

Victory Over Evil Forces S.S.

1. Welcome
2. Memory Verse
3. Victory Over Evil Forces is really what life is all about in these last days of earth's history.
4. The word forces is a descriptive word in and of itself. Force is the exact opposite of God's Kingdom. He does not force. So when you see this word you know that it goes very well with the word evil.
5. The backdrop of all worldly activity is the Great Controversy, the battle between good and evil. The lesson says something to that effect also.
6. How evil is evil? Is the enemy just some kind of half fictional character that the world makes jest of? Or is the enemy as evil as evil gets?
7. Friends, he is as evil as evil gets. He delights in bringing intense pain and misery to earthlings.
8. Perhaps many of you have read this little passage from Early Writings p. 152. It is an interesting insight to this foe.
9. "I was shown Satan as he once was, a happy, exalted angel. Then I was shown him as he now is. He still bears a kingly form. His features are still noble, for he is an angel fallen. But the expression of his countenance is full of anxiety, care, unhappiness, malice, hate mischief, deceit, and every evil. That brow which was once so noble, I particularly noticed. His forehead commenced from his eyes to recede. I saw that he had so long bent himself to evil that every good quality was debased, and every evil trait was developed. His eyes were cunning, sly, and showed great penetration. His frame was large, but the flesh hung loosely about his hands and face. As I beheld him, his chin was resting upon his left hand. He appeared to be in deep thought. A smile was upon his countenance, which made me tremble, it was so full of evil and Satanic slyness. This smile is the one he wears just before he makes sure of his victim, and as he fastens the victim in his snare, this smile grows horrible."
10. Evil, totally evil, there is nothing else we can say.

11. Well, then how good is good? Our good isn't all that good, especially without God, it is actually bad, deceitful above all things the Bible says is the way our hearts are.
12. But God's goodness is perfect goodness. So then let us ask the question, how close in equality is the power between the two sources behind good and evil?
13. There is no comparison. Even though evil has tremendous power it is no match for the power in good.
14. That begs for the question then, why does mankind struggle with evil so much? If the power behind all goodness is infinitely greater than the power behind evil, why would we ever struggle? That is one question we will want to address as we go through our lesson this week.
15. The closing sentence there on the opening page says that in Christ we have the promise of victory over those forces, the evil forces in our world.
16. That is another issue we will want to address then, how do we claim or acquire this victory if it has been promised to us?
17. Let's move on to Sunday entitled "A Stage Set For Our Victory."
18. The stage of course here as the lesson points out is the death of Christ on the Cross and His resurrection. Those two events give complete Assurance of victory.
19. So, let's have someone read for us [Ephesians 1:18-22](#).
20. Can we say that the cross provided the victory, His resurrection helps us to understand that the deal has been sealed? He was raised to new life and that is what our experience should be through Him, raised to new life in Christ.
21. Does that mean up until the cross there was still some uncertainty? When Old Testament people looked to the sacrifices that pointed forward to Christ did they have to do so with a great deal of anxiety, asking such questions as, will this really happen? Will He really come? And if He does come as a man among men, will He fail to accomplish His task?
22. If they would have realized that the Messiah would have to live as a man and live a perfect life and die a perfect sacrifice I think many would have questioned that something like that could ever happen. Why?

23. Well, because they knew they weren't living a perfect life and they could tell by the actions of everyone around them, nobody else was either.
24. I suspect most people, maybe all people didn't understand that aspect of the coming Messiah, that He would have to live a perfect life.
25. It's kind of hard to know what they thought about the coming Messiah in some respects. They might have thought He would live a perfect life, but as a royal king-like being, not someone struggling with sin and the problems associated with humanity.
26. So, back to our question, up until the cross was there still some uncertainty? Could Jesus have failed? Yes.
27. By faith though, looking to the perfect sacrifices they could believe that He would not. At least they should have been able to believe that. For the animals brought to be sacrificed had to be perfect, without blemish. The shedding of blood assured them of forgiveness.
28. But in all reality, where would you have rather been living, then or now? I am happy to be living now with this stage having been set that we are talking about here on Sunday. We know without a doubt that the sacrifice has been perfect. The resurrection and ascension took place likewise and Jesus took some first fruits with Him to heaven, those who were raised with Him.
29. The fact that there are earthlings in heaven with God now should give us even greater assurance. The supporting cast we might call them. They are enjoying the splendor of heaven, which means victory has been provided to be sure. Nothing or nobody is going to be able to yank those glorified souls from heaven back to a corrupted earth.
30. Now, the stage is set and it is not just any ordinary stage. It is the most glorious stage possible. How do we take advantage of this? I mean we know about the stage. We know the facts about what it tells us in regards to victory, our victory.
31. But then, low and behold, we go through the day, maybe today, or yesterday or tomorrow and we experienced something less than victory. How awful is that?

32. Perfect stage, perfect provisions for victory, but perfect failure on our part to achieve victory all of the time.
33. Oh maybe we were sailing along, enjoying victory, rejoicing in the Lord and then boom, we let ourselves down. What is the problem? Is the stage not that perfectly set? Can we blame it on the stage?
34. Never. We must never entertain such a thought. It was a perfect sacrifice. It was a glorious resurrection. The problem of course is that our focus was drawn away from the stage in some manner.
35. And it is the whole reason behind Paul's admonition to the Ephesians, to remind them where to keep their focus. We are to learn from our mistakes and admonitions from the Word.
36. Will Rogers stage specialty used to be rope tricks. One day, on stage, in the middle of his act, he got tangled in its lariat. Instead of getting upset, he drawled, "A rope ain't so bad to get tangled up in if it ain't around your neck." The audience roared with laughter. Encouraged by the warm reception, Rogers began adding humorous comments to all of his performances. It was the comments not the rope tricks that eventually made him famous.
37. We get tangled in our own ropes at times. They will not become ropes around our necks and unto our death if we look back to the perfect stage that has been set for our victory. We are to learn from our mistakes and go on from victory to victory.
38. It's when we don't take the admonition and focus our minds on the perfect stage that we will have our eternal problems.
39. Well, let's move on to Monday entitled "Hope of Victory."
40. What perfect timing for such a lesson. And I say that because right now here in the United States we are nearing the national elections for the presidency of these United States.
41. We are also in the middle of the baseball major league play offs and working our way to the World Series.
42. On the minds of many people with these two major issues is the concept of victory. At least it better be.

43. Can you imagine someone running for presidency who ran around complaining about how he didn't think he had a chance to win? If he did that would he win? Absolutely not.
44. The same with baseball teams. Teams who don't eat drink and sleep the concept of victory don't achieve victory.
45. What a lesson to the Christian. We should eat, sleep, work, with the concept of victory. All of our waking hours and even our dreams should be laced with the idea of final victory. Hope of victory. Without hope of victory we can be sure there will be no victory.
46. Will someone read for us [Romans 8:26-28](#)?
47. Is there an element of teaching even within the Church that victory over sin isn't possible? Unfortunately you hear it way too much.
48. But even though we may not have attained perfection can anything less than perfection be our goal? Not if we want to call ourselves Christians. For to call yourself a Christian is to say that you desire to pattern your life after that of Christ. Did He live a perfect life?
49. Did He live that perfect life because He used His Divinity? No. He did it within the framework of humanity. He had no advantage over us, in fact was tempted more than any of us.
50. Just after Paul tells us there in verse 28 that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose," He goes on to say this in verses 29 and 30.
51. "For whom He did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them he also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified."
52. As the lesson points out these verses have been the battleground for the concept of predestination. But the larger point to the verses is an amazing promise.
53. What does predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son mean if it doesn't mean His desire for us is to be just like Jesus? If we are just like

Jesus, we will be victorious over temptations to sin. We will live victoriously.

54. God would have us look to Jesus for the concept of perfection. Likewise Jesus would have us look to the Father for the concept of perfection. In fact, let's have someone read about that in [Matthew 5:48](#).

55. I've gotten a laugh or two in the past when some have attempted to use this verse and tell us that the Greek word for perfect doesn't mean perfect, so much as it carries with it the concept of mature.

56. Well, bless their hearts, if one is as mature as even the Father in heaven is mature, then that equates to perfection no matter how you look at it. You can throw many words in there and it comes out the same.

57. Be as kind, or as loving, or as considerate as your Father which is in heaven and you still end up being perfect, for the Father is perfectly kind, perfectly loving, perfectly mature and on and on.

58. So both Father and Son would have us look to the other and realize that our goal is never anything less than perfection. It is the ultimate Hope of all Victory.

59. As the lesson points out verses 35 through 39 of Romans 8 gives an array of entities over which the Christian can be victorious. It's quite a list when you look at it. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword.

60. And if that isn't enough verse 38 includes death nor life nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature. He doesn't miss much.

61. None of these entities are to strip us of our victory.

62. Can you imagine what the manager of a baseball team would do with a player who only went around touting the expertise and power of the other team. They have the best pitching staff in the world. The relief pitchers are better than the starters and are impossible to hit the pitches they throw.

63. Their hitters are the best in the world and can hit anything you throw to them. Don't try hitting past their fielders for they catch everything.

64. Even their fans are the best. They will out applaud ours two to one. I don't think that player has a long career ahead of him at least on the team he is on.
65. But think about it. Haven't you heard someone talking like that in regards to the battle we are in, lamenting just about everything? Maybe you have done it a time or two. Has it helped your battle? Hardly.
66. Can we say the same of hope that the Bible says of faith. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Hope cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. I believe so.
67. Hope of victory. If you sense yourself lamenting to any degree in this great controversy we are in, renew your hope of victory by going to the promises in God's Word to buoy yourself up for the battle.
68. We need to go to Tuesday's lesson entitled "Christians Versus the Devil."
69. I don't particularly like the title. Because if it is just the Christian versus the devil we would lose. Whatever you do, don't go up against the devil by yourself. It would be better to say Christians in Jesus versus the devil. Maybe it is understood that using the term Christian actually means just that, and really it should. If you are a Christian, you are in Christ, Christ is in you, then okay, you will be able to contest the devil.
70. Someone read for us one of my favorite texts in all the Bible, [James 4:7](#).
71. We must make sure we follow the order of this verse. First things first, submitting ourselves to God, then we can resist the devil and then we can claim the promise that he will have to flee.
72. Sometimes we don't give the devil enough credit for the power he possesses, and other times we give him too much, as if to say he is so powerful there is no way we can challenge him. He is a created being. We are created beings. Yes, angels were created higher than humans and we do know he is much smarter than we are.
73. But submitting to God gives us the edge. We are no longer mere earthlings out here on a limb on our own. Like Paul we can say Christ lives within us. With Christ within, what does that mean?
74. Well, think back to His earthly ministry. Did the demons know who He was? Yes. Would someone read for us [Mark 1:23-25](#)?

- 75.If Christ is living in us, then if we come in contact with this kind of a situation we should expect the same results. It's how much and how full we are allowing Jesus to live within us that makes the difference. How fully are we submitting to God is the key. Before we ever resist the devil and do battle with him, we must be assured of that first step.
- 76.James 4:7 is a text I refer to in my prayer every time I am involved in an anointing service for someone who has called for the elders to pray for them.
- 77.I verbally tell God I am submitting to Him and include the others and hope and pray they are in tune with that submission. Then I claim the promise that is in the rest of that verse, that as we in the name of Jesus resist the devil he will have to flee.
- 78.For is not the devil responsible for every physical affliction. Oh, I don't mean we can cast all the blame on him, for if we have abused our bodies and brought illness on ourselves we have to accept the blame, but according to the story of Job the prince of darkness is responsible for all pain and suffering is he not?
- 79.So in an anointing service first of all we instruct the person requesting prayer to read an important chapter in the book called Ministry of Healing and how it spells out the sinner's responsibilities when it comes to this anointing.
- 80.As they yield to those principles then we can claim James 4:7 with confidence.
- 81.That doesn't mean that healing will take place at that time. We surrender enough to pray as Jesus prayed, thy will be done. But if we are surrendered to God healing will take place, right then, in time or when Jesus comes again.
- 82.When Jesus comes there is going to be a mass fulfillment of answered prayers for the sick. Many people have gone to their grave after an anointing service, but they await the answer to their prayer when they come forth from the grave.

83. And just because they weren't healed at that time, the devil still had to flee and people can have sweet peace knowing that he has had to flee and that they are secure in the arms of God.
84. That should be our attitude in this battle between Christian versus the devil. One way or the other, at one time or the other, the Christian will win and be assured of victory, as they are in Christ.
85. As we move on to Wednesday it is entitled "Examples of Victory." An important part of today's lesson concerns itself with having power over demons and unclean spirits. The 70 were sent out, not with specific instructions to cast out devils, but this seemed to be the most exciting part of their mission trip.
86. These experiences can be exciting and inspiring when God works to free people from the demonic world. It has been that way so much for some people that they want to specialize in this area of religious life. I feel in a way that can be dangerous.
87. If a need arises that is one thing, but to seek this kind of thing as I have seen it in others seems to be asking for trouble in the long run. Surely we shouldn't avoid it when coming into contact with someone who is possessed, but going out of our way to specialize in this ministry is not something I want to do.
88. Over 30 years ago my wife and I were studying with a young couple. The young lady only spoke Spanish and so I needed my wife's help since she can speak Spanish.
89. They were a delightful couple. We had so much fun with them especially as the young lady who had never had any background in Adventism. The husband had, but had gotten away from it for a while but was really dedicating his life to God again.
90. So it came time for their baptism and we went to see them Friday night before they were to be baptized. They also had another couple there they were related to.
91. So I was visiting with the men downstairs and Dorreen went up to visit with the ladies. The young lady getting ready to be baptized was having some problems.

92. Unbeknown to us down stairs she was up there really in battle with the enemy. A presence was trying to lift her off the bed and making her lose her breath and a very frightening situation.
93. Dorreen immediately understood what was happening and along with this other Adventist lady began praying. As they did God's power came in and the presence left. The young lady felt such an experience of relief. She had had this experience in the past a few times but we had never discussed it and didn't know about it.
94. But from that time on she never had the problem again. And just a few years ago we got a chance to see this couple again after 30 years and what a delightful Christian couple they are. They had grown children going into SDA colleges. How exciting to know that God delivered her once and for all from that power of darkness.
95. These are the kind of examples of victory that enrich our lives in the Lord.
96. Does deliverance from demonic powers in a person's life ensure that they will always be free from those powers? Is there a chance that they can become demon possessed again?
97. Well, the answer of course is yes it is possible. People can return to their old life and allow the powers of darkness to take over again.
98. I will never forget a young lady who had been educated all of her life in our Christian schools and now she was married to a nice young man. But back in her Academy high school days she was a student in the dormitory. While there she became involved in the ouji board, that little tool of the devil.
99. Since that time she was plagued by the demonic world from time to time and it was always a frightening experience. She was trying to live the Christian life, but these experiences would be awful for her.
100. A few times we were with this young couple and saw what was taking place and prayed fervently and she found relief.
101. But the problem with her was she wasn't really serious about being fully surrendered to God in all things and so she continued to have problems with these demons.

102. Eventually she divorced her husband and gave up on the church and I suspect she wasn't as bothered by these kinds of attacks since the enemy had gotten the victory as far as her commitment to God was concerned.
103. So, yes examples of victory of which we are talking about here on Wednesday's lesson can give way to defeat if we don't seek God with all our hearts.
104. But examples of victory that are recorded in God's Word are given to us as an encouragement, that there are no powers that can take victory from us if we are surrendered to the power of all powers.
105. As we move on to Thursday's lesson entitled "Examples of Victory (Book of Acts) we get some further insight to that which we have been talking about.
106. When Jesus was here in person He had several contacts with the demonic world and each time He was able to deliver the poor souls who had been controlled by these demons.
107. Some of these episodes were extremely dramatic. At first people thought the person who had been possessed actually died right there on the spot. But it was soon seen that they not only didn't die, but they were totally healed and delivered from the evil that had controlled them.
108. One of the problems some people have had with deliverance type ministry is that it has become easy for them to become proud of what kind of powerful experienced happened through their efforts, through their ministry, when in actuality it is only because of God could any deliverance ever take place.
109. But as we move to the book of Acts and some of the experiences the disciples had with this demonic world, it seemed to be part of their ministry only as it became necessary and nobody got proud.
110. Would someone read for us [Acts 5:12-16](#)? Even Peter, the old Peter often became proud very quickly, but not so in this story.
111. What are we to think about a passage like this? Is it easy to think that people could become superstitious when it comes to being healed by the shadow of a person?

112. Or is this an amazing example of faith having heard how God is using a person to bring healing to many that they feel if they can just be in that man's shadow. That is what it seems like it is to me.
113. Let's turn for a moment to Acts 16:16-18. (Read)
114. This is the kind of scenario that the church runs up against more often than not. By that I mean things are a bit unusual and you really need God's Spirit to guide you just as He did Paul.
115. Paul recognized what was going on and rebuked this spirit of divination and that spirit came out the same hour.
116. The book Acts of the Apostles is a book of experiences by the early Christians.
117. But many books called Acts could have been written since then. Many books could be written right here at Central. We could call it Acts of the Central membership.
118. Many examples of victory could be recorded. Right here in our congregation we have people who have found victory over demons, over drugs, sex abuse, a life of crime, and you name it.

