

VICTORY

The legend goes like this: engulfed in war with Persia, the people of Athens longed to hear news from the front line. As a weary runner approached the hills of Athens, eager citizens gathered to receive his report.

Dying from exhaustion, the runner fell before a stunned audience, whispering his message. Those words were the last he spoke—the breath that voiced them was the last he ever took.

What news would have been so important that hills and valleys couldn't deter Philippides that day in 490 B.C.? Why would he have worn himself out on the roughly 25-mile road from Marathon to Athens? What message would have been sacred enough, vital enough, and glorious enough to be worth his life? Victory.

Fact? Heavily embroidered history? Two things are certain: The story of Philippides' feat inspired the modern marathon—but his message inspires the soul.

Victory Over Sin

Today a vicious war rages around us which has slaughtered more than all the battles of history combined. But we will never see it covered on CNN.

Paul called it “the good fight”—morally good (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7). In this fight, good and righteousness strive to overcome evil and wickedness. As Christians, we should be in the thick of the good fight. All too often, the battle reports seem bleak, causing many Christians to refuse fighting. They try to be conscientious objectors. Fear locks their trigger fingers.

But hold on—in this war, we have the ultimate weapon—Christ. He embodies the force of a million nuclear bombs, while the devil's army carries Daisy BB guns—without BBs. A lopsided fight to be sure, but it promises a clear and decisive victory for Christians (1 Jn. 4:4). We must ally ourselves with Christ (Matt. 12:30), engage the enemy (1 Tim. 6:12), and Christ will be our strength and victory (Phil. 4:13; Rom. 8:37).

Victory Over Self

But in order to keep Christ as our ally, we must win other victories—daily. These battles are the most difficult we will ever face. They require each of us to look at ourselves in the mirror of His Word (Jas. 1:22-25), then make a judgment about the reflection we see. Does it reflect an image of us striving daily to live like Jesus? Does it reveal us as reprobates, wallowing in sin, reveling in iniquity (2 Cor. 13:5)? Or does it show us floating in the dangerous lukewarm waters of halfhearted effort (Rev. 3:15-16)?

After examination, we must fight our own lusts and desires. James writes, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” (Jas. 1:13-14). Jesus overcame our sin and he will continue to do so if—if we walk in the light (1 Jn. 1:7). We “walk in the light” when we combat the desires of our bodies and seek to do the desire of God (1 Cor. 9:27).

Through Jesus we can win. If we conquer our minds, we can receive His mind (Phil. 2:5). If we defeat our wills, we can take up His Will (Phil. 1:21). If we lose our lives, we can put on His life (Gal. 2:20).

Gaining victory over ourselves is hard, because it requires introspection, honesty, and self discipline—three virtues elusive to the lazy soul. Yet these traits are vital to the heaven-bound.

Victory Over Death

The greatest power that Jesus gives us is the victory over death—resurrection. During this life, our bodies gradually lose the battle of health. Physicists call it the “Law of Increasing Entropy” or the “Second Law of Thermodynamics” (with time, all things tend to move from an ordered state to a disordered state). Paul called it decaying or wasting away: “Though our outward man perish” (2 Cor. 4:16). Solomon called it the evil days (Ecc. 12:1-5). Today we call it growing old.

This earth and its carnal ways pull our bodies to the grave and our souls to hell. But Jesus offers a way out of the devil's

death grip. God first cut the chains of death for Jesus (Acts 2:24). Now through Jesus He offers us the same escape from the permanence of death.

Paul demonstrates his confidence in the Christian's Victory over death:

“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:54-57).

The battle of Marathon, Greece happened nearly 2500 years ago. It was one win, in one war, in one age. Many wars have raged since, with no lasting peace. But the concept of a single man sacrificing his life to spread the word of victory has resonated in peoples' hearts for millennia.

Five hundred years later, Jesus traversed the road to Calvary and sacrificed his life to spread true victory. It is the ultimate triumph, in the ultimate war, for all ages. It inspires the heart—and saves the soul. Victory!

Sam Dilbeck *adapted from Eastside Edifier*

Plan to be here for each day of our

Gospel Meeting

Toney Smith

April 9-13, 2006

Sunday 9:30 am 10:30 am 6:00 pm

Monday – Thursday 7:00 pm

Wednesday Class 10:00 am

BIRTHDAYS

Katy Greer, 03-21; Jodie Wilson, 03-21;
Joel Nelson, 03-24.

ILL

Sunday: Anne Adams. **Wednesday:** Anne, David and Dee Adams. Barry Nebergall was scheduled for surgery for a brain tumor in Arkansas last week. Those battling cancer: Diane Cannon, Kim Clark and Ledgia Campbell. Please remember these in your prayers, as well as: Janice Carter, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

HOME BOUND

Bob Adams is at the Del Mar Gardens, Room 229. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

OUT OF TOWN

The Parish family was in Davenport, IA last week visiting relatives. The Greer's were in the St. Louis area last week. The Scott's were in Missouri Wednesday night.

MOVING

Joe and Karen Brewer will be moving to Houston, TX March 21 due to their employment. There will be a farewell get-together at the Olathe Fire Mountain restaurant this Sunday morning after services. All are invited to attend.

MEETING PREPARATION

Please check the list on the bulletin board and sign up to help in the preparation of our building and grounds for our Spring Gospel Meeting.

AREA EVENTS

Please check the bulletin board for flyers of Gospel Meetings and Youth events taking place in the KC area.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 56; Sunday PM, 46; Wednesday PM, 42.

Those To Serve

March 19, 2006

BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Nemechek

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... George Thomas
SONG LEADER..... Joel Nelson
OPENING PRAYER John Carter
PRESIDE..... Gary Cole
ASSIST..... Joe Brewer
ASSIST..... John James
CLOSING PRAYER..... John Dodson

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER Ken Greer
CLOSING PRAYER..... Jeremy Keifer
LORD'S SUPPER..... Gary Cole

WEDNESDAY 22nd

SONG LEADER..... Ted Thrasher
INVITATION George Thomas

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

Phone: (913) 764-2325

E-mail: olathecoc@sbcglobal.net

CHURCH OF CHRIST

515 WEST PARK

P.O. BOX 482

OLATHE, KANSAS 66051

www.kc-cofc.org/olathe.htm

www.oabs.org/olathe.asp