ENDGAME

(Romans 8.31-35, 37)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. I’m excited to bring you this message as we celebrate Memorial Day weekend, remembering those who shed their blood so that we can enjoy the freedoms which we now enjoy. This is important because we must never forget that it was for freedom that Christ set us free, and it was for the freedom to worship Jesus that the first settlers came to America. And so, we must never forget that this precious but fragile freedom which we now enjoy wasn’t free, but came at great cost.

It was almost 10 years ago on November 7, 2009, that the nation watched as the USS New York, an amphibious transport dock, made with seven and three-quarter tons of steel salvaged from the World Trade Center, was commissioned into service. It was an emotional ceremony because there was a deeper meaning behind this battleship and the steel that was melted down and used in its construction. The message of the USS New York is that terrorists may have knocked us down, but they can’t keep us down, and its motto is simple and powerful: "Strength forged through sacrifice. Never forget."

Now, many centuries before Christ came into the world, David’s son Solomon was king over Israel, and he devoted himself to study all that was done under heaven. He considered the past and recognized by the Spirit of God that in spite of our best intentions, that history merely repeats itself. He said,

“Generations come and generations go, but the earth never changes. The sun rises and the sun sets, then hurries around to rise again. The wind blows south, and then turns north. Around and around it goes, blowing in circles. Rivers run into the sea, but the sea is never full. Then the water returns again to the rivers and flows out again to the sea. Everything is wearisome beyond description. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content.”

“History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new. Sometimes people say, "Here is something new!" But actually, it is old; nothing is ever truly new. We don't remember what happened in the past, and in future generations, no one will remember what we are doing now” (Ecclesiastes 1:4-11, NLT).

And so, Solomon gives us a grave reminder to memorialize the past, so that we never forget, because it’s very likely that history will repeat itself. And this Monday we honor the over 660,000 men and women who’ve become casualties of war since 1775. And I know it’s a massively overwhelming number, but the good news is that whenever you’re facing something that seems to be too big for you, when there’s an obstacle, an opponent, something that seems to be overwhelming, you must remember that in Christ you are more than a conqueror. If you’re a Christian, if you’re a follower of Christ, in him you’re an overcomer.

Last month, AVENGERS: ENDGAME came out in the theaters allegedly to be the conclusion of the Apocalyptic-themed story begun in the movie Infinity War. It seemed as if all hope was lost as Tony Stark, without food or water finds his oxygen supply starting to dwindle.

ENDGAME trailer: <https://youtu.be/hA6hldpSTF8>.

It’s a set up as the remaining Avengers must figure out a way to bring back their allies for an epic showdown.

Today’s message is entitled, ENDGAME, and if you’re in that place where you’re feeling overwhelmed, where you feel like life is just too challenging, and you’ve lost hope, I want to give you three points, three ideas to encourage you, building you up, and empowering you to press on. You see, positionally, if you’re a follower of Christ, you must remember that you’re coming from a place of victory; and so, you’re going to want to tap into the resources that God has given you. This is important, because when you know who you are, you’ll know what to do, because number one, you have a powerful ally.

## 1. You Have A Powerful Ally

And so, you want to ask for the Holy Spirit’s power to help you in your struggles and to strengthen you when you’re weak because life is tough. It’s easy to find yourself overwhelmed, but knowing that you have a powerful ally, and understanding God’s ENDGAME not only gives us hope for the future but encourages us to make a difference today. In fact, through the power of the Holy Spirit, you can live with hope and joy no matter what obstacle you’re facing, and no matter what it is that you feel like you can’t overcome. In fact, let me show you this in God’s word, the apostle Paul says in Romans chapter 8, he says:

“If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?” (Romans 8:31-35).

In other words, if you’re facing scarcity, financial difficulties, bankruptcy, or simply just more month than money. If you’re struggling with a physical hardship, maybe migraine headaches, a difficult marriage, or a doctor’s diagnosis and things just don’t look too good. The Bible tells us in verse 37,

“In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

In other words, Paul says, you may battling, you may be wrestling with all that, but you have a powerful ally. That’s what he said, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” And so, you need to recognize who your ally is, looking beyond the battle right now to the victory in the end. You see, we’re more than conquerors, but it’s not in our own power, it’s through him, it’s through Christ who loved us. And so, it’s not in our own strength or our own power, but it’s God’s power. The Bible describes it this way saying that it’s,

“His incomparably great power for us who believe…” (Ephesians 1:19).

It’s God’s power and it’s just like the Israelites when they were set free from slavery in Exodus. You know, they packed up and left Egypt in a hurry only to run into the Red Sea; and it was an immense obstacle, they began to panic, but when they called upon their ally, when they cried out to God, he miraculously parted the sea in front of them. The Israelites were able to safely cross on dry ground, but as the Egyptian army followed them into the sea, it came crashing back in and they’re destroyed by this great tsunami. And so, their greatest fear was washed away, the Israelites’ oppressors were crushed under the waves and it was an amazing victory for God.

In the same way, he’s going to fight your battles for you, but you’ve got to believe number two, that in him you’re more than a conqueror.

## 2. You Are More Than A Conqueror

You see, what was true for Moses and the Israelites many centuries ago is true for us today. We too can glorify God with great exploits of faith, seeing the supernatural in our lives, choosing that which lasts forever and doing the impossible; because as the children of God we’re not defined by the parameters of this world. That’s what the apostle John tells us, he says,

“This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

And so, we’ve got two choices, we’re either overcome because of our unbelief, or we’re overcomers because of our faith. But our faith doesn’t depend on how we feel, what we see, or what may happen. Our faith doesn’t depend on the sea before us or the army behind us. Our faith is in Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of lords, because he’s our ally, and he’s the one who’s fighting our battles. And so, the important thing for us is to trust God, believing and following him, even when we don’t understand the plan.

In fact, in Joshua chapter 3 we find that the people of God had been wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. They’d miraculously been delivered from slavery, but they weren’t walking in that freedom, instead they were walking in that cycle that Solomon described, just going around and around, but now Moses had died and Joshua had been appointed as their new leader. And so, it was at this time that the Israelites found themselves back in the same place as their fathers were 40 years earlier. They were standing at the edge of the Jordan River looking across at the land that God had promised to give them. And in verse 10, Joshua told them,

“Today you will know that the living God is among you” (Joshua 3:10, NLT).

And once again, God caused the water to part and the people walked across on dry ground. It was just like the stories that they’d remembered their parents telling them about crossing the Red Sea. And when they got to the other side of the Jordan River, the Lord said to Joshua,

"Take twelve stones from the very place where the priests are standing in the middle of the Jordan. Carry them out and pile them up at the place where you camp tonight” (Joshua 4:2-3, NLT).

And so, Joshua chose 12 men to carry 12 stones, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel, and they carried these 12 stones to the place where they set up camp and constructed a memorial there. Then Joshua said to the Israelites in verse 21,

"In the future your children will ask, 'What do these stones mean?' Then you can tell them, 'This is where the Israelites crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' For the Lord your God dried up the river right before your eyes, and he kept it dry until you were all across, just as he did at the Red Sea when he dried it up until we had all crossed over. He did this so all the nations of the earth might know that the Lord's hand is powerful, and so you might fear the Lord your God forever” (Joshua 4:21-24, NLT).

And so, these 12 stones were a memorial, a reminder, as Psalm 105 says, so that the people would,

"Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced” (Psalms 105:5).

In fact, the Bible is filled with close to 100 passages encouraging us to remember. Just as the prophet Isaiah said,

"Remember this, fix it in your mind, take it to heart..." (Isaiah 46:8).

And so, today, we pause to remember the millions of men and women who have served our country since its beginning, with over 660,000 men and women giving their lives for you and I. And yet, in spite of that sobering thought, we also remember Romans chapter 8, which tells us that,

“In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

In other words, that’s who we are in Christ, we’re more than victorious, because with Christ you have the power to overcome all of the temptations and hurdles this world throws at you. No matter whether its a great sea, a mountain, or doctors’ diagnosis, because number one you have a powerful ally, number two you’re more than a conqueror, and so, number three you’re able to overcome.

## 3. You Are Able to Overcome

You see, God has given us a power and strength beyond what’s humanly possible. He says, it’s not by might nor by power, but it’s by my Spirit. And the apostle Paul tells us that,

“Having believed, you were marked in him, (in Christ) with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit” (Ephesians 1:13).

And it’s through the Holy Spirit that we’re able to overcome, because he’s working powerfully in our lives, he’s helping us in our struggles, and he’s strengthening us in whatever we do. And so, it’s the power of God the Holy Spirit that is the dynamic, experiential nature of God’s empowering presence that enables us to be overcomers.

It’s through faith in Christ, that we’re provided access to something that’s supernatural and out of this world. The Bible tells us that we’re not limited to the weapons of this world, second Corinthians says,

“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:3-4).

In other words, as followers of Christ, we have the explosive power of God, an arsenal of supernatural weapons with divine power. And that’s why the apostle Paul tells us to be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power, because you need to know who you are and the resources you have.

You see, according to the Bible in Ephesians chapter 6, you have the belt of truth, the body armor of God’s righteousness, and for shoes, the peace that comes from the gospel. You have the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil, salvation as your helmet, and you fight with the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:14-17). And so, you have no reason to fear because perfect love drives out all fear.

You’re an overcomer, therefore, you can stand boldly in faith, telling your spiritual enemy,

“I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13).

And some of you today need to remember that you’re not fighting for victory, but you’re fighting from victory, positionally you’re already in a place of victory, and you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.

Now I know that there are some of you who are dealing with some stuff, you may be experiencing incredible pain and hardship, you may not be feeling like you’re in a place of victory, but that’s why knowing God’s plan for the future, his ENDGAME offers hope for us today. In fact, the Bible says that you may have all sorts of hardships, but through the Holy Spirit we can be hopeful, we can trust God’s plan to unite all things in Christ because...

“We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed” (2 Corinthians 4:7-9).

You see, we have this treasure, the power of God in these bodies, in these jars of clay, giving us the ability to overcome. And so, I urge you to believe it, to trust God, because you can overcome those feelings of hopelessness, depression, discouragement, and unforgiveness. By the power of Christ, you can overcome the pain of betrayal, you can overcome addiction, you can overcome all things through Christ who gives you strength. We’re overcomers, because God is working in us and through us. Isaiah said it this way,

“Lord, you are our Father. We’re the clay, you’re the potter; we’re all the work of your hand” (Isaiah 64:8).

And I’ll tell you, my life is a living testimony of what can happen when you put yourself in the hands of the potter. God’s helped me to overcome so much and you can do the same thing. With Christ in you, his power is your power, and his victory is your victory. Therefore, what he’s overcome, you’ve overcome and that’s why the apostle John says,

“You, dear children, are from God, and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

And so, this is what we need to understand, this is the hope that we need to have in the midst of any struggle, temptation or suffering, that we have access to God who is in us through the Holy Spirit. He gives us his presence, spiritual weapons, and divine resources that are not of this world so that we can overcome this world. He promises to be with us, not to eliminate every difficulty, but to anchor our hope in Christ. The Bible says it this way,

“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure” (Hebrews 6:19).

And so, you can be confident, knowing that you have a powerful ally, you’re more than a conqueror, and you’re able to overcome all things through Jesus Christ. You just need to remember and ask for the Holy Spirit to empower you, to help you in your struggles, and to strengthen you in all that you do, because God will.

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