

Viral Messages #13

The Lamb Wins

July 12, 2020

I want you to picture something for me. I want you to picture in your mind's eye; a lamb. If you will notice they are soft creatures, little spindly-legs, and timid. When my boys were small we would go to the petting and seek out the lambs. The goats were too crazy and when you ran out of food they tried to eat your shirt. But the lambs were different. We would fill our hands with those little food pellets and try to get those lambs to come out of their corner. My boys loved how they tickled their hands as they ate...they wanted to take them home...and protect them. You always wanted to protect them...

But follow one? Worship one? Entrust your deepest treasures to one? Rest in the triumph of one? Can a lamb lead us to victory?

The book of Revelation says so. John's vision pictures the enthroned Jesus, the One who receives the worship of all creation, who presides over the drama and the end of all history, who leads the armies of heaven in vanquishing all evil...John depicts this One this way:

[Revelation 5:6](#)

"and I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders; a Lamb standing...looking as if it had been slain..."

This defies all that we know about our world...the shadowlands. When we look at our world it seems that it's gone mad. Often, it seems that evil gets away with everything. That we are barely holding our own. Our is often out of kilter and balance...honor and decency are under attack constantly...often, It seems that the Lamb...has been conquered...

In 1939, the year Hitler mobilized his armies for war in Europe, a young man by the name of Helmut Thielicke was ordained as a pastor and given his first church in Germany.

He arrived with boldness, believing that Jesus had been given all authority in heaven and on earth. He told himself that Hitler was nothing more than a puppet of the enemy. He called for a Bible-study in that fear ridden town, and three people showed up. Two ancient women, and a man, even older, who played the organ with shaking hands. Huddled together in their little church, they could hear, just outside, the sound of thousands of boots, marching on the pavement. It was Hitler's Youth Corps, flexing their might.

The young minister wrote this in his diary:

"All Power?" Either Jesus' words held a depth of meaning that I cannot grasp, or that His words are hollow. An empty and wreck-less boast.

A lamb masquerading as a lion.

I want you to know that often we resemble Thielicke's bible study group...frail, huddled, startled by the jackboots marching outside. We often look like David when he hid from Saul—he was

promised the kingdom at some undisclosed point in the future, but for now he was a vagabond and a fugitive.

Even the big churches, the mega-church, thriving, great and rich...can hardly be accused as Paul and Silas were in Thessalonica, of turning the world "upside down".

Yet the Bible insists that we are more than conquerors. Yeah, How So?

This is how so. Victory, God-style, almost always looks like a defeat in the making, a catastrophe in the brewing. It has a lamb-like quality about it.

Victory, as defined by God looks a lot like Gideon's story.

Found in [Judges chapter 6](#)

His story is found in the early pages of the book of Judges. Gideon when you first meet him is a timid man, cowering from the Midianites. He is hiding out in the mountains. Gideon is the runt of the lowest clan. He's like a lamb.

But God doesn't see things that way. He calls Gideon "mighty warrior", and direct him to lead an attack against the Midianites.

So Gideon, after some dodging and balking, assembles a rough rabble of farmers and peasants numbering about thirty-two thousand. Not very impressive. Lambs.

The Midianites are skilled and ruthless warriors. They have state-of-the-art weaponry. They have one-hundred and thirty-five thousand fighting men...who love to fight.

God tells Gideon that he has too many men. Too many.

God tells Gideon to send the fearful ones home. Twenty-two thousand leave.

Ten thousand left. Still too many. This time Gideon sifts them out again, this time on the basis of how they drink water. By the time the sorting is done only three hundred remain. Three hundred against one hundred and thirty-five thousand Midianites.

Then God tells Gideon; Oh, by the way...take no weapons. Each man is to go up against the enemy bearing only a torch, a clay jar, and a horn...and the three hundred lambs win. Judges 6-7:25

This is the story of the Cross. All principalities and powers stand against the Lamb. They have the ultimate weapon; and the final solution to victory. Kill Jesus.

Humanity has been bound over to sin and death...long ago in the garden. But there's this one threat: this carpenter who's been preaching, healing, touching lepers, confronting hypocrites, telling stories. Forgiving people of their sins.

And there He stands...not a weapon on Him. His silly little army of washed up fisherman, tax collectors, and a few old ex-whores...a Lamb for the slaughter.

And in a lonely garden, this lamb doesn't even put up a struggle.

Next thing you know there's Jesus...

His body cut and swollen by the whip. **Next thing you know**, the Romans are nailing Him to a cross, flinging Him up mangled against a dark sky.

Like a Lamb to the slaughter.

Next thing you know He's dead. Defeated.

It is finished.

Only, what's finished? Who's finished?

Turn with me to [Colossians 2:14-15](#) (Read)

"Having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the Cross."

The very thing that looked like defeat turned into triumph.

Paul is telling us to imagine a Roman general returning home victorious. He's conquered, triumphed. He parades through the streets in dazzling pageantry, with His defeated enemy bound and staggering behind Him.

The cross was Satan's Trojan horse. He thought it was his weapon to finally defeat God and secure his power. It turned out to be God's weapon to destroy Satan and death.

John tells us in 1John 3:8 this:

"The reason the Son of God appeared, was to destroy the devil's work."

John describes the devil's work as sin's grip on us...it's death grip.

The Cross broke that.

It is finished. And it was accomplished by a Lamb.

So why do we often look and feel defeated?

Why hasn't God conquered, not just the penalty of sin, but also it's grip, and its power?

The best answer that I know is this: Christ still conquers through the Cross.

His victory is still won as a lamb. As He won, so do we.

We take up our cross and follow Him. We enter into God's victory, His once and for all and yet still unfolding victory, through the doorway of our own dying...dying to self, dying to narcissism...dying to the ways of this world.

We rest in God's victory, not through strength of weapons, but through meekness. Not by power, but by surrender. The shape of our triumph is still the cross...it is still lamb-like.

The book of Revelation portrays God's final and utter victory. The final victory is won by a Lamb.

[Chapter 12](#) of Revelation paints a picture of the devil's mayhem. Satan is an enraged devouring dragon, bent on destruction. The church and her saints overcome him by this:

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life, even unto death." [Rev. 12:11](#)

Its three hundred men with clay jars and torches, blowing their horns in the dark, while just beyond, a vast army of destroyers clutch their sword and rise.

God has always triumphed this way. By His blood and the words and deeds of his martyrs, by Gideon's clay jars and torchlight's.

God's triumph often comes disguised. Words. Wounds, blood, clay jars...

Paul knew that. He wrote:

[\(Read Romans 8:31-39\)](#)

Trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, sword...in all of these things, we are more than conquerors.

In all these things...

The triumph comes disguised. Because in the midst of the devil's mayhem, the dragons' rampage, the thunder of an army's boots marching just outside...there's the Cross.

And the Cross does every time what power and might is impotent to do:

It destroys the work of the devil.

Because of the Lamb, the tables have been turned. The violence of all of our pain, shame and fear, that fell upon Jesus at the cross, has been turned.

Because God raised the Lamb from the grave, Jesus has delivered a devastating blow to the kingdom of darkness...

Paul tells us that it is the death of death:

[2 Timothy 1:9-10](#)

"Grace...has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel!"

In the midst of this chaos our Lord declares:

"I am the resurrection and the life," he tells us ([Jn. 11:25](#))

Then He invites us to share in His resurrection power and take upon ourselves His righteousness so that we can stand confidently in the presence of the Father.

[Romans 10:9](#) states:

...if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

Jesus is Lord. With these words the first believers were baptized; and later with these words on their lips many Christians were martyred for their faith.

To this day we arise every morning with this hope in mind.

From the very beginning at the **resurrection**, the followers of the scarred Lamb of God have proclaimed the lordship of the risen Jesus.

I want you to see that Paul is linking the lordship of Jesus with the **resurrection**:

"God raised Him from the dead..."

In rising from the dead Jesus triumphed not only over death, but also over every power that can be named. The **resurrection** of Jesus not only offers hope of life to come, but also changes the course of the world.

The rabbi from Nazareth truly is the risen Lord of the resurrected life.

And that's not all...because of the Lamb, the heavens rejoice...

[In Revelation chapter 5:11-13...](#)

One hundred million angels, since the cross, have seen in God something they had never seen...Gods Lamb sacrificing Himself...for us...

And "Because" of the Lamb they sing...and all creation sings...

[Read Revelation 5:11-13](#)

Read pp. 139 The Holy Wild

Our leader is not dead.

Our leader is the Man who walked out of the grave on Easter morning. Our leader neither sleeps nor slumbers. The Lamb just keeps conquering by the power of the cross.

One day...soon, Christ will return. Not on a donkey, weeping. Not on a cross, dying. But on a stallion, a sword coming from His mouth...conquering as He rides. On that day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord.

Between then and now, though, the dragon rages, the boots march...and evil dances. The victory comes disguised. We are here to witness to the Light. Affecting one heart at a time. Though kingdoms crumble...The Lamb wins...Take courage...The Lamb wins...

You...you rest in this...Jesus is still on the throne...and not one thing...anywhere can separate you from His love...

The Lamb wins...

Selah.