

## Here For Good

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

- **Acknowledge the source of the victory.**

- Ex 32:18; Dt. 20:4; Jos 10:10; Jdg 12:3, 15:18; 1 Sam 19:5; 2 Sam 8:6, 8:10, 8:14, 19:2, 22:36, 23:10, 12; 2 Ki 5:1, 13:17, 14:10; 1 Ch 11:14, 18:6, 10, 13; Job 12:16; Ps 18:35, 44:3, 6, 7, 60:12, 108:13, 118:15, 129:2, 144:10; Pr 2:7, 11:14, 21:31, 24:6; Mt 12:20; 1Cor 15:54, 55, 57; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; 1 Jn 5:4; 2 Cor 4:18

- **Acquire the life of the victory.**

- **Accept Christ.**

- John 14:6; Acts 2:38; Isaiah 58:11

- **Faith and trust.**

- Hebrew 11:1-2

- **Prayer.**

- Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

- **Obedience and surrender.**

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Matthew 16:24-25

- **Generosity.**

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West Valley Church  
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Michael O'Neill

## Here For Good Final Sunday

In 1962, Phil Knight was a middle-distance runner at the University of Oregon – a school that had become a powerhouse of track and field just a few years before. Knight was driven by a desire to be a success in both the sport and its equipment, so he and his coach, Bill Bowerman, fronted a grand total of \$550 each to begin making track shoes. They developed an innovative design of using rubber poured into a waffle iron to make the soles. By 1965 they were selling shoes out of the back of their station wagon. In 1966 they opened their first store in Santa Monica, California as the Blue Ribbon Sports Company.

By 1968, Knight wanted to update the company's marketing ability. He chose a name that would be synonymous with victory. Victory was the goal of their products for everyone who used them and was also Knight's plan for his business – to be victorious over the world of sports shoes. The name he chose was the Greek word for victory, and it was also the name of the winged Greek goddess of victory: Nike.

Knight then paid a Portland State University graphic arts student by the name of Carolyn Davidson to make a logo that would represent Nike. He paid her \$2 per hour. It took her about 17.5 hours, to create this design. Knight didn't like it at first, asking her, "What else you got?" But he decided to stick with the original design, saying that it might grow on him. So he paid her \$35 for it.



Today Nike is the largest sports and fitness company in the world, grossing over 50 billion dollars annually, and that original swoosh has become one of the most marketed and recognized symbols in the world. Nike has won numerous awards for the advertising campaigns, all celebrating victory and featuring that original \$35 swoosh.

By the way, Carolyn Davidson did eventually get more than \$35 for her design. Davidson got a phone call one day in September 1983, inviting her to have lunch and touch base again with a few of the people she used to work with at Nike, including Knight. When she arrived, much to her surprise, she was greeted with a catered lunch and was presented with a gold ring with a swoosh embedded with a diamond. She also received a certificate from Knight and an envelope containing 500 shares of Nike stock. The stock has split multiple times since then, so Carolyn says, "I can definitely say that I have been well compensated for my design."

My point isn't to give a history lesson on Nike sports marketing, and I certainly don't intend to endorse their culture or their products. I said all of this because, despite how famous Nike has become, there was an original "nike" that is far greater and infinitely more powerful than Phil Knight. You can find it in the following words of Scripture. Would you please honor God's Word and stand with me as I read this passage? Thank you. Remember that the Greek word for "victory" is "nike."

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory (*nike*).”

“Where, O death, is your victory (*nike*)?  
Where, O death, is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory (*nike*) through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:54-58, niv)

Thank you! You can be seated. Jesus Christ is the original founder of true “nike” – true victory. This is what we are going to share about together today as we conclude our three-year generosity effort called “Here For Good.”

Thirteen years ago when I first arrived, I knew there were several crucial things that needed to happen, including getting our church out of debt and renovating the older areas of our great facility. So the first thing we did was refinance our mortgage to a much lower interest rate in order to give us time to work on several higher priority ministry concerns. At that time, even the new parts of our building, which by then were only ten years old at the time, hadn’t had any significant upkeep or maintenance. There were air conditioners and heaters and pipes and conduits and glass and structures and even paint that hadn’t been maintained or updated or replaced. So we created a new position of facility manager to begin that work. We also knew that we needed to create a gathering space for all of us, so we created Chapters Café.

We also knew that we needed to prioritize missions in a new way, so we redefined missions according to Jesus’ statement in Acts 1:8 when he commanded us to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. He was giving a strategy of missions: that we are to introduce people to Jesus in areas that are local, and regional, and global. So we prioritized our mission to our own Jerusalem with Backpack to School, Upward Soccer, Trunk or Treat, Breakfast with Santa, Homework Club – on and on, and then beyond our community to our Jerusalem and Judea with significant financial and volunteer sponsorship in order to restart our Nazarene Church in Wapato as a bilingual church – it was about to close at the time. And then we focused on the ends of the earth – global ministry, with our 5-year partnership with the church in Victoria, Guyana – really, the entire district. We sent over 75 people on 11 trips to build their church and community center and to invest in their village. In October of 2019 we dedicated that new building.

Finally, we were ready and in February of 2020 we launched Here For Good – we could *finally* focus on getting our church out of debt and renovating some key areas of the church.

But to tell that story I have to back up a little bit. In fall of 2018 I had lunch with Alex Robertson. I kind of ambushed him, because, unknown to him, the Leadership Team and I had been praying about him for a quite a while. So finally at lunch I asked Alex if he’d be willing to be the chairperson of a major generosity initiative for West Valley Church. He didn’t even wait to finish lunch before he said he’d do it. So we began planning right away.

The Leadership Team appointed a team to interview different consultants who could lead us through this work. After interviewing three, then praying and talking about it, the Leadership Team hired Generis – a Christian generosity consulting company that helps churches like ours. We began meeting with our consultant, Jennifer Perrow. We built our team and charted out our journey. With a year of planning and praying, *that's* when we began sharing that vision with you in February of 2020. If you remember, we started with a sermon series called “Here For Good.” We spent five Sundays casting that vision, beginning with a sermon titled:

**Here for Christ** – our lives are to be totally devoted to Christ so that we would be willing to do whatever he asks of us. The next Sunday the sermon was titled:

**Here for Each Other** – that as a church, we are committed to the community of God’s people here at West Valley Church, so we must come together and be willing to make generous sacrifices to do whatever it takes to make our church as great as God intends for us to be. The third Sunday we focused on the fact that we are:

**Here for our Community** – that we must make generous sacrifices in order to best reach our community with the love of Christ. The fourth Sunday we were reminded that we are:

**Here for Generosity** – that if we are like Christ, we will be a generous and giving people. God loves and gives generously to us. That should be our nature and character. Then on the final Sunday we talked about how we are:

**Here for Good** – that our vision is to remain on this corner, making a positive difference in our community, introducing people to Jesus Christ. We again cast the vision that God intends for us to be a multi-cultural, multi-generational, multi-site, and mortgage-free church.

You caught that vision, and we all began praying and determining what God was asking us to commit over the next three years (of course, you stepped out in faith because the pandemic started). Our goal was to raise 1.6 million dollars – \$1.1 to eliminate our mortgage, and \$500,000 to do as much renovations as we can. Next Sunday we will announce our grand total of giving toward that goal! We’ve already seen great victories over these last three years, and through God we are going to see many, many more victories. Today we want to learn about victory – what it means and how we will achieve it.

The word for “victory” is used many times in the Old Testament, and several times in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the words most often used for “victory” are the Hebrew words *yashaw* and *mawkah*. They mean “to be made safe,” “to avenge,” “to defend,” “to deliver,” “to help,” “to preserve,” “to rescue,” “to bring salvation’ or “to save,” – to get victory.

What’s interesting is that they also mean to slaughter, smote, or fatally wound. Remember that because it’s going to help our understanding in a minute.

In the New Testament, the Greek word for victory is *nikos* or *nike*. It means a triumph or victory, to bring salvation, or to save. We’ll come back to that, too.

Here’s the thing – *every* time the word or any of its variations are used in connection to

God's people, there is something implicit in it – whenever the word victory is used, it means that we need to...

– ***Acknowledge* the *source* of the victory.**

Whenever the word is used in the Bible for God's people—whether Jews or Christians—victory always, always, always indicates that *the victory has been won by the Lord*. It is *never* our own.

In the Old Testament, the word "victory" is used 35 times. 33 of those times it includes the phrase "from the Lord," or "It is the Lord who gives." There are only two times that the word does not include the Lord. One of those 35 times is when Moses came down from the mountain and heard the people worshipping the golden calf and carrying on in sin. That's when Moses said, "It's not the sound of *victory* or defeat, but of singing." The Lord had nothing to do with their sinful idol worship. The other time the word is used without reference to the Lord is in Proverbs when it says that with many advisors, victory is assured. But even that verse has a built-in implication that the advisors are giving godly counsel and wisdom.

If you look on the app or on our website on the sermons page, you'll see that I've listed the references of the use of the word in case you want to do your own study. But let me just highlight a few of them:

Deuteronomy 20:4 – The Lord goes with you to give you the victory.

Joshua 10:10 – the Lord gave them victory.

Judges 15:18 – You (Lord) have given your servants victory.

1 Samuel 19:5 – The Lord won a victory for all of Israel.

2 Samuel 8:6 – The Lord gave David victory wherever he went.

Job 12:16 – To the Lord belong strength and victory.

Psalms 18:35 – God, You give me your shield of victory.

Psalms 144:10 – the Lord is the One who gives victory to kings.

Proverbs 2:7 – The Lord holds victory in store for the upright.

Who is the source of victory? The Lord. Always.

But I want you to notice something, and this is what I was hinting at earlier: in the Old Testament, the victory that the Lord wins for his people always has to do with God's people getting the victory over their enemies in battle. Victory always has to do with war. And the victory is always a result of the Lord's intervention. Most times that God brought that victory, the people of God were outnumbered, out-strengthened, surrounded, and had much less adequate battle technology than their enemies. God's people were often going up against fortified cities, better shields, better swords, and better weapons.

Now let's look at the times the word victory is used in the New Testament. The word is used in the New Testament five times—once in Matthew, that talks about how Christ's

sacrifice will bring us victory, three times in 1 Corinthians 15 that we read earlier, and once in 1 John which I'll share in a minute. But here's the thing: in the New Testament, the victory is *different* than the Old Testament. Victory no longer has to do with victory on the battlefield against opponents – it's not about winning national wars. In the New Testament, *because of what Christ has done, the victory we win is always against the systems, the spirits, and the sin of this world and its effect on our lives, which is ultimately death.* Because the ultimate battle is against sin and death. The Bible says:

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5, niv)

The victory we have in Christ is always a spiritual victory. So no matter how much you pray for your football team to win, that's not the kind of victory that God assures us. Even on an international front, when we pray about the wars that are going on, we should pray for peoples' safety, we should pray for wars to cease, we should pray for God to accomplish his purposes on a global scale. God does not promise that our side will always win.

But when it comes to our own lives, it is *always* a spiritual victory. Along with that, the victory can often be an emotional or mental victory. Sometimes it is even a physical victory, like when God heals us.

But that isn't always the case, nor is healing in this life always promised. Anyone who tells you that you just have to have enough faith and God will heal you, or that you just have to declare your victory and God will give it to you is a false prophet. You can't find that in Scripture. I don't care if they've been in the church a long time or even if it's a pastor. They are wrong. Do I need to be more clear?

Listen though: even if you don't experience healing the way you want it, you *can* experience victory. You don't need to be defeated. Your faith in God can soar. Even if you don't get healed. Even if you die. Because Jesus has already conquered death – he is already victorious over death! There *is* total healing in eternity; just not here.

Let me give you an example of this. Many of you know that Dave and Cathy Pennington's son, Ryan, is a pastor at a Nazarene Church over in Lewiston. He was diagnosed with cancer and had been undergoing treatment and all the indicators were positive. Last week he had a PetScan, and the results were devastating. He has cancer pretty much everywhere. There is the possibility of another type of chemo treatment, so we're praying it's effective. Ryan is praying that the treatment will at least extend his health long enough for him to spend the summer with his wife and kids – if not more.

Many of us are shocked, saddened, and even angry about this. But Ryan has a powerful response of faith when it feels like we've lost (I am quoting Ryan verbatim):

“But God... these two simple words that have resonated with me continually throughout this journey are ringing true still. Cancer may think it is winning, but God, through His Son Jesus, has already won the victory over sin and death. And I claim this same victory through the salvation that Christ has given me! We don't know how long I have left but the

cancer has spread quickly over the past two months. I continue to share with you the hope that comes from the life that Jesus offers! God has not stopped my call of ministry, counseling, and sharing love and hope to people, so I will not stop until He says enough. We are not giving up because we know that God has not given up on us. We believe that there are still more options on the table. Maybe a clinical trial will show better results! Maybe divine healing for more life in this world will come soon! But ultimately, I do know that divine healing will come, no matter what day it is, when I meet my Savior Jesus face to face. I will no longer have pain in my body, no longer have perverted cells who have gone outside their original design wreaking havoc and doing things they were never designed to do. Instead, I will experience everlasting life! This is the hope that Jesus gives – the free gift of salvation through faith in Him. My story is not done yet and I am trusting that the author and perfecter of my faith, the one who began a good work in me, will be faithful to complete it.”

My friends. THAT is victory. Victory in the face of death. Victory even IN death.

That's the real victory! 1 John says:

“This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”  
(1 John 5:4-5, niv)

Faith is acknowledging that the source of our victory is the Lord—*even if we don't yet see it happening*. It's what allowed Moses to deliver God's people from Egypt and cross the Red Sea. It's what enabled David to step out and take on the champion of the Philistines, Goliath, and win the victory with a sling shot. It's what enabled a rag tag handful of farmers under Gideon's leadership to defeat an army. It's what empowered a small group of ordinary disciples to change the course of history. And it's what gives you the victory in your life, too. Whenever you are facing insurmountable problems. Whenever circumstances are out of your control. Whenever the pain or hurt is unbearable and you feel all alone. Whenever sin seems to have control of your life and you are defeated. Victory comes from the Lord. Even if life seems impossible.

When we talk about the vision God has for this church and this community, it is impossible. Think about it: we live in a world where the generations dislike each other and distrust each other. Generations blame each other for what they perceive to be the failures in our country. In the midst of that, West Valley Church is growing as a multi-generational church, where each generation is valued and respected and contributes. That's counter cultural! As we get better and better at that, the world around us will look on and wonder how we do it. And we'll get to tell them about Jesus!

We live in a country where race is a source of hatred and anger in the news every day. The races are becoming more and more polarized and politicized against each other. One side blames the other for antifa riots and CRT and white anger and white privilege and mass shootings and police shootings and police being shot. We hear every day about race reparations and about the crisis at the border with immigrants and refugees and foreign operatives. Every political party blames it all on the other party. In the midst of that angry, violent vitriol, *West Valley Church will be one church with two languages*. The Bible demands that God's people be united; that we are one church from *every* tribe and nation

and tongue. Listen, when that begins to happen here at West Valley Church, the community around us will look at us as a healthy, loving, unified multicultural church and they will want to know how that happens. And we will be able to tell them that it is only through Jesus Christ!

Just because we can't see all of that happening right now doesn't mean Christ hasn't already won that victory for us. It doesn't mean it won't happen. It just means it will come from Jesus Christ, not us. It is *His* victory! And just like the heroes of the Old Testament, we get to participate in the victory—that's what we are doing as we give to Here For Good, and as we introduce people to Jesus through West Valley Church. But the accomplishment of it will be the Lord's. Even when the opposition seems too strong. Even when we can't see it right in front of us. Jesus will win the victory.

On a balmy October afternoon in 1982, Badger Stadium in Madison, Wisconsin, was packed. More than 60,000 die-hard University of Wisconsin supporters were watching their football team take on the Michigan State Spartans. It soon became obvious that MSU had the better team.

What seemed odd, though, as the score became more lopsided against Wisconsin, was that there were bursts of applause and shouts of joy from the *Wisconsin* fans. How could they cheer when their team was losing? Well, it turned out that seventy miles away the Milwaukee Brewers were beating the St. Louis Cardinals in game three of the 1982 World Series. There was no internet and no cell phones yet.

So large numbers of the fans in the Badger Stadium were listening to portable radios--and responding to something other than their immediate circumstances. Friends – *that's* what the church does!

The Bible encourages about us this:

“We don't focus on the things that can be seen but on the things that can't be seen. The things that can be seen don't last, but the things that can't be seen are eternal.”  
(2 Corinthians 4:18, ceb)

When we do that, we can rejoice even in hardships because we see Christ's larger victory. So how do we...

### - ***Acquire the life*** of victory?

There are important ways that we must participate if we intend to be a part of the victory that Christ has for our lives and for West Valley Church, starting with the need to...

### - ***Accept Christ***.

The Bible is very clear that this victory we are talking about can only come about through Christ. There is no victory without accepting what Christ has done for us on the cross and giving our lives to him. Jesus said:

“I am the Way—yes, and the Truth and the Life. No one can get to the Father except



by means of me.” (John 14:6, tlb)

Jesus clearly stated that in this world we would have trouble and tribulation, but that we should take heart, or be encouraged, because He has overcome the world.” (see John 16:33)

So how do we accept Christ? The Bible says:

“Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38, nlt)

That means that you must admit that you have sinned, and need to be forgiven by God for it, accept that Christ’s death on the cross was payment for the penalty of your sin, and turn away from sin and by the power of the Holy Spirit begin to live completely for him. You must declare with your life what Christ has done for you – through baptism, and with your words and actions. You will introduce people to Jesus both verbally and visually. You cannot expect the victory if you do not belong to Jesus! You can watch others gain it, you can benefit indirectly by it, but it will not be in *your* life.

Then you need...

### - **Faith and trust.**

As we said earlier, victory means recognizing that God is there and that he will provide victory, even if you can’t see it yet. The Bible says that faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. The Bible says:

“The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It’s our handle on what we can’t see.” (Hebrews 11:1-2, tmt)

Faith is a trust in the character of God that He will do what He says He will do, even when it looks like He isn’t doing it. Trust means I’m going to live my life as if the victory *has already* taken place. Because you know what? In heaven, it *has* already taken place. We just don’t see it here yet. So we live as if victory is now, and we keep living that way until our faith becomes sight, as the Bible says (2 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 11:1).

Third, to get this victory requires...

### - **Prayer.**

Prayer is our tool of communication to God. It not only allows us to talk to Him, it aligns us with His character and purposes. It positions us so He can best gain the victory in our lives. In the Old Testament, you see all those heroes of the faith gaining great victory, and they did it by having conversations with God. That’s prayer. When you read that Moses talked to God as a friend, that’s prayer. When you read that David spoke to God and sought direction from God, that’s prayer. When you read that Paul and Silas were talking to God and singing while they were in prison, that’s prayer. We cannot expect to see or gain the victory if we do not pray on a regular basis—daily and even moment by moment. The Bible

says:

“Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns...” “...pray all the time; thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live.” (Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, tmt)

Prayer is the key to living in the life of victory.

Next, it will take...

### - **Obedience and surrender.**

First, if we are going to obey, we must KNOW what the Word, the Bible says, in order to obey it. To know God's Word means that we have to be reading it—on a daily basis. Why? Because:

“Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17, tmt)

That's what the Bible says about itself! That's exactly why David said in the Psalm 119:11,

“I've hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you.” (Psalm 119:11)

Jesus said that we are to obey every word that He has commanded us to do. How can we expect to see victory if we are walking in a different direction than He is?

And that's the second part – surrender. It's going to be difficult to obey God if we haven't surrendered ourselves to him. The true life of victory is a life of surrender. Victory comes when we are sanctified – when we are surrendered and set apart for God alone, so that he can fill us with his Holy Spirit. We are completely and totally God's. Don't think you can do whatever you want, and still get all of God's victory. Jesus was very, very clear about this:

“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.” (Matthew 16:24-25, nlt)

Victory through surrender.

Finally, one of the demonstrations of the surrendered, sanctified, victorious life is that you will live a life of...

### - **Generosity.**

There is *no* time that God accomplished great victory that it did not require some kind of willingness to make a generous sacrifice on the part of God's people. Think of Moses—he sacrificed a life of comfort and wealth. David? He was willing to sacrifice his life for the Lord every time he went to battle. Peter? He sacrificed the family fishing business; he gave up his career and eventually his life when he was crucified upside down for believing in

Jesus. Paul? He sacrificed a privileged position and even his freedom and health for the sake of the Gospel; also being martyred. In fact, eleven of the 12 apostles were martyred. John wasn't martyred but he was exiled. What about Jesus? He sacrificed his throne and his life. If you expect God to bring victory in your life, it will require generosity; it requires sacrifice. That is what we have been calling you to do for three years during **Here For Good** – asking you to sacrifice in order to bring about God's victory in this church and community. Let me tell you this: The greater the sacrifice on our part, the greater the victory.

I'll say that again so you can write it down: The greater the sacrifice, the greater the victory. Count on it. And watch it happen here as we give to this great work. You **MUST** know (hear me) – **Here For Good** has never been about raising money to pay bills. It has been about coming together as God's church in unity, making generous sacrifices and developing a culture of generosity, and seeing God accomplish the victory in us.

If we are doing these things, then we are walking in the life that will allow God to bring about the victory. And the same things hold true as the church.

West Valley Church will see God's victory when we as His people are doing these same things. If we are going to see the fulfillment of the vision, it will take these things as we carry out what we've committed. And what a great victory that is!

*Let's finish strong – would you be willing to make a sacrificial offering today, or this week? Remember our goal has been \$1.6 million, and as of last week we've raised \$1,533,922. We're only \$66,000 short. We've already won the victory, for lots of reasons that I'll share with you next Sunday. But it's not too late for us to get involved, or to make one last push today.*

### *Prayer*

*Next week: the grand total. Plus, we are going to count the many, many victories that God has accomplished over these last three years.*

### *Benediction (Psalm 37:3-6)*

Trust the Lord and do good;  
live in the land, and farm faithfully.  
Enjoy the Lord,  
and he will give what your heart asks.  
Commit your way to the Lord!  
Trust him! He will act  
and will make your righteousness shine like the dawn,  
your justice like high noon.