

9,29,20 (10-1-20)

## The Spiritual of the End-Time Remnant

We're going to find out soon (within the next few months) whether the E511 guy has been right about all this. If you've watched his videos called "What's Really Coming?" and "The Great Awakening", you'll know what I'm talking about.

Nations and empires rise and fall; it's been this way for 6000 years. And in every case, there was a generation at the end that watched their empire crumble. We are witnessing the fall of the nation we live in; we're *that* kind of generation.

We're not of this world, but we are temporarily in it. And our role as disciples of Christ is to reach the lost and build up the Church. As to our influence on the culture we are in, since we are meant to be 'salt and light', we should always take a stand for righteousness and when we vote, we vote for the platform that best represents the values of the Scriptures.

But our "fight" is not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. Our battle is spiritual, not political.

So, as for this nation, I am for any Democrat or Republican who will give their allegiance to the same leader, the same king, I have given my allegiance to. That's my family and that's my 'country'.

So, be careful not to get caught up in the "Dominion Theology" movement.

They're not sounding a call for the Church to repent (which is the thing most needed in our country), but a call for the *nation* to repent; which is not going to happen. We're past that now.

I'll close this part with a paragraph from the book, "The Cross, The Church and The Kingdom".

"We are at a very critical point in the spiritual history of this universe. To anyone who is observing the movement of these times, very little argument or evidence is needed to be brought to them that the movement is a very

ominous one. So far as the work of God on this earth is concerned, it is a very serious situation. In different forms, under different names, and in varying degrees of intensity, the whole system of evil - that which is opposed to God - is becoming greatly accentuated; and it is perfectly clear that the effort is greatly increasing to push God out of this world.”

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Last week we touched on the “shaking” that has begun in the spiritual realms. As the war in the heavens intensifies, we will continue to see increased chaos on earth; whether political, geological, or spiritual.

As Jesus warned us in Matt. 24, the beginning of sorrows would include increased earthquakes, plagues, lawlessness, political in-fighting and massive deception.

Everything we see in the visible world is a result of the ongoing conflict between Satan and Christ in the invisible world.

We looked at the Biblical basis for the conflict for the throne last time, so we won't spend more time on that here – only to say that the enemy is desperate to hold on to his “prince of this world” position, but that position is being removed from him and the advance of the Church to spiritual ascendancy is increasingly establishing the rights of Christ to reign as the supreme Sovereign over all creation.

Satan is being defeated in the spiritual world at the same time that he is increasing in influence among the earthly kingdoms leading up to Antichrist. The earth will eventually be the only sphere of influence he has once he's cast out of heaven at the middle of the tribulation – as seen in Rev. 12.

At the same time, the Lord is increasing in measure in His remnant as He finalizes the spiritual development of His Church. And at the close of the tribulation, through the completed and perfected Church, He will bring judgment to both Satan and all in this creation who are aligned with Satan.

Rom. 16:11; “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.”

1 Cor. 6:2-3; “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? Do you not know that we will judge angels?”

Rev. 2:26-27; “He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces... “

All that God is doing in our lives in this last generation is intended to prepare a fellowship of overcomers throughout this world to be in a position spiritually to share the throne of Christ.

This is why we press on; this is “the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” that Paul refers to in Phil. 3:14.

More believers have detoured from the path of spiritual growth for one single reason over all others. Some do it because they simply want to live their lives according to their own desires and interests; not Christ’s interests. They want their Christianity to be convenient and controllable.

Others sidetrack off course because they want to serve the Lord, but they want to do it *their way*, not His. And American Christianity offers a box to work within with understandable, secure, well-defined roles and duties.

There’s no place for an unpredictable God.

But here’s what I believe is the main reason: Christians see the cross (as it’s applied to the believer), as unbearable and negative. They agree that disciples of Christ need to pick up their cross and follow the Lord, but that agreement is restricted to intellectual consent – they don’t want what the cross really implies.

And since they don’t see what the cross leads to, which is the glory of the resurrection, the fullness of life in Christ and the incredible destiny of the crown of creation, they reject any teaching that implies that we can’t have the throne without the cross.

They obsess on what they consider to be the negativity of instruction related to suffering and hardship. That’s all they can see. They want their best life now (as Joel Olsteen says), because they have no vision of eternity, destiny or glory.

It would be like a soldier with fantasies about how awesome it would be to be Rambo or Chuck Norris; to fight in a war, to use all sorts of hi-tech weapons and

kill the enemy, but they aren't interested in what they've heard about bootcamp; about the intensity of the training needed to *become* Rambo or Chuck.

But as Paul told Timothy in 2 Tim. 2:3 "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."

It may be hard for us to keep in mind why our personal conflict seems so intense, but again, if we understand the 'why' behind what God is doing; that He's making spiritual soldiers out of us, we can rejoice in our bootcamp – it's leading to a victorious war and a seat on the highest council of government in the universe.

All believers want the honor of reigning with Christ, but they don't want to go the way He did to get there.

Phil. 2:5-9; "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason, also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name."

2 Tim. 2:12; "If we endure hardship, we will reign with him."

If our vision is limited to earthly life and experience; the throne becomes too abstract and distant.

As one author put it, "The vocation of the church is to bring the impact of Christ's rule in the heavens to bear upon the cosmic forces in our world."

What an incredible thing it will be for those believers who have lost their lives here; who have suffered for the Lord in service to Him and to His church, when they find that their labor has not been in vain and they hear "well done thou good and faithful servant. . ."

- when they discover that their welcome into heaven is a glorious celebration of those who lives demonstrated the victory of endurance, receiving an inheritance that will be their possession forever.

But there are also Christians who, to a large extent, have ignored eternity in order to focus on their own happiness in time; their own self-directed Christian religion, over all that the Lord would have brought them into if they had genuinely pursued Him.

They may have succeeded; they might be more comfortable and happier than those in pain, but at the judgment seat of Christ they will suffer loss while others are being abundantly rewarded.

Here's some comments by Sparks on this idea of the inheritance and how it ties into the overcomer.

“When you come to the letter to the Hebrews, you find yourself in a battle. For here it is all about the inheritance, spiritually. The Spirit is here, urging the Church, urging the believers to go on; not to go back, not to stand still, but to go on. The writer points out that Joshua did not bring the people into God's rest (Heb. 4:8). It was type, it was figure, but the final fulness of Christ was never entered into under Joshua.

When we come to the book of the Revelation, we find that the whole issue of the inheritance has now resolved itself into a matter of 'overcomers'. The situation that we find is that the Church as a whole has *not* gone on. A very large proportion of the Church has either declined, fallen back or away, or has stood still in this matter. Perhaps the conflict has been too fierce, the cost too great, the world too attractive, sin too subtle; but there it is. As we find at the end of the book of Joshua, that the enemy was not finally cast out; so, in the last book of the Bible, in the first part of the Revelation, we find that the enemy has not been fully and finally eliminated. He still has territory amidst the people of God. And so, there arises the whole question of the 'overcomers'. The 'overcomer' company, or body, is that which will go on and will satisfy the Lord in the whole matter of His full thought.

The overcomers are not a 'select', an arbitrarily selected company, but all who will. Paul's great word as to his own praying and striving was: "that we may present every man complete in Christ" (Col. 1:28) - every man. It is God's thought for us all. Do not say: 'That applies to some people who have great spiritual capacity and are of a different make-up from what I am.' No,

'every man complete in Christ' - that is God's purpose. If the Holy Spirit gets His way, if He gets His ground - He can do it with every man.

But there is going to be not one bit of this inheritance possessed without conflict. We need to make up our minds to that, for that is how it is going to be. There is going to be resistance from all quarters. As soon as the matter of any spiritual increase comes into view, then, strangely, sometimes mysteriously, a state of conflict arises. It gets into the very atmosphere, and it comes even from Christian people. Be satisfied with what is called 'the simple gospel', 'the basic truths', and you meet no conflict; everybody applauds and accepts, and is on your side. But - set your heart on the whole purpose of God, and you find yourself at once in a realm of terrible conflict. Satan is not going to allow the Church to reach its determined destiny, if he can prevent it.

Every step is going to be challenged. Notice in Joshua 1:3; "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon" - yes, "to you have I given it - 'but, there will be a battle over it; *there will be a battle over your possessing what I have given.*' Even though God has predestined and pre-determined it, and it is settled in the foreknowledge and fore-counsels of God, that does not mean that we are going to automatically come into it. With all the Divine sovereignty, with all the Divine power, and with all the Divine wisdom, associated with the purpose, strangely enough there is a battle over every inch of it. It is like that."

I'll add these thoughts on this by J. Hampton Keathley;

The word overcomer, which comes from the root word (nikao), means literally, "to conquer", "to carry off the victory", "to "prevail". Overcome does not mean achieving success, recognition, acceptance, prestige, health, wealth, or popularity. It is exclusively related to the spiritual life of the one overcoming. The meaning of this word presupposes and calls attention to the presence of war, contests, battles, and conflicts in man's struggle with evil. The Bible clearly teaches us, as does life itself, that we are in a conflict, indeed, a holy war, with specific adversaries. The conflict rages in and against the life of the Christian. This is everywhere evident in Scripture and so obvious in life that one has to deny reality to ignore or disclaim it."

In one form or another, all of our enemies (the world, the flesh and the devil) are overcome by faith in the truth of God's Word and by a growing confidence in the indwelling Christ. As our knowledge increases our faith increases; "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). We become better equipped to recognize the source of our attack and we become better able to counter it.

Now, listen to this passage from Heb. 11:8-10 AMP;

"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as a stranger in the promised land, as in a foreign land, living in tents as nomads . . . For he was waiting expectantly and confidently, longing and looking forward to the city which has foundations, an eternal, heavenly city, whose architect and builder is God."

Abraham's vision rose a million miles above earth – ours needs to be the same. This life is incredibly transitory, we are like the grass that today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven - but the life to come is eternal.

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Our goal over the next few weeks is going to be to discover what an overcomer is and to move toward entering into the stature of that position.

So, let's begin with a couple of foundational verses that reveal the mentality that God honors; the kind of people who, like Jacob, will wrestle with the Lord and prevail.

Jer. 29:12-14; "Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the LORD..."

John 5:39; "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life."

God doesn't respond to half-hearted curiosity of the content of His Word. Only whole-hearted pursuit of Him is worthy of Him and puts us in a position where we truly want to hear from Him.

Hearing messages or watching videos or reading books and articles are all simply a means to an end. They are supplementary. It's what we *do* with what we hear and read that determines the course of our lives.

If Christ is not our life, with everything else progressively fading into the background as we grow, then we will never reach His desired goal for us.

Paul simplifies this when he wrote, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain".

That's the battle ground of our inner life. As we grow, the Lordship of Christ in us must take root before the fruit can be expressed through us. The Lordship of our will, our likes, our preferences, our selectiveness – all that belongs to us that resists the place our Savior should have in us, has to be set aside.

Only then can the actions we take have Christ as their Source.

The Kingdom of God is, in this age, a spiritual kingdom; it is within us. The kingship of Christ is first realized within us before He can be seen through us. As Sparks puts it;

"The Church is to be constituted as to be God's instrument of administration and manifestation of His kingdom."

But never give in to the deception that quantity is the same as quality. Doing a few things that God has asked of us is more valuable than a lifetime of man-generated religious service.

Some people are doing all they can just to work at a job, raise kids and spend some time in study and prayer. That's the load they are carrying. That's all they can do, so that's all God is asking of them.

We can be totally content with a very private, unflashy walk with the Lord if that's His will. The problem with those James was writing to, when he said "Faith without works is a dead faith" was not that these believers weren't doing *enough* works, it was that they either weren't doing any.

From the same book mentioned earlier, the author wrote;

“You can reject all we are saying still be saved. All you need is to believe on the Lord Jesus and you are saved. With that you can go to heaven, you can be delivered from condemnation and from hell. If that’s all you want, you can have it. But I ask you, are you as concerned to be useful to God as you are to be saved? The matter of your value to God is determined by your impact on the spiritual forces in this universe which are opposed to him. To what degree are you a menace to *his* kingdom? The heart of it is this, that when, from the day of Pentecost men and women went out into this world in the good of what it meant that the kingdom of God as an actual reality had come, and that it was an inward fact, the thing which characterized them was that there was, by their very presence here in this world, an overwhelming impact of the kingdom of God upon that other kingdom lying behind the framework of this world system. It just happened. Their very presence disturbed, challenged, provoked that other kingdom, and the fact of these two kingdoms being in such deadly opposition became a manifest reality simply because those believers were there. It wasn’t simply what they did; it was who they were that created such opposition.”

This isn’t a works issue; it’s a heart issue. There is a definite difference between the heart of an overcomer and the heart of a Laodicean.

An overcomer is the person who takes God seriously. The non-overcomer is committed at the level of personal convenience, not personal sacrifice.

As I mentioned earlier, overcomers are very imperfect people. All you have to do is look at the lives of those God presents to us in the Bible – like Moses, Jacob, Abraham, Peter, etc. – to see that it’s their *heart*, not their infallibility, that qualifies them.

Also, when Paul talks about his concern to make sure he disciplines his body so as to not be disqualified, he’s not talking about losing his salvation, but about losing the reward of the inheritance.

Whether corporate as in a fellowship or assembly, or individual in each of us, our continuance in terms of genuine spiritual life has conditions attached. Salvation has no conditions; but discipleship is the direction our lives are meant to take *after* salvation.

And the conditions of discipleships aren't impossible. In one sense, they aren't even "hard" when you consider that they are based not on our ability to excel in some way, but on the attitude we have toward our Master.

Here's what I mean, Matt. 11:28-29;

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

This offer, these conditions of discipleship are filled with hope, not something a hard-taskmaster would burden us with.

It's more an issue of selfish refusal to follow Him, to trust Him, that disqualifies us; not the fact that we are weak, clay vessels. God hasn't chosen the mighty; He's chosen the helpless, so that His strength and glory may be displayed without any fleshly competition.

It's the "poor in spirit" that get His attention.

The second we begin to believe that somehow our strength is assisting the work of God in or through us, we are headed toward getting a serious thorn in the flesh.

2 Cor. 12:7-10; "And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

The "yoke of Christ" that we are take upon us is undergirded by the power of His resurrection. But only the truly weak can fully appreciate and receive that power. They've failed so much that they have given up on dependence in themselves, and now their faith that's directed anywhere *but* themselves.

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I'm going to close with something personal, but the application is universal for those desiring to be God's end-time remnant. I'm just going to read this as it came to me.

As I wrote this, I was thinking about the members of my family, but I also realized that this is a growing world-wide phenomenon in the overcomers of our generation.

It's not the sharp pain of an injury that eventually heals; it's the grinding pain that never ends – a body you can't escape. There's never a reprieve. It's a shattered body living among fading friends who are jumping off cliffs into the ocean screaming in delight.

It's the unending loneliness that contradicts the Bible which tells us "It's not good for a man or woman to be alone". It the haunting fear and emotional ache of unanswered prayers in the Psalms of David; the personal struggle of a failed past and an uncertain future.

This is our bootcamp; our training and preparation for the throne.

Whether our suffering is physical, emotional or spiritual (or all at the same time), sustained, chronic pressure beyond our ability that doesn't stop; all of this is ramping up in God's final push in this last generation to make us vessels fit for the Master's use.

Behind everything that is happening, with circumstances designed specifically for each of us based on the Lord's knowledge of who we really are, is the hand of the Potter, the spiritual Surgeon, cutting away our flesh to bring our spirit into the light. God is taking pain-racked vessels of clay and developing men and women as weak as babies but as hard as iron.

And as the Father operates on us and we beg Him to stop, it seems that He has no feeling for us; that our cries go unheard. But knowing what we know about the living, organic nature of the "Body of Christ"; we know that the Head feels the pain of every part of His body. Our Savior has been literally, not merely sympathetically, suffering in His church for 2000 years.

The ultimate challenge for us is (and has always been), faith undergirded by vision, by spiritual understanding of God's final goal and His means of reaching that goal for us. Though He slay us, will we trust Him? When we do trust (if only rarely) the measure of Christ increases in us and Satan loses ground; and he must lose *all* ground in us if we are to be to the praise of God's glory.

As Andrew Murray writes, "Faith leads the seeking soul to depend on God alone. Faith believes God's Word, clings to Him, and waits in perfect trust that His power will work within us everything that He has promised."

By faith the church advances like a juggernaut into the enemy's fortress; and the gates of hell will not prevail against us. The cross is the path to ascension and eternity will openly manifest God's glory in us.

This is the result of our momentary suffering; as Paul tells us in Romans 8:18, "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us."

And in 2 Cor. 4:7-11; "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. . . Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

I've seen my daughters crying out; their bodies and souls racked in pain. I've felt their loneliness, their fear and shame and guilt. I've seen the strain and burden and uncertainty in my son's face, and I've seen the deep hurt, like chains in the soul, in their mother's eyes. Because when our kids hurt, we die inside. I will cry for them until the Lord returns.

But I also know their hearts, better than they do. And God knows their hearts better than anyone; that's why their suffering is so intense. He is entrusting them with the path of God's Son in this world.

Amy Carmichael, missionary to India, wrote the following poem;

Hast thou no scar?  
No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?

I hear thee sung as mighty in the land,  
I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star,

Hast thou no wound?  
Yet, I was wounded by the archers, spent.  
Leaned me against the tree to die, and rent  
By ravaging beasts that compassed me, I swooned:  
Hast thou no wound?

No wound? No scar?  
Yet as the Master shall the servant be,  
And pierced are the feet that follow Me;  
But thine are whole. Can he have followed far  
Who has no wound nor scar?

For Jesus, He learned perfect obedience through the things He suffered; for us it's to eliminate all of the old creation. The impurities within us must be drawn out of the silver submerged in fire. As these impurities surface under the heat, they become the only thing we see. We see our mixed motives, our unbelief, our confusion, fear and desperation. What we feel is pain; what we see is failure; what we experience is fire and impurity. All of this seems to be our constant, grinding, unbearable companion.

This is how silver is refined. God is making overcomers in the only way that overcomers can be made.

Which is why most Christians run from the cross and choose a life that makes sense to them. But the Lord won't give *us* that option, because He sees to the core of who we are and what we really desire; which is Him.

Like navy seals, the overcomer company of the last generation is very few.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, because we know that as painful and confusing as things are now, Peter tells us in 1 Pet. 5:10 that “After you have suffered, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.”

Before this generation is over, we are going to see Christ formed in us and revealed through us to the world, giving them their last glimpse of the glory of God in His overcomers before the darkness falls on them.

This is the hope that carries us through. We may be severely scarred, but we will win the fight we are in.

Rev. 21:3-4; “I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “The dwelling place of God is now with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and He will be their God; and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”