

THE BIG IDEA: We are overcomers because He has overcome.

The Take-Off

This morning we're going to wrap up our series, "This Is Us"

Honestly, we could do this forever because there are always things that we can talk about that define our identity as believers and as a church

But we've got to cut it off at some point, and today is the point

We've covered a lot in this series and sometimes when we make statements about who we are, we immediately feel like we're failing to live up to who we are

That's because we have an enemy who loves to point out all the ways we fall short

Sometimes, he even uses people to point that out. Raise your hand if you've ever heard someone say, "And you call yourself a Christian...?"

We recognize that the message is greater than us and the standard can feel beyond us, and so I want to finish our series by turning to Romans 8 and reminding all of us that we are overcomers

This is such a rich chapter that I hate to not read all of it, but let's read **Romans 8:31-39 (NIV)** and then let's spend some time focused on verse 37.

1. Victory is our destiny

- a. **Romans 8:37** is a rich verse and it's where we find the truth that we are overcomers
- b. "We are more than conquerors"
 - Greek is "hypernikomen"
 - Means to "keep on being conquerors to a greater degree" or to "keep on winning a glorious victory" or to "overwhelmingly conquer"
- c. **Victory is our destiny.** We win, and not by a Hail Mary pass or a last second shot
- d. We overwhelmingly conquer, as in it's not even close
- e. And not because we're all that and a bag of chips - it's all because of Jesus
- f. We're more than conquerors - we are overcomers - "through Him who loved us"
- g. Just as further cement on this truth, here are a few more verses:
 - **1 John 5:4** / note the word "everyone"
 - **1 John 4:4** / we overcome the world
 - **1 Cor. 15:57** / God gives us victory through Christ
 - **2 Cor. 2:14 (NKJV)** / God "always" leads us in triumph
- h. Somebody say ALWAYS!

2. Victory is measured in eternity

- a. If you've lived for any amount of time, you can already see the problem Paul's readers had
- b. How can we say we're always overcoming when it doesn't even seem like we're currently overcoming?
- c. Paul's response? **Romans 8:18** / what's happening currently can't compare to what's happening eternally
- d. **Victory is measured in eternity.**
- e. That's why Paul could list all the things and still say we're overcomers
- f. Nothing we face here can keep us from the victory we'll inherit there
- g. That's an eternal perspective that can keep us living as victors when others live as victims
- h. Acts 12 can help us see how this plays out
 - The highlight of the story is that Peter was released from prison by an angel
 - The one-verse lowlight is **Acts 12:2** / James wasn't released; he was executed
- i. We can see clearly that Peter was an overcomer, but what about James? I'm glad you asked.

3. Victory is experienced in community

- a. Before I answer that very important question, let me read some names that you probably won't recognize: Jordan Hicks, Chris Maragos, Jason Peters, Darren Sproles, Caleb Sturgis. Joe Walker, Carson Wentz
- b. Every one of those men won the Super Bowl without playing in the Super Bowl
- c. All of them were injured at some point during the season and couldn't play in the big game with the Philadelphia Eagles upset the New England Patriots

- d. But they ALL got rings, and that's perhaps the greatest grace in this whole teaching
- e. **Victory is experienced in community.**
- f. Look again with me at **Romans 8:37**. Do you see it? Who is more than a conqueror?
- g. We are. WE are overcomers.
- h. When we grasp this, it changes how we experience the Christian faith
- i. We aren't called to individual victory; we called to body victory
- j. MY casualty can advance OUR victory when I see the part I play in the Kingdom

The Landing

God knows that we don't have what we need to overcome without Him

Looking back over this series we can all find weeks and topics that caused us the sting of falling short

In holiness, in family, in generosity, in being planted, messy, transformed, or brave - truly Romans 3:23 is accurate:
we've all fallen short.

It's so easy to NOT feel like an overcomer, but God gives us what we need to overcome: power, perspective, and people

We are overcomers because He has overcome.

John 16:33 / "Take heart; I have overcome the world!"

Because He has, we will, too.

Let's pray.