

Walking in the Light, Part 5

INTRODUCTION

- John has been repeating certain themes: To know Jesus is to know the love of God for us. To love Jesus is to walk as Jesus walked and follow his commandments. To love Jesus is to love one another.

YOU HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD

- What is the Bible? _____
 - What happens to your heart, your behaviors when you are a new creation? _____
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- The promise of victory is for everyone who is born again.
 - The victory you have over the world is from faith in the one who has overcome the world.
 - There is true victory in Jesus for He has overcome the world and all that is in the world.

THROUGH CHRIST JESUS

- Jesus is the one and only one who has overcome the world. There are no exceptions.
- The three proofs of this are: Witness for his baptism; Blood for what he shed on the cross. The Holy Spirit that speaks the very word of God.
- Though there are three to the testimony, there is truly but one testimony: Christ Jesus.

WHO IS YOUR TESTIMONY

- To testify or to bear witness has the legal sense to it.
- Why do witnesses put their hand on the Bible? _____
- Ultimately, every testimony should point back towards Jesus because the true power rests in him

OF THIS YOU MAY BE CERTAIN

- All of the testimony in the Bible is given to you so may believe in Jesus and that you may know for certain that you have eternal life with him.
- When you have the assurance of Jesus and who he is that you have the confidence to bring anything to him.

HEAR & APPLY THE WORD

- Read the testimony of the Gospel of John
- Read the woman's testimony
- Bring everything to Jesus, having the confidence that he will hear you.

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Personal Testimony

Written to and received by Pastor Tom Parrish

I haven't really told this to anyone before, besides my mother, who didn't quite believe me at first. However, after listening to your class yesterday, I have decided to write down my testimony about a "divine appointment" I had two years ago. After writing my testimony down, I've decided that I should at least share it with you.

Two years ago during vacation bible school, you had taught us how to defeat the Jesus of our imagination and discover the Jesus of the bible. During one of those sessions you talked about the power of Jesus' shed blood and the hold that it has over the demonic. You gave us simple, but effective tools, to not only combat the devil (which I am very grateful for), but to bring others to Christ that may be from other backgrounds, such as the Islamic faith. During that week, you told us to expect something to happen, similarly to a divine appointment as you've mentioned this week, because you had planted the seed and had given us the tools we needed. You also asked us to pray for something to happen to us in order for us to use our new acquired tools, just as you asked us to pray for a divine appointment yesterday. Well, I had done as you had asked and was very excited to see what Jesus would throw my way. Little did I know, it would be a little more serious and far more scary than simple discussing my faith with another. A few weeks after you had left and VBS had ended, I finally had my divine appointment. The day was like any other day that I have experienced, mundane and somewhat boring, and before I knew it I was brushing my teeth and off to bed. The only difference in my daily routine was that I had started to say the Lords Pray every night before bed, since VBS. Even two years later, I am still saying the Lord's Pray before my personal prayer every single night before I go to bed. I can't even go to sleep until I've said my prayers. I started doing that mostly because of you and what you had said about comatose patients. I truly wanted the Lord's Prayer so ingrained within me that I would call upon the Lord or say his prayer in times on need when I really couldn't think logically.

So, that night like the nights before it, I said my prayers and went to bed. Sometime during the night I began to dream. Now, since about ten years old, I have never really had any issues with my dreams. Before ten, my dreams were actually a problem, due to three reoccurring nightmares that I would have, which felt very real to me and would always leave me scared to go back to sleep. However, after I became ten, they stopped because I got the notion that I could "control" my dreams from one of my Christian daycare teachers. Since then, I've always been able to tell when I'm dreaming, can change them at will, and wake myself up easily. My dreams, scary or not, never really affect me anymore and I never have trouble falling back to sleep after, regardless of what kind of dream I have.

However, this was not the case for this dream. It was most certainly a nightmare and was extremely vivid and life-like, to the point that I had -trouble recognizing that it was a dream: Unlike normally, I was feeling extremely strong emotions within this dream. I was petrified, scared, and anxious. The dream, which almost seemed to be like a theatrical release of a serial killer movie, had me isolated, afraid, and confused. And that's what the beginning of the dream was about, in a third person kind of view, I watched a small group of three get trapped in a house that was "allegedly" possessed (or haunted or whatever you want to call it) by a demon



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that had possessed others to commit murder. At this point of the dream there was a lot of weird imagery, death, and this looming sense that something bad was coming. During this part of the dream I wasn't too afraid, but I was afraid of the dreadful feeling I was getting that I was not safe. That even though I was watching these people and technically not a part of the action, something worse was coming, and it was coming for me.

Then all of a sudden the dream shifted and I was back in my room. All of the lights were off except for the faint glow of my tv. I was laying in my bed looking at the tv, like I had been watching a horror movie all along. However, what caught my attention was that the door to my room was open. I thought it was odd because I never leave my door open when I go to bed, it is always shut. This is when the dread began to really set in. As I continued to stare at my door I began to truly realize how dark and sinister the hallway looked. This is going to sound funny, but I had never seen a darkness that dark. It was absolutely terrifying to look at and that's when I knew that I had to shut my door. It's like my life depended on it. So, as best as I could, I put on the fakest, and not very convincing, brave face I could muster, and walked over to the door. I firmly held onto the door knob, not really out of confidence but more out of fear, and began to shut the door.

I hadn't really expected anything to happen, I was mostly still in denial trying to tell myself there was no reason to be scared of the dark (again not really realizing I was in a dream). However, as I had just about finished closing the door, I could have sworn that there was a little push back before it had clicked into place. So, I stood there, with my hand on the doorknob thinking, "no ... there's nothing out there ... nothing nudged the door ... " Out of dumb curiosity, I decided to open up the door, just a crack, to see if something had actually pushed on the door. The second I did that, something hurled itself into the door over and over again, to the point that it felt like that the entire room itself was shaking. I was fighting for my life it seemed, as I tried to keep whatever was trying to get in, out. Before I knew it, knife-like claws were trying to cut my feet beneath the door. Fortunately for me, my dresser is right next to my door, so I pushed my back into the door and put my feet up on the dresser to keep away from being cut. It was at this point that I was the most scared that I have ever been in my entire life and I knew that I wouldn't be able to hold on for much longer.

And that's when, out of nowhere, I began praying the Lord's Prayer. Never, not once out of all the dreams I have ever had, have I called out to the Lord for help. But the second I said, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ... " the shaking stopped, the banging at the door ceased, and the darkness that had been pervading my room and the hallway lifted. I hadn't realized that during the assault, I had shut my eyes, but slowly I began to open them and everything I saw seemed rosy colored in a way. There was this blanketed feeling of peace and calmness. There were no longer claws trying to cut my feet, but my adorable cat's paws trying to get me from under the door. I could hear my mother humming some Christian Hymn from her bedroom down the hall. And after opening my door, my cat greeted me with his adorable little purr and the hallway filled with the most beautiful, warm and hazy light. I was happy and safe for-the-time-being.



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That is when I woke. No longer did I feel at peace or safe, I again felt extremely scared. As I actually opened my eyes for the first time, I saw that my real room was covered in the same darkness that I had seen in my dream. The moonlight and floodlights that usually shone through my window, illuminating my bedroom at night, were nowhere to be seen. I couldn't see anything, but this swirling dark mass of nothing and that frightened me. So much so, that I shut my eyes closed and covered most of my body with my blankets. And as I laid there in fear with my eyes glued shut, I felt this awful presence. It felt as though there was something face to face with my, close enough to me that I could tell that something was right in front of me, but not close enough that it was touching me. That sent my brain into over drive and I refused to open my eyes for fear of what I might see. And as I sat there too scared to open my own eyes in my own room, a thought ran across my head.

I began to remember your class on the demonic and the power of Jesus' shed blood. So, in my head I began saying and repeating, "In the name of Jesus and his shed blood I command you to leave." But no matter how many times I repeated it in my head, I was still fearful and this demonic presence was still there.

Before I go on, I would like to mention that I no longer just have faith, but know for a fact that God is real.

I know this because, after continuously repeating that statement in my head over and over again, with no luck and no change; this booming inner voice, that was not my own, commanded me to say it out loud. I will not lie ... I hesitated in those few seconds after the command. I was again in denial like I had been in my dream before. The thoughts that crossed my mind in those short moments were as follows: "was that my thought?" "was that God???" "no way that was God" "I think I'm going insane."

And then again louder, and somehow more commanding, the voice spoke again: "SAY IT OUT LOUD!" So, I did, at first it was a whisper, soft and fearful, but as I began to repeat it over and over again I became louder, each time becoming less afraid and more filled with courage to the point where I could open my eyes and sit up. As I did, I watched as the darkness, similarly to my dream, lifted from my room and finally vanished. Softly, in came the rays of moonlight. My room somehow felt lighter in a way. After this, I turned on the lamp next to my bed and I stayed up most of the night in prayer, thanking God, and reading scripture while holding my rosary.

I will not lie, I was nervous every night before going to bed for about two weeks after my experience ... I'm only human, I couldn't help it. And I did have another dream, which I may write about another time. However, I now know that I am equipped with the tools necessary to fight evil, and based on my second dream I know God has more work for me in this realm of the spiritual battle. So, thank you Pastor Parrish. If it weren't for God working through you when he did, I may not have been prepared enough to make it out alive or intact.

