

JOHNNY'S VICTORY

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It was the summer of 1967 when I first met 17-year-old Johnny. He was a troubled young man living in the men's dormitory of the Dallas Teen Challenge Center where I was a counselor. There were three of us working under the director, Eugene Hunt.

Johnny's father was also a resident of Dallas with many problems of his own. Johnny wanted to live for the Lord, but each time he visited his dad over a weekend, he would go to the bars with him and would usually return to the Center angry and frustrated. Getting him back on track was usually accomplished through prayer and counseling. I never knew for sure whether he had been redeemed through the grace of the Lord, but when we prayed for him and counseled with him, he would be encouraged (because of Johnny's troubled background, it was very difficult for him to believe that someone, especially Jesus, could love him). During his times of encouragement, Johnny was a very sincere and dedicated young man who had a burning desire to see the lost come into the kingdom.

Johnny loved the deaf, and learned sign language in his spare time. Though he often found it difficult to live for the Lord, he found ways to minister to those of the deaf community in Dallas.

I remember late one afternoon right after our evening meal. I was in the dining room. Our other counselor, whom I'll call Bill, was in the back yard throwing some passes to the residents. Everything was quiet. The supper dishes were done, and there were several hours of daylight left. Then, without warning, Johnny ran past me with a frightened, faraway look in his eyes, followed by Bill. They ran through the dining area where I was reading, through the living room and up the stairs. Bill yelled to me, "Tom, come on, we're going to catch Johnny and pray for him"! Not knowing what was really going on, I darted up the stairway behind the other two where we ended up in my living quarters.

Bill and I cornered Johnny near the window on the far side of the room. He could go no further. There was a water-type heat radiator connected to the wall exactly where Johnny stood, who was now facing us. The terrible agony in Johnny's body was more than startling. The look of extreme fear in his eyes was piercing right through me, then to Bill, and back to me. I was a little shaken because I had never faced a situation like this before. Before Bill could explain anything, and before anyone had time to utter even a short sentence, Johnny's body stiffened like a board and his upper body fell backward with his head supported by the wall. I remember trembling as my spirit called out to the Lord for help. I knew this was a situation much bigger than Bill and I. Johnny's body remained stiff while leaning against the wall, angled over the radiator for the next four to five hours.

Bill and I, beginning to realize our dilemma, began commanding the devil to come out. Neither of us were experienced in this type of ministry, but we had studied the Word, and found the scripture we knew that condemned Satan and all his angels to an eternal lake of fire, and other scriptures we knew gave God's people victory over Satan were quoted. We figured the louder we shouted, the easier it would be to defeat this single enemy. We demanded his name, and finally, the devil answered us. With an extremely deep monotone, the devil stated he was alone, but he definitely would not come out because we did not have the power to frighten him in the least.

About this time, Michael, one of the younger residents entered...watched a few minutes, then came close, wanting to help. He took Johnny's hand; Johnny growled, and grabbed Michael's hand with a grip that none of us were able to break. The clenched fist was not extremely tight around the youth, but Johnny's fingers could not be loosed. Finally, after much prayer, Johnny finally released Michael's hand. Though Michael remained there and prayed as we instructed, he was careful not to get within reach of Johnny again.

“Come out of him. You must leave at once!”

“I will not go. You haven’t the power to make me. I will stay here, and you can’t touch me!”

“I haven’t the power in myself, but by the power of Jesus’ name and His blood that was shed for all men, you must leave this man...now, at once, in the name of the Lamb slain from the foundations of the world, Jesus”! “For He that lives in me is greater than he that is in the world.”

This demon conversed with Bill and I in a similar way for several hours, him attempting to stay in his worldly house, and we continuing to locate and read the Word to him and pray, exalting the Lord Jesus Christ. But Bill and I were tiring now, and we knew the enemy was also close to giving up. (Neither of us had been prepared for this. It came suddenly, and without any warning. Each day was new challenges, and it was because we had not foreseen the problem and fasted that we were not prepared.) I then determined to call the women’s dorm, explained what was going on at the men’s center, and had the counselors there to fall on their faces before the Lord in prayer. We would let Michael stay on the line to keep in contact.

Bill and I were tired, but not about to give up. We knew that the Word is true. We believed that in the Triune Godhead, there was a million times the power we needed to defeat this woeful enemy. And it would surely be soon. I could feel the Lord with us. Yes, Jesus was there, and He was ministering strength to us as we continued.

We both felt such peace then. Bill said, “Tom, I feel very strongly that Jesus is right here, and He wants you and I to stop our shouting, and rest in Him, and pray. He will intervene for us.”

I was still praying a few minutes later when Johnny’s body relaxed and he slumped to the floor. I remember wondering if this was a trick of the imp that was wanting to keep his dwelling place. But when Bill and I saw Johnny on the floor, in the Spirit of God, speaking in tongues and in sign language, we were convinced that Jesus is still the only power in this universe. What He says, and what He does is from eternity to eternity, and no being can conquer His domain. Jesus is inexhaustible! And where Jesus is concerned, there are no experts.

In a little while, Johnny started to come out of the Spirit. We were all weeping in the Lord. We prayed again for Johnny’s continued deliverance, and all the surroundings at the Center; Each room, each hallway, the large porch, the entire property, we prayed over by the blood of Jesus. Remember with me now, the following truth from the Apostle Paul:

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38,39

Someday soon, when it’s all said and done, I believe the Lord will spotlight the one who has caused so much destruction for six thousand years, and allow His people to behold the biggest fool that ever lived since eternity began, and we’ll laugh with joy at his eternal destiny:

“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone...” Revelation 19:19,20

and again...

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.”.....And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before god; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:10-15.

Know this, friend. Jesus is the Savior. Satan is a real, and dangerous enemy who hates Jesus so much that he’s willing to see all God’s creation destroyed. Right now, if you aren’t bought with the price of the precious blood of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, Satan remains your father. Please don’t choose to be like him. Don’t follow after your father. Change sides today. Call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He will hear you. Jesus said:

“Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 12:28

Will you come?

“Even so, come Lord Jesus.”