

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 13 Feb 2022

Sermon Title : Overcome or Succumb

Speaker : Rev Peter Koh

Text : 1 John 2:14

INTRODUCTION

As a child of God, in our journey of faith, there are many things that come along our path that we need to make choices in, including overcome or succumb to temptations. We are constantly faced with temptations and when lured, we may follow the temptation and succumb to it, forgetting the true purpose and intent that we originally set out for. Temptation does not always come in the form of material things as it can include invisible things such as the lust of the eye or craving for power and acceptance. God promises us a life filled with abundance (John 10:10) but the devil dangles temptations like dangling a carrot in front of us, in order to steal, kill and destroy.

We succumb to temptation because we want it now, rather than wait for the very best in eternity

- We want instant gratification and pleasure
 - it is easier to succumb as it gratifies our emotions and makes us feel good. Sin is pleasurable and gratifying. If sin is not pleasurable, we do not need to fight it so much and we will always be holy.
 - We do not want to wait because we live in an “instant society”.
- The devil knows this is our weakness and uses it by tempting us to sin as it gives us instant gratification and pleasure. The devil is a coward who stands beside or behind us, whispering to us the temptation and its goodness, convincing us that following the temptation has no consequences – with thoughts like “No one is watching”, “Nobody will know” or “There is no harm”.

On our own, we often fall into the devil’s trap when we succumb to temptations but God wants us to overcome temptations.

- God wants us to be overcomers. We need to submit to God, look up to God and take our values and instructions from the Word of God. (James 4:7),
- Once we understand what God wants in our life, we can turn around to tell the devil, “In the name of Jesus, be gone!”, and because the devil knows that God lives in us, he will flee (James 4:7). When the devil flees, the carrot also goes away. We can then turn back and continue on our journey of faith.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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- God destined and wants us to be overcomers. If you believe in the Word of God, this is what the Word of God says about you and who you are. But the devil wants us to think otherwise, to confuse us about what the Word of God has taught or tells us, like in the case of Adam and Eve.

We need to be overcomers. We either rejoice when we overcome or succumb and be miserable because after a temporal joy, we will feel guilty and miserable that we have succumbed to the devil's lies.

Maturity in our journey of faith (1 John 2:14)

God wants us to grow up, transform and mature. When we mature in our faith, we will have values that will guide us to become an overcomer. John is calling us to pay attention to our faith in Christ. We need to ask ourselves some questions about our maturity in faith:

- a. Where do I stand in maturity in faith? Am I still a baby or mature like a father or a young man strong in the spirit, able to overcome the evil one?
- b. Am I becoming more and more like Christ?
- c. Or am I still a secret Christian and nobody knows I am a child of God because I am still not reflecting God's image and likeness, not manifesting the Fruit of the Spirit. Do I not behave Christ-like in the marketplace and only become Christ-like when I am in church?

In 1 John 2, John emphasized in his writing the need to:

- Raise attention to their faith (children, father and young man) in Christ
 1. God will not put children in the front line when they are not ready. He will give you time to grow in your faith, to understand and grow in a strong relationship with Him from a "baby" to a "young man" who is maturing and strong to fight the spiritual battle and then to "fathers" who are experienced with knowledge. In John 2:14, John is describing a person who is living out the truth till he attains spiritual maturity.
 2. God puts overcomers (people who have experienced/overcome the evil one) to test when they are ready. God will prepare us for the test and will not put us to the test if we are not up to it. God will provide a way out so that we can endure. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- Stir within the people their love for God and to avoid the lust of the eyes and pride of life

We are often faced with choices in our daily lives such between the bible and the newspaper. We tend to choose to read the newspaper first even though it is full of bad news. The bible is full of good news yet we do not want to read it. We gravitate towards bad news and then ask why there is so much bad news. We need to love to spend time reading the good news in God's Word that empowers us and brightens our day.

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To be an overcomer we also need to:

- View failure as an event and not an identity

It is important for us to know God wants us to grow and be an overcomer. God made us winners because biologically, we were all conceived by the fastest sperm which reached the egg. We are not born losers but the devil will whisper this lie to us. In actual fact, we are winners, created to overcome and not succumb.

John was stirring to bring attention to our faith and our identity in Christ so we may love God and people. We must not let our failures crush us as failure is only an incident and not a loss of identity. It is an incident to shape and mould us but it does not change our identity as a child of God.

- Know the truth, love the truth and live the truth

“Those who know the truth are not equal to those who love the truth. But those who love the truth are not equal to those who live the truth.” - Anonymous

Some people may know God but does not love God. Others may even fear God. Some who love God do not live out His Word. It is not about going through the bibles many times, but letting the Word of God go through us. Transformation begins when the Word of God lives in us to transform us. We know the truth and the truth will set us free, and the truth is Jesus.

When we know the truth, we need to be honest with God because that is where transformation takes place. We need to examine our ways by asking questions such as “Do I feel weary and tired being a Christian instead of having a life full of abundance?”, “Do I struggle in reading the Word of God?”, “Do I have a relationship with Jesus, The Shepherd?”, “Do I really know and love Jesus as I proclaim and sing?”, “Is God changing and moulding me or do I succumb instead of overcome?” When we turn away or repent from sin, transformation starts to take place.

CONCLUSION

We need God’s Word to transform us so that we glorify God in our thought, word and deed. True transformation comes with intimacy with God:

- Do you learn God’s word? – that is good
- Do you love God’s word? – that is better
- Do you live God’s word? – that is best.

We must know The Shepherd of our life, to encounter Him so we may realize that God is personal, caring and divine. Let us grow our faith by allowing God to make us the person that He has designed us to be, a strong overcomer, able to stand against the evil one and emerge victorious. May we never let failure bring us down and may our identity remain in God, to realize that God has created us to be special, empowered by the Holy Spirit to live in a Christ-like way. May God also help us to be a guide and blessing to the community when we become overcomers.

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As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Appoint someone to read 1 John 2:14 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, "This is the Word of the Lord."

All to respond, "Thanks be to God." Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now."

- a. As God's Word was read, how has this verse spoken to you?

- b. (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Overcome or Succumb"?

- (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. (i) How can John's emphasis in 1 John 2:14 of "raising attention to our faith in Christ/growing our faith in Christ" and "loving God" help you overcome instead of succumb to temptations in your life?
- (ii) Why is it also necessary to view failure as an event and not an identity so as to overcome temptation?
- 2b. To overcome temptations we not only need to know the truth and love the truth but also live the truth. How can you live the truth in James 4:7 when faced with temptations?
- 3a. (i) Do you identify with instant gratification and pleasure as the cause for succumbing to temptations in your life?
- (ii) What is one such temptation in your life that you need to overcome?
- 3b. What is one thing you can do to overcome the temptation in 3a(ii)?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage each other to achieve 3b above, for the following week(s) till your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your testimony on how you have overcome a temptation in your life through God's Word and help. Share also how this prevented you from falling into the devil's scheme to steal, kill and destroy.

OR

Give thanks to God for preparing us and not putting us to the test if we are not up to it and also providing a way out so that we can endure. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

5. With a prayer partner, take time to pray for the concerns in 3(a), 3(b) and 3(c) above, submitting to God your fears and challenges and seek the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to truly know, love and live out God's Word so you may overcome temptations that come in your life.

As a group, pray also for the Holy Spirit to be upon your group and our church so as a FAITH Family, we can come together to encourage and spur one another to grow in maturity in Christ, to be overcomers.

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