

To Him Who Overcomes

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In today's society, people have become soft and weak in their approach to life. So many are wanting the quick and easy fix in life. For so many, life has degenerated into a life of drug-dependency, hopelessness, aimlessness, anxiety, uncaring, indifference, heartlessness, and selfishness. In the minds of so many, their lives have no real value, no real purpose, and no real future.

With this approach to life so prevalent in the world today, the ideas of striving to overcome personal problems, striving to overcome weaknesses in life, striving to overcome character flaws which lead to failure in life, and striving to overcome evil and to do what is good are totally foreign to their minds.

The plain truthful fact is that the world does not want to overcome evil. Under the influence of our adversary, the devil, more and more and more, the world has become happy with evil, happy with disobedience against our Heavenly Father's laws, happy with direct and constant rebellion against our Heavenly Father. In the eyes of the world, there is no reason to overcome evil. But this worldly attitude has no place for the called-out ones of our Heavenly Father.

There is a specific phrase in verse 7 of Revelation 2 that is a conditional warning to the called-out ones of our Heavenly Father.

Revelation 2:7 *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (KJV)*

So, in this verse, we are told that those who overcome will eat of the tree of life and will receive eternal life. The other side of this warning is that those who do not overcome will not eat of the tree of life and will not receive eternal life. So, our spiritual lives and our future eternal lives depend on being part of those who overcome.

My sermon this afternoon is entitled:

To Him Who Overcomes

I would like to explore the important spiritual issue of overcoming in our spiritual lives and the evil that we must overcome in order to enter our Heavenly Father's Kingdom. We will explore this spiritual issue in two main points.

The first point in the need to overcome is:

1) We must overcome in order to enter our Heavenly Father's Kingdom

Let's continue reading Revelation 2. A famous part of scripture is found in the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation concerning the seven churches along a major mail route in Asia Minor (now western Turkey). Although most of the churches had severe problems, either with continuing sins or with continuing tribulation, all of the messages to the seven churches had a consistent, common promise and warning to the called-out ones in those congregations. Let's read the messages to the churches. Remember, the word *church* in Greek is ἐκκλησία *ekklesia* – Strong's #1577 meaning "the assembly of called-out ones", the called-out ones as a whole or unit.

In the past, there has been much speculation that these seven churches represented seven church eras in the history of the called-out ones over the past two millennia, and that may be. I sometimes wonder if that speculation helped different churches proclaim that they were the Philadelphian Church era. It's interesting that no one ever claimed to be the Sardis Church era, or the Thyatira Church era, and definitely not the Laodicean Church era. Personally, I believe that these seven churches (called-out ones as a whole) represent seven attitudes existing all along within the called-out ones of our Heavenly Father over the centuries as well as today.

Revelation 2:1-7 *Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;*

2) I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3) And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4) Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5) Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6) But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (KJV)

The Greek verb for *to overcome* in verse 7 is νικάω *nikao* – Strong's #3528 meaning "to overcome, to prevail, to conquer, to be victorious".

The called-out ones in Ephesus were warned that they had lost their first love of our Heavenly Father and of His Son and of following His way of life. But if they overcame, they would have eternal life in our Father's Kingdom.

Revelation 2:8-11 *And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;*

9) *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*

10) *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

11) *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh [νικάω – nikao – overcomes, prevails, conquers] shall not be hurt of the second death. (KJV)*

The called-out ones in Smyrna were warned that they would suffer significant tribulation. But if they overcame, they would have eternal life in our Father's Kingdom.

Revelation 2:12-17 *And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;*

13) *I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.*

14) *But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.*

15) *So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

16) *Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.*

17) *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh [νικάω – nikao – overcomes, prevails, conquers] will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. (KJV)*

The called-out ones in Pergamos were warned that they had allowed our Father's truth to be corrupted by pagan doctrines. But if they overcame, they would have eternal life in our Father's Kingdom.

Revelation 2:18-29 *And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;*

19) *I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.*

20) *Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.*

21) *And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.*

22) *Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.*

23) *And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

24) *But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.*

25) *But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.*

26) *And he that overcometh [νικάω – nikao – overcomes, prevails, conquers], and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:*

27) *And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.*

28) *And I will give him the morning star.*

29) *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

(KJV)

The called-out ones in Thyatira were warned that many had corrupted themselves with sexual sins. But if they overcame, they would have eternal life in our Father's Kingdom.

Revelation 3:1-5 *And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*

2) *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.*

3) *Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*

4) *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.*

5) *He that overcometh, [νικάω – nikao – overcomes, prevails, conquers] the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.*

6) *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

(KJV)

The called-out ones in Sardis were warned that they had produced no fruit and were basically dead spiritually. But if they overcame, they would have eternal life in our Father's Kingdom.

Revelation 3:7-13 *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;*

8) *I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*

9) *Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*

10) *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*

11) *Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

12) *Him that overcometh [νικάω – nikao – overcomes, prevails, conquers] will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: 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.*

13) *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

(KJV)

The called-out ones in Philadelphia were faithful and fruitful but they were warned that they should hold fast and not allow anyone to take their crown, and if they overcame, they would have eternal life in our Father's Kingdom.

Revelation 3:14-22 *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;*

15) *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*

16) *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

17) *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

18) *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

19) *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

20) *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

21) *To him that overcometh [νικάω – nikao – overcomes, prevails, conquers] will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

22) *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

(KJV)

The called-out ones in Laodicea were warned that they had become lackadaisical in their spiritual lives and were not "on fire" for serving our Heavenly Father and striving for the Kingdom. But if they overcame, they would have eternal life in our Father's Kingdom. This is a very consistent message to all the called-out ones. Which church of these seven churches best represents the characteristics of our own spiritual lives? Are we struggling to keep that first love and that first excitement alive in our spiritual lives like the church in Ephesus?

Are we struggling with constant problems and trials and bad circumstances and significant injustices in our lives like the church in Smyrna?

Are we struggling to be steadfast to the Biblical truths to which our Heavenly Father has opened our eyes like the church in Pergamos?

Are we struggling to avoid and to eliminate the sexual sins in our lives in a world which has been totally sexualized and corrupted like the church in Thyatira?

Are we struggling to avoid letting our faith and our spiritual lives slowly waste away and die? Are we struggling to produce abundant fruit, but are producing less and less of the fruit of our Heavenly Father's Spirit like the church in Sardis?

Are struggling daily to stay faithful and close to our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus, so that no one will be able to take our crown like the church in Philadelphia?

Are we struggling to avoid being lackadaisical in our spiritual lives like the church in Laodicea? Are we growing closer and closer to our Heavenly Father or are we pulling further and further away from Him?

Which one of these attitudes exemplifies us today? The key in all of these church characteristics is that we must overcome in order to enter our Heavenly Father's Kingdom.

The second point in the need to overcome is:

2) The Bible shows us what we must overcome

We have established the crucial importance of overcoming because overcoming is a prerequisite for entering our Heavenly Father's Kingdom and receiving eternal life. But what are we to overcome? The Bible shows us what evils we must overcome. We will explore three of those evils in today's sermon.

The first evil that we must overcome is:

a) We must overcome the world

We must do something that Jesus the Anointed One said that He had done when He spoke to His disciples on the last night of His physical life.

John 16:33 *These things I have 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* [νικάω – nikao – have overcome, have prevail against, have conquered] *the world.* (KJV)

So, Jesus had overcome the world. That knowledge was a positive uplifting truth to the disciples and to us in our spiritual lives today.

In 1 John 5. The Apostle John discusses that we must overcome the world also.

1 John 5:4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh [overcomes, prevails against, conquers] the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

5) *Who is he that overcometh [overcomes, prevails against, conquers] the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? (KJV)*

So, if we have our Heavenly Father's Spirit and we are begotten of Him, then we will be overcoming the world and all the evil that is in it.

The Apostle John discusses the interaction between the called-out ones and the evil people in the world.

1 John 4:4-6 *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

5) *They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.*

6) *We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. (KJV)*

The Apostle John states that the called-out ones have overcome the people in the world. In John 17, on the last night of His physical life, Jesus prayed a fervent prayer to His Heavenly Father and part of His prayer was concerning the disciples and the future called-out ones.

John 17:13-16 *And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*

14) *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

15) *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [one].*

16) *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (KJV)*

The *evil* in verse 15 in Greek is “ὁ πονηρός” ho ponerós – with the Greek word “the” in front Strong's #4190 meaning “the evil one”. In the New Testament, the devil is referred to as “ὁ πονηρός” ho ponerós – the evil one.

Jesus was praying that God Our Father should not take us out of the world but that He would keep us from the wiles and schemes of the evil one, our adversary, the devil. We are told that we must overcome the world. But how do we overcome the world? In 1 John 2 the Apostle John gives us a short recipe for overcoming the world.

1 John 2:15-17 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

16) *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

17) And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. (KJV)

The Apostle John is saying that we must not love the world nor the things that are in the world, the lust of the flesh (sexual immorality), the lust of the eyes (covetousness), and the pride of life (arrogance against our Heavenly Father and against righteousness).

Are we fighting the pulls of the world that beset us every day? Are we drawing closer and closer to our Heavenly Father or are we pulling away from Him as we are enticed more and more to follow the world and its trappings, all playing on our human side to follow the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The world today is immersed in those elements, and they are all around us. We must be overcoming the natural desires to want to “fit in” in this society and not be different. But we must be different, and in order to be different, we must overcome the world.

A second evil that we must overcome is:

b) We must overcome our own inner wickedness

The Apostle Paul exhorts the called-out members in the Roman congregation that they should overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:21 *Be not overcome [νικάω – nikao – overcome, prevailed against, conquered] of evil, but overcome [νικάω – nikao – overcome, prevail against, conquer] evil with good. (KJV)*

In verse 21, the Greek word for *evil* is κακός kakos – Strong's #2556 meaning “inner wickedness, inwardly foul, morally rotten character”.

Where are we in overcoming our sins? Are we still trying to overcome sins that we have been fighting against for years, maybe even decades, but without total success? Do we continue to do things that we know do not please our Heavenly Father, but because of weakness, we continue to commit the sin? Look at Romans 7 from the New Living Translation. The Apostle Paul discusses this inner struggle, which is truly a dichotomy.

Romans 7:14-25 *So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin.*

15) I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate.

16) But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good.

17) So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

18) And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't.

19) I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.

20) But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

21) *I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong.*

22) *I love God's law with all my heart.*

23) *But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.*

24) *Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?*

25) *Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin. (NLT)*

Do these verses describe us in our spiritual lives? The Apostle Paul was writing about the daily struggle that every Christian deals with in their spiritual lives. The good that we want to do, we don't do. And the evil that we don't want to do, that's what we do. Paul is talking about two types of sin here in Romans 7.

The first type of sin mentioned in verse 15 is the sin of omission. It is the good that we want to do, but we don't do it.

A) Sin of Omission

James discusses the human frailty of knowing to do good but then not doing it.

James 4:13-17 *Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:*

14) *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away.*

15) *For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.*

16) *But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.*

17) *Therefore to him that knows to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

(KJV)

So knowing to do good and then not doing it is a sin against our Heavenly Father. Everyone knows the parable of the Good Samaritan. But there were two other people included in the parable who did not act in a proper and righteous way toward the wounded man.

Luke 10:30-32 *And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*

31) *And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.*

32) *And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. (KJV)*

These two people who did not act righteously were a priest and a Levite, two people who knew that they should act. They knew God's law of mercy, but they did nothing to help a helpless and injured man. The priest and the Levite knew to do good but did nothing. They sinned against God Our Father as a result.

The second type of sin mentioned in verse 15 of Romans 7 is the sin of commission. It is the evil that we do when we disobey our Heavenly Father's Law.

B) Sin of Commission

Whereas Galatians 5:22 lists the fruit of God's Spirit, three verses earlier in Galatians 5:19, we read a different list, a list of sins that we can commit.

Galatians 5:19-21 *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20) idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21) envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. [NKJV]*

These sins are active sins, not passive sins. These sins are sins that we commit with our actions, with our thoughts, with our attitudes, and with our words.

Are we overcoming both kinds of sins that constitute this inner wickedness and this inner moral corrupt character in our spiritual lives? How do we overcome our unrighteous character? In Ephesians 4 Paul exhorts us to do just that in his epistle to the Ephesian brethren.

Ephesians 4:22-32 *That ye put off concerning the former conversation [ἀναστροφή – anastrofé – Strong's #391– behavior or conduct] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24) And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25) Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another 26) Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27) Neither give place to the devil. 28) Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29) Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30) And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31) Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (KJV)*

The Apostle Paul instructs us that the way to overcome our inner morally corrupt character more and more each day is to stop living the sinful ways that we have in the

past and to put on the new man each day by using our Heavenly Father's Spirit within us more and more each day.

We've just read about the fruit of the flesh and about the way of our adversary, the devil. Now let's read the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23) gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!* (NLT)

Brethren, in our spiritual lives, there is no vacuum. If we are eradicating the fruit of the flesh out of our lives, we must replace it with something, and that something is the fruit of our Heavenly Father's Spirit. Fruit is not something that is produced immediately. Fruit is a result of a long, growing process. So, the good fruit listed in verses 22 and 23 is a result of a process of growing ever closer to our Heavenly Father and to His Son and is a result of overcoming the inner evil in our lives.

A third evil that we must overcome is:

C) We must overcome our adversary, the devil

The Apostle John wrote that we can and must overcome the devil, the adversary who hates us and who hates our Heavenly Father and Jesus the Anointed One.

1 John 2:13-14 *I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome [νικάω – nikao – overcame, prevailed against, conquered] the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.*

14) I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome [νικάω – nikao – overcame, prevailed against, conquered] the wicked one. (KJV)

Who is *the wicked one*? The wicked one in verses 13 and 14 in Greek is “ὁ πονηρός” ho ponerós – with the Greek word “the” in front Strong's #4190 meaning “the evil one”.

In the New Testament, this fallen angel is also referred to as “ὁ πονηρός” [ho ponerós – the evil one]. This term is used 79 times in the New Testament. In Jesus' model prayer known today as the Lord's Prayer, this term was used in the recitation of Jesus' words.

Matthew 6:13 *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.* (KJV)

In this verse, the English word *evil* is actually “ὁ πονηρός” [ho ponerós – the evil one] in the Greek. So, Jesus was telling us to pray that God Our Father would keep us and protect us from “the evil one”, who is the fallen angel who is our adversary, the devil.

In Matthew 13, we will read in the parable of the wheat and the tares where Jesus mentions this fallen angel with Jesus' words being recorded in the Greek as both "ὁ πονηρός" (ho ponerós – the evil one) and "ὁ διάβολος" (ho diabolos – the slanderer).

Matthew 13:37-39 *He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;*

38) The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one ["ὁ πονηρός" – ho ponerós – the evil one];

39) The enemy that sowed them is the devil "ὁ διάβολος" – ho diabolos – the slanderer]; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. (KJV)

The Apostle John wrote that the fervent called-out ones overcome the devil by the blood of Jesus the Anointed One, even if they were required to die for their beliefs and steadfastness.

Revelation 12:10-11 *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*

11) And they overcame [νικάω – nikao – overcame, prevailed against, conquered] him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (KJV)

Are we overcoming the devil by the blood of our Savior? Are we willing not to love our lives unto death?

The Apostle Peter exhorted the called-out ones of the congregations to be vigilant against the devil, our adversary, because the devil wants to destroy and devour us.

1 Peter 5:8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

9) Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. (KJV)

The Apostle Peter wrote that the devil is our adversary who wants to devour us and that we must steadfastly resist him in the faith. We must always be fighting and overcoming him.

In James 4 the Apostle James also exhorted us to resist the devil.

James 4:7 *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (KJV)*

If we resist the devil and his temptations, if we persevere against him with the power of our Heavenly Father's Spirit, if we overcome him and his trickery, then he will flee from us.

Jesus the Anointed One was a perfect example of reflecting our Heavenly Father in His actions, His attitudes, His love for His Father, His love for others, His righteousness, and His steadfastness.

Matthew 4:1-11 *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*

2) *And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.*

3) *And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*

4) *But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

5) *Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,*

6) *And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

7) *Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

8) *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;*

9) *And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*

10) *Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

11) *Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. (KJV)*

Jesus overcame the devil in the devil's attempts to tempt Him to sin. Jesus steadfastly resisted the devil, and in the end, the devil fled from Him. In Matthew 4, Jesus left us an example of the fulfillment of James 4:7, we, like Jesus, can and must overcome the devil.

In 1 John 4, we will read two verses again that we read previously.

1 John 4:4-5 *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

5) *They are of the world: therefore, speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. (KJV)*

The reason why the devil will flee from us if we resist him is that the power of our Heavenly Father through His Spirit is greater and stronger than the devil.

The devil and his demons may have power over us physically (if our Heavenly Father allows it like He did with Job), but the devil and his demons do not have any power over us spiritually unless we allow it, unless we submit to them, unless we give in to them, and unless we do not fight against them with the power that our Heavenly Father has given us.

Are we fighting successfully against the wiles and schemes of our enemy, the devil?
Are we winning? Are we overcoming him in our daily struggles?

So, we must overcome our adversary, the devil.

Today we have explored two points concerning the importance of overcoming in our spiritual lives.

1) *We must overcome in order to enter our Heavenly Father's Kingdom.* Again and again, we read that overcoming is a prerequisite for entering our Father's Kingdom. This means that if we do not overcome, we will not enter His Kingdom.

2) *The Bible shows us what we must overcome.* We explored three evils that we must overcome in order to enter our Heavenly Father's Kingdom.

a) We must overcome the world. Are we prevailing against the evils of today's wicked and degenerate society? Can people in the world see that we indeed are different from them? Or do we just blend into the world because we act just like the world? How can we overcome the world if we are not different from the world?

b) We must overcome our inner wickedness. Are we prevailing against our sins? Are we making progress in ceasing the sins that we have continued to sin for perhaps years and years? Are we putting the spiritual leavening of sin out of our lives each and every day? This cleaning out the spiritual leavening of sin from our lives is not just something we do once a year before Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. Repentance and change are keys in our overcoming. Are we repenting from our sins and changing the direction of our lives? If so, we will be overcoming those sins.

c) We must overcome our adversary, the devil. Are we prevailing against our adversary, the devil? Are we continuing to be weak against his wiles and schemes that he uses against us? Do we give him loads of ammunition to accuse us before our Heavenly Father? Or do we successfully resist the devil so that he flees from us?

Where are we in our spiritual journey? Where are we in deepening and maturing our relationship with our Heavenly Father? Where are we in growing in our love for God our Father and for His Son, Jesus, by exemplifying the life of Jesus in our lives? Where are we in growing in our love for one another? Where are we in prevailing against the sins that beset us time and time again each day? Where are we in growing the fruit that our Heavenly Father needs to see in us before He gives us eternal life?

And brethren, where are we in growing to be part of that very special group of called-out ones about which our Heavenly Father and Jesus say that They will give eternal life "To Him Who Overcomes"?