

Matthew 13:43 What it Means to Overcome

Alright, this morning we are finishing up Matthew 13:24-43. We are taking and focusing on the last verse today. There is a special study just wrapped around that verse in and of itself.

Remember, Matthew chapter 13 consists of The Parables of the Kingdom. Verse 3 tells us that Jesus spoke many things to them in parables. In verse 34 it tells us that Jesus spoke all things to them in parables and without a parable He did not speak to them. There's been a change in the Lord's public ministry where He revealed Himself and He healed people and preached the truth to them about salvation in Himself in Christ. But as He began to experience resistance and rejection He began to speak to the public in parables so that they would not understand.

And you might ask the question, "Then why speak in parables if it's for the purpose of concealing the truth, not revealing the truth?" It's because those who have a heart and have an ear to hear when the Lord calls them out they come to Christ privately. The last half of the Lord's ministry was the Lord ministering to His disciples. He did minister to the general public in part, but never like He did in the first half of his ministry.

So, after presenting the first four parables in verses 1 through 33, the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him for an explanation of The Parable of the Wheat and Tares that He gave in verses 24 through 30. And so, they asked for the explanation, and last week we saw the explanation in verse 37, which is where we pick up today.

When Jesus answered to them, He said, first of all, **The one sowing the seed is the Son of Man.**

Secondly, verse 38, **And the field is the world.**

And thirdly, **And the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom.** So, the wheat coming out of the good seed are people. They are God's people, as we saw last week in I Peter 1:23, that "**We have been born, not of corruptible seed, but of the incorruptible seed, by the living and abiding word of God.**" So, the wheat now, the seed, was planted and the end result of it was God's people.

The fourth thing, **But the darnel (or the tares) they are the sons of the evil one.** So, the wheat and the tares growing together, you have God's people growing together in, with, and at the same time as Satan's people. You remember the parable? The slaves wanted to go out and take out the tares from the wheat, but the owner of the field told them not to go, that they would be separated at judgment because you might hurt the wheat by pulling out the tares because their root systems are so intertwined. If you pull out some of the tares, you might pull out some of the wheat with it. So, the owner's decision was to let them grow together and they'll be separated at the judgment.

Verse 39, the fifth thing, **And the enemy who had sowed them is the devil.** We have the Son of Man sowing the wheat, we have the devil sowing the tares.

Sixthly, **And the harvest is the completion or end of the age.**

And seventhly, **And the reapers** (or the harvesters that are sent out to bring the harvest) **they are angels.**

But then, the Lord, in verse 40, focused on the completion of this age. He mentioned the completion of this age, and the harvesters and the reapers being the angels. He now focuses on verses 40 through 43. **And indeed, therefore the tares (or the darnel) are being gathered and are being consumed in the fire, so it will be in the completion of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather from out of His kingdom all the ones who offending.** An offender, a **σκάνδαλον** (scandalon) in Greek, is somebody who hinders other people from following the right path. A person who offends, is somebody who prevents people from following the truth, and, in fact, leads them in a different direction than the truth. **He gathers from out of His kingdom all the ones offending, and the ones practicing lawlessness.** Those who refuse to be under the rule and law of God. **And they will throw them into the furnace of fire; and there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.** We focused last week on this place where there will be a consuming fire and there'll be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

But then as we get into verse 43, we study about the provisions for God's people. We just studied about the judgment for those who reject Christ, but now we study about the provision for God's people. And there are three things, three provisions, that we want to study this morning in verse 43.

Then the righteous ones will shine out like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The righteous ones will shine with the glory and the magnificence of their Father who is in heaven. This is a quote from Daniel 12:3 about the people of God shining like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. We know from Revelation 21:4 it says when that time comes in that we are in the kingdom of God and we are shining as the sun with our Father, **And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: because the former (or first) things are passed away.** So, there's a kingdom coming. An eternal kingdom of God, which God's people will be, where there will be no more pain, or difficulty, or suffering; and we will shine like the sun as we reflect the very glory of God as we are with Him throughout eternity. So, the first thing we study this morning is our place in eternity; different than the consuming fire of the furnace where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The second provision for this morning that we want to study, is the provision of revelation. We've studied this quite a few times up till now, but I don't think we've studied it like we will this morning. The Lord's provision is revealing the truth to us. Notice what it says in verse 43, at the latter part under the command, **The one having ears to hear, let him hear.** Or more literally the command, **Hear.** So, there's the condition, a previous condition: *the one having* - present participle showing present, permanent, condition. **The one having ears,** and

then there's the command: **hear**. It is not an invitation. The King James says, "let him hear," as if it's an invitation, but it's a command. The Lord is actually commanding that those who have ears to hear that their hearing be activated to be able to hear and understand the things that He's teaching. This is very important, especially for us this morning. The condition *having* is a present permanent condition. That present participle means it is a present permanent condition, *the one having ears to hear*. Then the command, "Hear." That activation, activating their ability to hear and to understand.

It is necessary, absolutely necessary for the Lord to give the ability to hear and understand, because without it a human being cannot understand the things of Christ. And you say, "Well, there seems to be a lot of people that understand." Well, I don't think we understand. That's why we have so many churches with so many different opinions, and so many different beliefs about what the same book means. Because people are taking personal beliefs into the text, what they think it means, and teaching and believing that rather than the actual text itself. And why is that? Because God is not revealing the truth to them. That's why we have so many different churches and so many different opinions about what the Bible says. God's Spirit is not revealing. They have a book. We all have a book. It all has words on the page, but the spiritual meaning of those words takes the revelation of God's Spirit in order to understand.

Paul says in I Corinthians 2:14 that the natural man - the **ψυχικός** (psychikos), that is the Greek word, the psychical man, the person who functions strictly with his psyche, no spiritual life whatsoever but just functioning with the psyche - **The psychical man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they (the things of God) are spiritually discerned.** They are spiritually understood by the Spirit of God. Not by man's opinion. Not by what conclusion we come to from our Bible education. It comes by the Spirit of God. So, we are unable to understand naturally, and we cannot seek it with natural human ability.

Paul says in Romans 11:33, **O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!** You can't go down to the library and check out a bunch of books and try to understand God's ways or understand His judgments. People question God's judgment all the time. Even with this hurricane, where a child asked his parents, "In all of this where is God?" because there is just devastation and destruction everywhere. People don't understand the very judgments, people don't understand the very ways of God. They are past finding out in the natural. And yet people do have their natural, human, logical, reasonable opinion and beliefs about what the Bible says. But most of it is not from the revelation of God's Spirit, because there is a unity.

I can remember the very first Greek class that I ever attended back in 1970 where the instructor got up and said, "If everybody who taught the Bible had the same education and same understanding from that education, that is, in the original languages, we would have no differences." And over 50 years later I come to the same conclusion. Because the people that I talk to, and that I share with - and I share with them on the basis of what I understand and why I understand it - first of all, they don't they don't understand it, and second of all, they have no education in that area whatsoever. Thirdly, they don't have a spirit of revelation, they just joined

a theological system. So, it cannot be understood in the natural and you cannot seek it out with human ability. It takes Christ.

To the crowd the Lord spoke in parables, but in Matthew chapter 13 - same chapter we are in here - verse 11, **Jesus answered to them, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given."** So, it's only to the people who belong to Christ, not to the general public. "It has been given to you to know the mysteries." They are secret. They are mystery unless Christ reveals them.

So, the first provision we see is our place in heaven in eternity. The second thing we see is the provision of God revealing to us His truth according to His faithfulness according to His timing; but we have a third thing.

The third provision this morning, it's coupled with hearing. Something that is compounded and coupled with this command for hearing and with this principle of hearing by way of revelation. The other provision that is coupled with hearing is found in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, we have the Lord's seven messages to the seven churches which are in Asia. At the end of each one of the messages there is an encouragement and a promise and a provision by God's Spirit for everybody who responds to His message of correction.

I'll read the one in Revelation 2:7, the message to the church in Ephesus. A couple of weeks ago we read this. What He had against the church was they left their first love, they put other things in priority, they left their first love. Listen to this, **He that has an ear, let him hear.** There's our phrase that we've studied that is found some 14 times in the Scriptures. **The one having an ear, hear.** See, the command is there. *Having* means a present permanent condition. People who are already having an ear to hear, He commands them to hear. **Hear what the Spirit says to the churches.** Interesting, hear all the messages to all the churches. **To him that overcomes,** here's our second provision in the text, literally, *to the one overcoming*. I hate to be technical, but it puts everything in perspective, if we don't take it in its technical correct form we miss the point. The word *having* and the word *overcoming* are both present participles, denote present permanent condition. He's not issuing a challenge: "*If you should overcome,*" or, "*if you might overcome* there's going to be a blessing for you." No. He's talking to those who already have an ear to hear and to the ones who are already overcoming. **To the one overcoming will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.** So take note of that, of the same grammatical structure between these two words because they are now grouped together in compound presentation, because of the association of overcoming and the association with revelation. It takes the revelation from God's Spirit for a person to see that they are already overcoming if they are in Christ. You catch that?

The reason why I emphasize that is because there's a movement that's been going on for years in all the churches challenging people and trying to motivate people to strive with their human effort to overcome their difficulties. According to Scripture, if you are in Christ and Christ is in you, you have already overcome. It is not a future event. So, just like hearing and understanding the truth from God's Word must come from the Lord, so does overcoming also come from the Lord. Both of them. In Revelation 2:7, **The one hearing and understanding is**

the one who is overcoming all things. Statement of fact. They are both coupled together. They both go hand-in-hand.

So now I want to spend a few moments on overcoming. That's really the basis and focus of the study for this morning. Most people don't realize that overcoming difficulties and hearing revelation from God go hand-in-hand. They're not separated. They go hand-in-hand in Scripture. The basis for the victory for overcoming is that the Lord Himself has already overcome the world. The basis for overcoming is what the Lord has done.

In John 16:33 Jesus said to the disciples before He went to the cross, "**These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you will have affliction.**" You will have affliction. "**But be of courage; I Myself have overcome the world.**" The term *have overcome* is a perfect tense. It's already done. "I myself," Jesus said, "I have overcome the world." So, the basis of my overcoming is not my ability, or my efforts, or even my faith. It is on the basis of the finished work of Christ. Christ overcame the world. Christ defeated Satan at the cross.

Secondly, the beginning of the overcoming, when does it start? When does overcoming my difficulties begin for me? It begins at salvation. In I John 5:4, John says, "**And everyone who has been born of God is overcoming the world.**" Not *should*, not *might*, but *is overcoming the world*. That's just a straight present tense verb that means presently and continuously. **The one who has been born of God is overcoming the world: and this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith.** As soon as we put our faith in Christ, we have been born of God and we are overcoming the world. It doesn't seem like it, does it? It's because we don't understand what overcoming is.

So, we have had The Basis for our Overcoming is the finished work of Christ. He has overcome the world. The Beginning of our Overcoming is at salvation. Once we put our faith in Christ and Christ comes to live within, we are overcoming the world. But then there's the basics, the third thing is The Basics of Overcoming.

The believer overcomes even the spirit of antichrist and even the devil himself. In I John 4:4 John says, "**You yourselves are of God, little children, and you have overcome the spirit of antichrist.**" Notice the perfect tense, *you have overcome*. Not *you should*, or *you will*, or *you might*; but it is already done. Here's a reason why. Here's the basic, "**Because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.**" The One Himself who overcame the world and overcame Satan now lives inside of you, therefore everywhere you go and everything you do you overcome, and you have overcome because you have Christ in you. He's the overcomer.

In I John 2:13, John addressing the people to whom he is writing, he says, "**I write to you, fathers, because you have known the one who is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.**" Again, a perfect tense: *You have already overcome him*. "**I write unto you, little children, because you have known the Father.**" So, it is interesting, he is writing to the young men because at a point in time that they receive Christ they became overcomers and they have overcome the evil one.

So, here is what it means to overcome. We've got the facts. The Basis for our Overcoming and our victory over the world and Satan is Christ Himself. It begins at salvation when Christ comes to live within. And the Basic is that everything comes up against me, and all the difficulties that I experience, I do it with Christ living inside of me. He has already overcome this. But again, in our minds and in our understanding, there is still a problem. Because I don't see myself overcoming. I see the difficulties overcoming me. I see the hardships overcoming me. I hear other Christians approaching me and telling me, "You need to claim the promises in order to overcome." But the Bible tells me I have already overcome. How do we explain the conflict? What it means to overcome. First of all, what it does not mean.

Overcoming is not according to how I handle things in the weakness of my human ability. How my flesh, how my human weakness responds to things, that is not the judge and the evaluation of overcoming.

Secondly, no matter what I am currently going through, my spiritual relationship to Christ and my position in Christ never changes. Never changes. There's the victory. See, no matter what happens today, we talked about a hurricane earlier, I'm not picking on them, I am just using that as an example. If there's a hurricane that swept through here today and should devastate and destroy all the physical material things around us, even if I should become injured in my human, in my human body and in my flesh, my relationship to Christ and my position in Christ is still the same. It hasn't changed. Spiritually, it's all the same. Physically things have changed. No matter what I've gone through in the past, coming out the other side, the end result, my position in Christ and my relationship to Christ is the same. It never changed. Emotionally I might have changed. Psychologically I might have changed. Physically I might have changed because of the difficulties of the circumstances, but Christ never changes. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. He has already overcome the world. So then, we say, "So, if He has already overcome the world and He lives in me, then why am I experiencing these difficulties?" Those are physical. Those are of the flesh. Those are circumstantial. They are not spiritual.

You see, Satan's attack against me is to get me to evaluate and understand my life from the human, not from the spiritual. If he can get me into the human and into the flesh and I evaluate my Christian life based on my human performance, then he can rattle my cage. You and I have all experienced it. How we've gone through times where we felt like we were failures as Christians because after all, look at our performance. It is not based on our performance. It is based on the faithfulness of Christ. It is based on who He is. It is based on what He has done. And it is based on what He is doing now. My flesh might be totally thrashed from the difficulties of my circumstances. Emotionally and psychologically I can be totally wiggled out. But my position in Christ and my relationship to Christ has never changed.

So, the problem that we have is not with the truth and the fact of Scripture. The problem we have is that we judge our performance by how we handle situations by our human abilities and effort. We think God has put us into a position of testing us, as to how we are going to perform, and that's not true. It is totally false. Sometimes we do well through circumstances and sometimes we don't, in the human. But Christ always is the victor. He is always causing us to overcome. Many evaluate themselves in the human by how strong or how weak they were

through the circumstances. How many times I've heard people say, and even I myself have said, "Boy, I was pretty weak through that. I wasn't as strong as I should be." I'm evaluating by my human condition, not the Spirit of Christ. My flesh will be weak. I will be weak. Many evaluate their outcome of their situation by whether they have come out of it successfully, or with failure. Again, human evaluation of what success and failure is.

So, the victory in overcoming our difficulties is in the fact that the Lord takes us through every situation and we are overcomers because Christ overcomes through us. In other words, no matter what I went through last week, or what I went through last year, as I stand before you this morning, spiritually my relationship with Christ has not changed. He hasn't gone anywhere. He hasn't abandoned me. There isn't anything that I have gone through, as difficult in the human as it might be, there isn't anything that is taking me away from Christ, or Christ away from me. Nothing has stopped Him from being faithful to keep my relationship with Him intact. Even though I slip into the human, and I evaluate things that way.

Listen to what the word of God says from Matthew 24:13, **But he that endures unto the end, the same shall be saved.** I've heard this one mistaught many times. **The one who has endured to the end this one shall be saved.** Literally, it is an aorist participle, *the one that has endured to the end, this is the saved one.* You see, one of the characteristics, in fact, the main characteristic that proves that I'm saved is that Christ takes me all the way to the end. I never stop. I might want to quit. In the human I might fail, but He never fails me, and He takes me through it. Everybody who reaches everything to the end are saved people because Christ is the one that took them through. You cannot quit because Christ will not quit, no matter how much we fail.

Also, in Philippians 1:6, **Being confident,** Paul says, literally, ***being persuaded of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.*** If you've been born of the Spirit of Christ, and Christ lives inside of you, the promise is the Lord will carry out that work all the way to the end. He will not stop. He will not fail. And even though I am kind of hanging out on the clothesline. My mother used to wash clothes differently than they do today, and then hang the clothes out on the clothesline in the back. I used to watch the clothes flopping around in the wind. I've thought many times, in the human, that's the way I am a lot of times, in the things that I have to go through. But the clothesline holds it steady. The clothes flop around but they're going to dry, and they'll be there to come out and get them. So, those who belong to Christ have already spiritually overcome all things. Everything. Because the Scripture says, "Nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ." Romans chapter 8. Nothing. Death, life, difficulty, affliction, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

In Hebrews chapter 13, it is recorded that Jesus said, **"I will never leave you and I will never forsake you."** There's a double negative with the word *leave*: *I will never leave you.* That is, and the word *leave* means *leave if we tell Him to.* "I will never leave you. You can tell Me to leave, but I will never leave." And the second part of that verse is, **"And I will never ever (triple negative) I will never ever forsake you.** I will not leave you because I make a decision to leave and I will not leave you if you tell Me to leave. I'm here permanently. That's His faithfulness because He knows our weakness. He knows that we just want to give up

because we are failures, because we are constantly evaluating our Christianity, and constantly evaluating our walk with the Lord based on our human performance and how we in the human handle things. Instead of spiritually.

See now, let's put this together. People do not understand what it means to overcome as a Christian, because it has not been revealed to them. You see how they go hand-in-hand? The person who has an ear to hear, the command is to hear. Have that hearing and have that understanding of what it means to be an overcomer. There people today that don't understand what it means to overcome. They think it's human. It is evaluated by human accomplishments, but that's because God's Spirit hasn't revealed it to them. They have to have spiritual understanding. And all spiritual understanding is going to focus back on Christ. Christ is the one who reveals His truth to us. We can't do it on our own abilities and do it on our own. Christ is the one who has overcome and who lives in me and overcomes through me. I cannot overcome on my own. Christ is the overcomer.

So, hopefully, this is an encouragement to you this morning, because I know that people struggle with their Christianity as to how I'm performing. I'm already told that my flesh is weak. My flesh has no spirituality to it at all. I cannot perform according to what God wants me to. I have to depend totally on Christ. And in the midst of my human weakness, He's always there. He always takes us through. It might not seem like it, it might not feel like it, but in the midst of it all, and after it's all over our relationship with Christ and our position in Christ is the same. It hasn't changed because He has not changed.

Let's close with prayer.