verses from the Bible. Why did he do that? He could have told Satan to go away because he was God, and as God he had the power to do that. Why did he call verses from the Bible? As an example, for you and for me, all those temptations were related to the same kinds of things that you and I are tempted by. They were the lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. And the Lord Jesus overcame them simply by quoting the Word of God. And so you and I can be overcomers. And what this is, is one way that Satan tries to get us. To sit. And the reason I bring it out is because this is basic. Much of the trouble in our Christian lives is not because we don't understand the truth of Paul's ministry or not because we don't understand the truth of the ground of gathering, or not because we don't understand all the details of prophecy. Those are very important. But much of the trouble in our lives starts with very basic things, and that is giving in to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. And the Lord Jesus didn't argue with the devil, He didn't try and give him any long explanation. He simply said it is written. But Satan has lots of tricks in his bag, if I could use that term. And Satan has two basic ways of attacking us. Sometimes he attacks us by. Trying to think of a good word. He allures us. He puts something before us that we really like. Let me use an illustration sometimes if people want to break into a house. Or into a property that has guard dogs on it. They will take a good big chunk of meat, and when they go there, they toss the meat to the guard dogs, hoping that the guard dog will be so occupied with a piece of meat that he won't bother with them as they go in and try to commit the robbery. Now, a properly trained guard dog doesn't fall for that trick, but unhappily, a lot of dogs do. Because that's the way they're made, aren't they? That's what Satan does. He allures us with something that tempts us so strongly.

That we fall right for his trap instead of looking to the Lord for strength and going back to the word of God and simply saying it is written. But then the Satan has another trick, and he tried that one on the Lord Jesus too. Let's turn over to John's Gospel. Chapter 16. As far as I know, these are the only two occasions of overcoming in the life of the Lord Jesus. But they cover the whole scale of overcoming as far as Satan's temptations are concerned. And this is in the last verse of John 16. Verse 33. These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world. This is where the cross comes in, isn't it?

There Satan came in a different character at the beginning of the Lord Jesus life. He tried to present something to him that would allure him into sin. That would kept him in the sense and there was nothing in the Lord Jesus to respond to it. But the Lord gave us an example. But then the Lord Jesus came at him, at the cross, in all his fury and power. If allurements wouldn't work, then persecution was going to come and all Satans power was brought to bear on the Lord Jesus. And sometime don't do it right now, but sometime if you have an opportunity, stop and think of all the things that happened in the life of the Lord Jesus. Surrounding the cross and immediately before. Think of it. First of all, his own follower in the person of Judas was plotting to betray him, and even though the other disciples knew nothing of it, the Lord very well knew, and Judas betrayed him and sold his master. The other disciples couldn't understand what he was saying, and when the time came that he needed them the most, first of all, they fell asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane. And then later on it says they all forsook them in flesh. The rulers of the nation whom he had come to save plotted against him in order to get rid of them, and the main reason for doing that was because they envied him for his influence among the people. It wasn't the only reason, but it was one of the main ones. The very people whom he had been so good to in feeding them and healing them. As a mob took a cue from their leaders and stood there in front of Pilots government hall and cried out, Crucify him, crucify him. One thing after another, one thing after another. And then we won't go on. But you can look at that record there. Everything came together there, all the power of Satan brought to bear on the Lord Jesus in every possible way. What does he say? Fear not, I have overcome the world. And I believe here it's the world as it's going to persecute the Christians, and I'm looking at those here. I think for the most part, I don't live under the threat of real persecution the way some of our brethren do. But all I can say is that it tells us in Second Timothy three that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. You're going to get it one way or another. And Satan will try these tactics. In different orders. Sometimes he'll try attacking by persecution. If that doesn't work, he'll try it in the way of allurement. But in one way or another he will try and get you off the track. And, you know, he's being all too successful today. I won't bother. We don't have time to take a lot of say a lot of things about this. But you know, and I know how bad the world is getting. And it's getting bad slowly so that you don't notice it so much. But it's in terrible shape and in these countries where the gospel has been so widely preached and where we've had an open Bible.

The giving up has resulted in a far worse condition than if we never had anything, if we'd never had the Bible and the truth. What do we need? We need all the more to walk with the Lord and in the light of His Word. But that brings us to a third area of overcoming, and for this one, let's turn to Revelation Chapter 3. Revelation chapter 3. And in some ways this is perhaps more difficult. I'm only going to read one verse or two here, but there are many here in the second and third chapters that refer to overcoming. But notice here in chapter 3, verses 11 and 12. This is in the address to an assembly in Philadelphia. Verse 11, Chapter 3 of Revelation. Behold, I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more ever. And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God. And I will write upon him my new name. Overcoming within, shall we say, the profession of Christianity? Is perhaps the most difficult. Why is that? Because the opposition may welcome from those from whom you would normally expect support, and that makes it doubly difficult. I remember talking to a young woman once who had been through a lot. She had been brought up in a Christian home, but sad to say, her parents did not go on very well for the Lord, and particularly her father had been anything but what a Christian father should be. As a result, there was serious disorder and confusion in that home. And the details I won't bother going into, but I remember well talking to her and she said to me something like this, she said, Bill. It's one thing to be persecuted from the world, it's one thing to have Satan attack you from the outside. But when problems and difficulties come in right in your own family, that's supposed to be a Christian family that is 10 times harder to bear. I couldn't relate to that in personal experience, but you can imagine. How? That is for how it was I should say and here. In the addresses to these seven assemblies in Revelation 2 and three. There is always a space left for an overcomer, and here in the address to Philadelphia, the Lord looks for that in a day when there's much giving up that responds to Him in every possible way. Is it possible to be an overcomer in that condition? I believe it is, but it's not easy. Most people that know me well know how much I enjoy a good him sing, and it just thrilled my heart to sit there and sing those hymns tonight. But as I was sitting there kind of glancing around, especially at some of the young people enjoying themselves and singing so heartily. It took me back to a remark that was made by my late father-in-law, Albert Hayholt, probably a good 40 years ago now. And referring to a Bible conference, I believe he was at this particular Bible conference, not here in Saint Thomas, but at a Bible conference at the time he made the remark. And he said, you know, if I were just to come here and justice be able to look at the faces. It would make the whole trip worthwhile. I think there are many of us that can relate to that. It wouldn't make the whole trip worthwhile just to see the faces.

But then he made a rather sobering remark. But I've never forgotten. You just kind of set out half to himself and half to some of us that were standing around. He said. I wonder if I would have the grace and the strength from the Lord. To walk away from it all, give faithfulness to the Lord, demanded it. That's where the rubber hits the road because. The reality of the Christian life does not depend on a wonderful hymn sing at a conference or all of the Christian fellowship that we may enjoy, wonderful though it is. The basis of your Christian life and mind should not be that. If it is, we'll be tested sooner or later. The basis of your Christian life and mine is not a happy local assembly, although that is the most wonderful thing and God has given it for encouragement for us. Thank God for it. But the basis of your life and mine, walking before the Lord, is a personal relationship with the Lord. An acquaintance with His Word, and a firm resolve in my heart as a result of that, to walk before the Lord faithfully. Regardless of what others do. There are those here who have had to go through something of that painful experience of walking away, perhaps from those whom they loved and cared for so much in the Lord. Because there was no other way if they were going to be faithful to the Lord. Now, we don't want to go too far with all that because sometimes what passes for faithfulness to the Lord can be other motives involved. But all I say is when it's a question of overcoming. Within Christianity Today, of necessity, faithfulness to the Lord may mean. Separating from that which is not according to His word. Let the Lord be the reference point though, not others. And if the Lord is the reference point, then what will happen? O, my heart of love to every other believer will not be diminished one bit. It won't be a question of I'm right, you're wrong. It'll be a question of faithfulness to the Lord. Can I quote my father-in-law again? I valued what he said and it stuck with me, he said. You know there are two ways of maintaining the truth. They can maintain the truth with the attitude that I'm right and you're wrong and I'm going to prove it to you. If it's the last thing I ever do, and if I do it in that spirit, the result will be the same as what Dawn Rule said in the reading this afternoon. I may put people to silence. I may be able to use Scripture to back them into a corner. But then to use his words, they'll just get up and go to the dining cart. Why? Because a man that is persuaded against his will, as the old saying goes, remains of the same opinion still. But if I present the truth of God in such a way as to say I am nothing, and it's only the grace of God that keeps me. But by the grace of God, this is so precious to me because it is connected with the person of my blessed Savior and connected with the one who loved me so much to die for me. But I can't, no matter what price it costs there, to let any of it go, I may maintain the same truth. They may use the same scriptures, but the spirit of it all will be so different, and the result and impact on someone else will likely also be different. And

so I leave those three things with us, The first two in the life of the Lord Jesus, because when He overcame the world, He did so as an example for us. Notice I'm not talking about the atoning sufferings when I refer to the cross. I'm talking about how many overcame. The power of Satan against him there and when I talk about the temptation in the wilderness. Again, I say he showed us by dealing with the whole issue in the same way that you and I can. And then when it comes to overcoming within the profession of Christianity within Christendom, if we could use that within the Great House as it's referred to in Second Timothy.

May the Lord give us grace to walk before Him, to have our eye first of all, back on Calvary's cross and all that He did for us, and then on the wonderful reward that is spoken about here for the one who is an overcomer. Again, I say in closing, God would not tell us to be overcomers if it were impossible to do so. And I believe God is looking to the younger ones here to be overcomers. In these last days because there isn't much time left of us, but God is looking for overcomers that will follow Him and be faithful to Him until the end. Let's just have another word of prayer and then I guess Brother Dave has some more announcements to make. Will will does okay. OK, our loving God and our Father, we give thanks again for thy precious words. And we thank Thee that the One who loved us and died for us also showed us the way to overcome the power of Satan against us, whether by allurement and temptation or whether by the fire of persecution. And we thank Thee to our God that Thou just give us the grace even within Christendom today. In the great house, to be able to be overcome and to be faithful under the end. So we give thanks now. We commit the rest of the evening to Thee. We ask Thy blessing on Thy word, and do so in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

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