Revelation 3:21-22

21 The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

1. Church of Jesus Christ

Today's text highlights the final two verses of Jesus's messages to the seven churches found in Revelation 2-3. As we know, these seven churches represent all visible churches on earth, including our own. In His words to these churches, Jesus examines and reveals what lies deep within us. He offers encouragement, provides rebuke, warns us, makes promises, and offers comfort—much like a father's relationship with his beloved children. The profound love and grace of God the Father, who makes sinners like us His children through Jesus, guides us in our lives. His words encourage, correct, warn, and promise, helping us grow in our relationship with Jesus. Through these messages, Jesus reveals the heart of God the Father and His deep love for us.

Our God not only saved us by offering His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to demonstrate how precious we are to Him, but He also continues to care for us and nurture our growth in this saved life. He does not abandon us to perish in sin; He never loses any of us. When He rebukes us, He does not merely condemn us; rather, He identifies the issues in our relationship with Him and rebukes us to restore that connection. God continually encourages, warns, and comforts us with His promises so that we can live in loving fellowship with Him. He also allows the church to participate in this process, granting us the authority to look after one another, build each other up, and truly live.

The image of the church presented in Revelation 2-3 reflects the visible church on Earth. It also represents the saints living in this world. This church is not yet perfect; it is weak, flawed, and still sinful. However, there is an important promise in Revelation 2-3 that we must remember. At the end of the messages to each church, there is a promise for those who conquer or overcome. The phrase “The one who conquers” is followed by the promise of heavenly blessings. This indicates that the true believers in the visible church are those who have already triumphed over everything through Jesus Christ and will ultimately enter the glory of heaven. Therefore, this message aims to strengthen our faith and encourage us to live as conquerors or overcomers.

After finishing these words in chapters 4-5 of Revelation, God reveals to us that the true church of Jesus and genuine believers on earth already possess the blessed reality of heaven. We will actually enter heaven and live in this perfect reality forever. This is the true nature of the church and its believers, who have already conquered or overcome all things through Jesus and will enter heaven as victors in the future. However, even though we are already conquerors and have victory in Jesus, how should we live as such on this earth? How can we recover and enjoy a conqueror’s life, and how should we conduct ourselves? The messages given to the seven churches in Revelation chapters 2-3 provide insight into the life of those who conquer and overcome. Since these seven churches represent the churches on earth, these messages are relevant to us all. Here are the teachings that illustrate the life of a true conqueror.

The church in Ephesus was told to repent for having abandoned their first love and to love Jesus even more. The church in Smyrna was encouraged to remain loyal to Jesus until death. The churches in Pergamum and

Thyatira were admonished to repent for following false teachings and serving idols, and to uphold the gospel of Jesus. The church in Sardis was called to repent for being spiritually dead, to renew their love and hope for the kingdom of Jesus, and to stay vigilant, keeping the garments Jesus had given them. The churches in Philadelphia and Laodicea were urged to repent of their sins, including lies and pride. They were encouraged to adhere to the words of patience, to cultivate a passionate fellowship of love with Jesus, to discover their true identity in Him, and to endure to the end. This is the life of those who conquer. Jesus promises that they will ultimately enter the glory of heaven and enjoy eternal blessings. He also assures us that those who conquer are already experiencing, and will continue to experience, the eternal blessings of heaven by persevering in faith until the very end.

In Revelation 2:7, Jesus promises that those who conquer will eat the fruit of the tree of life in God's Kingdom. In Revelation 2:10-11, He assures us that we will receive the crown of life and that we will not be harmed by the second death. In Revelation 2:17, He promises to give us the manna from heaven and a white stone with a new name written on it. In Revelation 2:26, He says that we will be given authority over the nations and the morning star. In Revelation 3:5, He guarantees that we will be clothed in white garments, our names will be written in the Book of Life—never to be erased—and that Jesus will acknowledge us before God. In Revelation 3:12, He promises to make us pillars in the temple of God and to write His name on us. Finally, in Revelation 3:21, He assures us that we will be seated on the throne of God alongside Jesus.

The blessings of heaven promised to those who conquer or overcome have already been fulfilled in Jesus, and we can possess and enjoy them spiritually. However, these blessings are not yet visible in our earthly reality. They will be fully revealed and experienced in glory on the day Jesus returns. Therefore, we must hold firmly to these promises with faith and live as conquerors. It's important to remember that we do not find our victory in the world around us; it is not revealed there. Although the presence of the church on this earth may appear lacking, and despite the weakness of our lives as believers—where we sometimes feel as if we are losing—we are already conquerors in Jesus. We are called to live with firm faith, confident that we enjoy the blessings of heaven. Why is this certainty so strong? Because our Jesus, who is the head of the church and united with us, has already conquered everything, overcome all obstacles, and attained the glory of heaven.

2. The One Who Conquers

John 16:33, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Jesus proclaimed, "I have overcome." But how did He achieve this victory? What does His triumph truly signify? The messages directed to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 encourage believers to live as conquerors, illustrating the life of Jesus as the ultimate conqueror. Jesus loved God completely, remained loyal to Him unto death, faithfully adhered to God's word, and cherished the hope of God's kingdom. He experienced a deep fellowship with God and endured all suffering, including death, as the Son of God. As a result of His faithfulness, He was resurrected on the third day and obtained the promised heavenly inheritance and blessings, ultimately reaching His glorious state.

Jesus invites us to participate in His victorious life and the eternal blessings of heaven that He has received. This is why He tells us to live as conquerors through Him. As I often emphasize, He does not command us to do anything He hasn't already accomplished Himself. Jesus calls the Church and the saints—who make up

His body—to live like Him on earth. As a result, our church community and every believer are called to love Jesus, even in times of suffering. We are to remain loyal to Him, uphold His teachings, cherish His kingdom, and support the Church that testifies to that kingdom. We are encouraged to share in a fellowship of love with Jesus and to embody a conquering spirit. Through our physical death, our souls first enter into the glory of heaven. On the day of His return, our bodies will also be transformed and reach that glory. This is our calling and the victorious life that the Church and its saints are meant to live here on earth. Jesus has achieved this life, and the Holy Spirit continues to guide us toward its fulfillment. Therefore, we must continually look to Jesus, rise again and again, and embrace our identity as conquerors in Him. Only by focusing on Jesus can we truly understand what it means to live a conquering life. That is why He encourages us to keep our eyes fixed on Him.

Hebrews 12:2, "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

Jesus endured the suffering of the cross, loving God to the very end. He obeyed God perfectly, looked forward to the eternal joy of heaven, and ultimately attained glory as the conqueror. Jesus tells us to follow His example, and while He commands us to do so, the Holy Spirit also works within us to help achieve this victorious life through the Word. Therefore, looking to Jesus is our path to victory. To keep our focus on Jesus, we must continually strive to engage with the means of grace, such as the Word, the Lord's Supper, and prayer. Participating in worship services, which include all of these elements, along with fellowship with other believers, is essential to this endeavor.

We must continually focus on Jesus and look forward to the sure joy of heaven that He has secured for us. We should run with endurance to the end, loving God and obeying His Word, regardless of the suffering we encounter. By keeping our eyes on Jesus, we can hold onto the clear hope of heaven—our ultimate destination, where Jesus has gone before us. This hope will empower us to run the race as conquerors. I pray that God grants us this grace. Let us also listen to the confession of the Apostle Paul, who embraced the life of Jesus and lived a victorious life in the hope of heaven.

Acts 20:22-24, "And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. 24 But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."

The Apostle Paul discovered his calling in Jesus and expressed this as he looked forward to the glory of heaven that he was confident he would enter as a conqueror, just like Jesus. He stated that regardless of the hardships that awaited him, he would not consider his own life precious in order to fulfill the mission he received from the Lord. He aimed to live as one who overcomes everything until the end. Whose life do you see reflected in the life of the Apostle Paul? Do you not see the life of Jesus? Paul also lived as a conqueror by setting his sights on Jesus. Our calling is the same. We, too, look forward to Jesus and make this confession in the hope of heaven. The gospel reveals the reality of the eternal glory of heaven that we will undoubtedly enjoy in Jesus. It encourages us to anticipate this clear reality and to draw strength from it, urging us to live as conquerors even more. Dear saints, Jesus and the gospel of the kingdom of heaven are our sources of strength. The great love of God and the abundant grace of Jesus, as revealed in the gospel, empower us to overcome. Please remember that we can live a victorious life only through faith. Seek faith and embrace the gospel that nurtures and strengthens that faith.

This is where our new self gain strength and serve the Lord with love until the end, driven by renewed will and purpose, living a life worthy of our calling. Although we may face hardships in this world, the power of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven empowers us to pursue the Lord's pleasing will and glory. I hope you recognize that all the realities of the gospel that Jesus accomplished are our reality too. We can look forward to the eternal joy that awaits us and live as conquerors filled with hope. So, what does it mean to live the life of a conqueror or overcomer with diligence? It means loving Jesus until the end, being loyal to Him, faithfully keeping His words, cherishing our hope in the kingdom of Jesus, sharing a passionate and loving fellowship with Him, and enduring all suffering and death as children of God. I encourage you to anticipate all the promised blessings of heaven and to fight the good fight of faith as conquerors until the very end. Finally, I will read the familiar words that we cherish.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18, "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

Please remember that there are two realities for the church of Jesus and the saints: the visible reality and the invisible reality. It is important for us to focus on the invisible reality. The visible reality of the church and the lives of the saints on this earth are often weak, flawed, and subject to challenge and suffering. However, this visible reality is not the whole story. We also possess the eternal and complete reality of heavenly glory, which remains unseen. Jesus has given us a foretaste of the heavenly blessings that the victorious enjoy, especially at this communion table today. I encourage you to come as conquerors, to share in fellowship with Jesus, and to experience all the blessings of heaven. Let us look forward to the blessed reality of heaven that we will soon fully enjoy. Let us endure the temporary suffering and strive to live as conquerors, following the example of Jesus until the very end.