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Expositional Message.

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"NOT SOMEHOW BUT TRIUMPHANTLY"

Scripture Reading – Romans 8:31-39

Introduction

In this eighth chapter of Romans Paul has set before us what Skevington Wood calls "life by the Spirit." Paul establishes the foundation for the boundless possibilities of life lived in the Spirit. It is his emphasis on the place and work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian which makes this chapter distinct from the rest of Romans. Skevington Wood calls it the Pentecost of Romans. The Spirit is mentioned no less than nineteen times in the space of thirty nine verses. It is clear that Paul is concerned about the place of the Holy Spirit in the lives of children of God. The idea of the Spirit and His work is expanded and developed by Paul in this chapter. He carefully defines the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Child of God. When he comes to the summit or the climax of what the Holy Spirit accomplishes in the life of the Christian in verse thirty seven, he seems to be unable contain himself any longer for his conviction and concern overflow through his pen like a flooded river that bursts through its banks, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." The message

is clear that what the Spirit accomplishes is not accomplished hesitantly but convincingly, not restrictively but overwhelmingly “not somehow but triumphantly.” This is life in and by the Spirit!

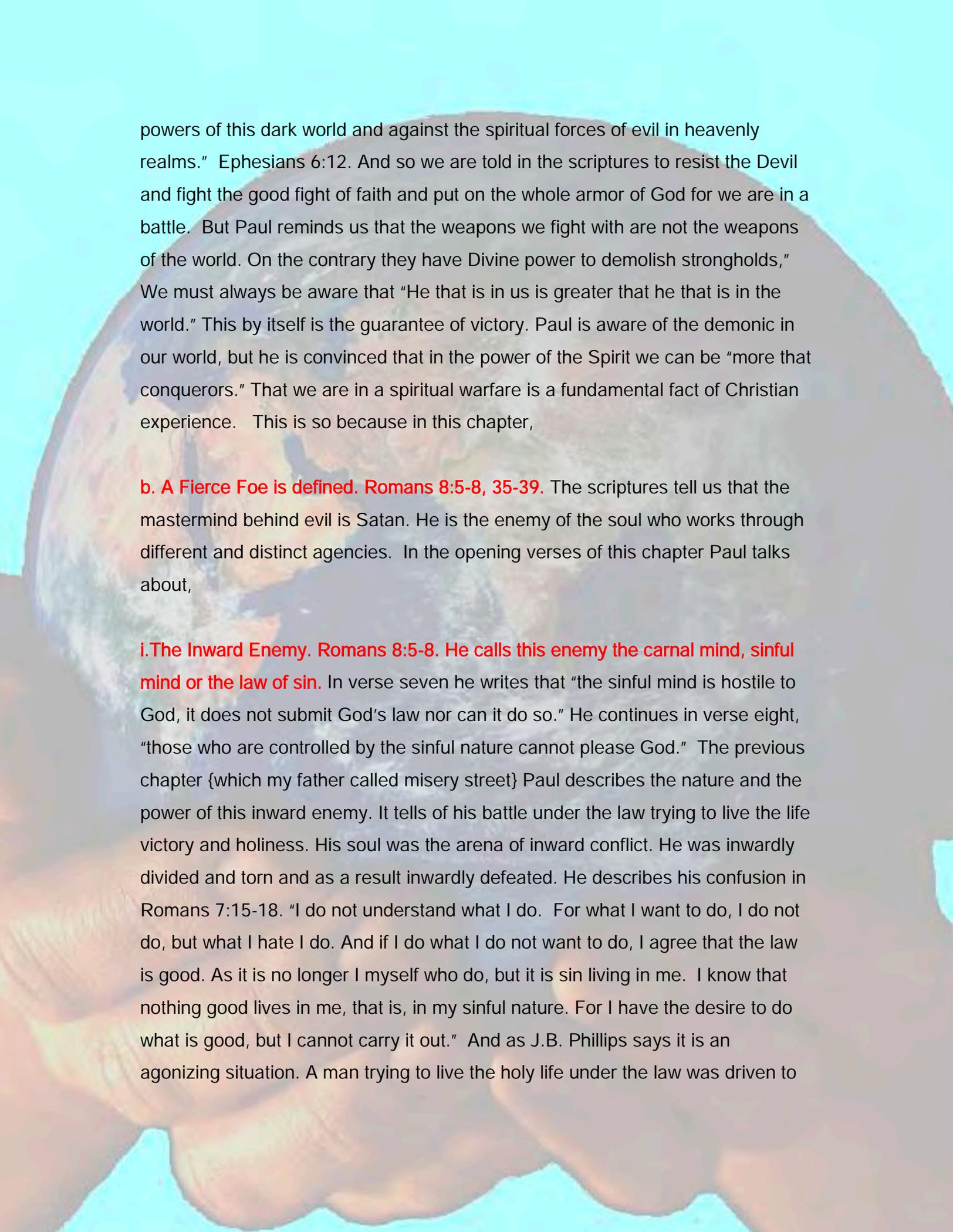
And so this victory, about which Paul is so certain, can be traced to the work and operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life. Indeed you cannot divorce the two. The one is the consequence of the other. To be filled with the Spirit and be defeated is a contradiction. The life pulse of this victory is the Holy Spirit. The possibility of this victory lies on the power of God. We are driven back to what Paul had already declared in the first chapter of this letter v. 16-17 that the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a gospel of which he is proud, is because **“it is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes** For in this gospel, righteousness from God is revealed that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written “the righteous will by faith.” It is not surprising then, that Paul who has this high view of the gospel would declare with confidence in its promise and potential that in “all things you are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” This high view is expounded in Romans eight, for he sets before us the great possibilities, incalculable privileges and the irresistible power embodied in the Gospel. The secret of it all lies in the Presence of the Spirit, for the Spirit’s Presence is the Divine power in the working out of Grace in our lives. This chapter is a clear description of what it means to live in the Spirit. In the opening verse Paul announces that there is “no condemnation.” There is “no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus who walk after the Spirit.” And he concludes the chapter with the words “no separation.” For he said, “nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Two great truths of the Gospel message are underlined here. **No separation is the consequence of no condemnation.** It is the result of what the Spirit of God can do for us and in us.. Romans eight, then, is a portrayal of life lived by the Spirit. What Paul is making clear, is that this victorious life has been provided by God through the power of the Cross and is applied to our lives by a personal surrender and an implicit obedience to the Spirit. The victory of the cross can be



our victory through the Holy Spirit. We can be “more than conquerors **through Him who loved us.**” I do not need to go to human antidotes to solve my problem of spiritual defeat. I need to go to the Cross of Christ. I need to appropriate the power of the Cross. I need to allow the Spirit to apply the overwhelming victory Jesus won on the cross to my life. The Spirit’s control assures our victory. What is Paul saying about this victory? It is important to see that he highlights,

1. THE SPHERE IN WHICH THIS VICTORY OPERATES. Romans 8:37. What is the dimension in which this victory works? Does it operate in some things and not in others? Is it limited to certain special personalities? Is it only for special occasions? Paul incisively wrote “In all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” The operative words “all things.” From this statement,

a. Fundamental Fact is disclosed. Romans 8:37. The word conqueror implies that the Christian is at war in our world. This is a non-debatable point. Jesus Himself said in Matthew 16:18. “I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” The metaphorical language used here is that the church is in a battle with forces of evil, but it is guaranteed victory in this battle. The church will overcome the forces of Hades. The word defeat is never entertained in vocabulary of God. The Cross and an empty tomb is a testimony to this. The Christian is in a constant battle with demonic forces, and will continue to be so until the moment of death. The New Testament is replete with statements concerning warfare. Paul you may recall encourages young Timothy in the fight against evil. In the paraphrase of J.B. Phillips he writes “Timothy my son, I give you the following charge (and may I say before I give it to you, that it is in full accord with those prophecies made at your ordination which sent you out to battle for the right, armed only with your faith and clear conscience(1 Timothy 6:12). And Paul writing to the Ephesian church clearly says, “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers against the authorities, against the



powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms." Ephesians 6:12. And so we are told in the scriptures to resist the Devil and fight the good fight of faith and put on the whole armor of God for we are in a battle. But Paul reminds us that the weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary they have Divine power to demolish strongholds," We must always be aware that "He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world." This by itself is the guarantee of victory. Paul is aware of the demonic in our world, but he is convinced that in the power of the Spirit we can be "more than conquerors." That we are in a spiritual warfare is a fundamental fact of Christian experience. This is so because in this chapter,

b. A Fierce Foe is defined. Romans 8:5-8, 35-39. The scriptures tell us that the mastermind behind evil is Satan. He is the enemy of the soul who works through different and distinct agencies. In the opening verses of this chapter Paul talks about,

i. The Inward Enemy. Romans 8:5-8. He calls this enemy the carnal mind, sinful mind or the law of sin. In verse seven he writes that "the sinful mind is hostile to God, it does not submit God's law nor can it do so." He continues in verse eight, "those who are controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God." The previous chapter {which my father called misery street} Paul describes the nature and the power of this inward enemy. It tells of his battle under the law trying to live the life victory and holiness. His soul was the arena of inward conflict. He was inwardly divided and torn and as a result inwardly defeated. He describes his confusion in Romans 7:15-18. "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is no longer I myself who do, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." And as J.B. Phillips says it is an agonizing situation. A man trying to live the holy life under the law was driven to

the point of despair. And he eventually cries out in agony in chapter seven verse twenty four, "What a wretched man I am, who will deliver me from this body of death, which is my sinful nature." Paul's cry of despair was an indication of Paul's extremity. He came to the end of himself. But his state of wretchedness was a first necessary step to receiving inward deliverance from sin's bondage. His desperate plight opened the door for God to "break the power of cancelled sin and set the prisoner free"(Charles Wesley). His desperate question is resolved when he cries "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 7:25. He rejoiced in the liberating, emancipating power of the Cross. It is Lord Jesus Christ who brings deliverance from inward sin. Two verses later in Romans 8:2 he writes, "Through Christ Jesus the law of the **Spirit of life set me free** from the law of sin." He amplifies this truth in Colossians 2:10. "In Christ you were also circumcised, **in putting off of the sinful nature**, not with the circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ." The key words are "Put off the sinful nature." **"It is by the spiritual circumcision done by Christ that the sinful nature is put off, says Paul . "He who the Son sets free, is free indeed."** We cannot be rid of the sinful nature by the hands of men, but by the circumcision done by Christ." **In this act of** circumcision (basically circumcision means to cut) he does not say that circumcision of Christ suppresses, modifies or counteracts the sinful nature. It does not say that it lies dormant but he does say that it is put off or cut away. Should we be surprised that he asserts with confidence and conviction that we can live the life of the "more than conqueror?" The life of the "more than conqueror" is possible because of the power of God to deliver us from the inward presence and power of sin. Now Paul moves on to declare that we can also be more than conqueror over the,

ii. The Outward Enemies. Romans 8:35-39. While we can be free from the inward enemy, there will be no freedom from the outward enemy until we reach the gates of heaven. These outward enemies reveal themselves in various forms.

Paul writes "In all these things we are more than conquerors." What are these things about which Paul is speaking? In verse twenty five we read "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword." As it is written for your sake we face death all the day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." This is not a comfortable lifestyle but it is in "all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." And then Paul moves on to add to this list as though he wanted to make sure that he covered all the bases. "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels, nor demons, neither the present or the future, nor any other powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is Christ Jesus our Lord." Paul recites this array of difficulty with which the Christian has to wrestle. They are adversaries which touch us physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. In other words these are forces which attack the total man. Every conceivable enemy is listed by Paul in these verses. And says none of them can separate us from the love of Christ and in all of them we can be "more than conquerors through Him who loved us." One has pointed out that Paul covers the limitless range of difficulties. He outlines the most extreme change of our condition on this earth (life and death). He touches on the most powerful orders of the universe (angels and demons) and moves on to mention the dimensions of time. What does he say? (neither the present and the future) then he goes on to highlight everything that is involved in space (He talks about height and depth) and last of all he underlines, anything and everything to be found in creation." The message is that the victory of the Cross and the triumph of Christ's love and the working of the Holy Spirit are more than sufficient to overcome them all and keep us in the love of Christ, all no matter who or what they are or do. Paul is unshaken by all of these forces; he makes clear that this is the arena in which this victory operates. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." The question is you living there? God did not send His Son to pay the supreme sacrifice on the Cross for mediocrity in Christian experience. He

has provided for a full salvation and the life of the "more than conqueror." Notice to

2. THE SCOPE THAT THIS VICTORY ENCOMPASSES. Romans 8:37.

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

Paul's exciting conviction is contagious. It so gripped him that it should grips us. He was exuberant and why would he not be? He had wandered in the valley of defeat as described in Romans seven, which eventually drove him to the point of despair where he cried out for freedom from sin, and he suddenly discovers that it is possible for it is the crucified Christ who brings deliverance and victory in all things. Why would he not be excited? Why should he not rejoice? If the gospel is the power of God, there lies within it unlimited potential. What great possibilities are promised in and through the power of the Cross. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

Now of what is Paul so sure? Firstly he is convinced of,

a. The Certainty of this Victory. Romans 3:37 "In all these things WE ARE more than conquerors. The question arises "is Paul being carried away by his emotions?" Maybe he is sincere but he is misguided or even self-deceived. "Can we know and experience the life of the more than conqueror?" Reginald Wallis asks this question, "Is constant victory really possible for every believer?" Should a Christian expect and experience constant triumph every day and all day over sin and self?" Is the victorious life really practicable; is it a pet theme for extremists or fanatics, or is there a sane Biblical experience of practical triumph within the reach of every believer irrespective of temperament, circumstances, environment or changing times and conditions?" Is it some great ideal to which we must ever seek to aspire in the vague hope that after years of experience or service, we may perhaps approximate to such a standard or such a level? Does the Word promise a life of spiritual achievement and conquest to the simplest and weakest believer, or has it reserved such a priceless blessing as this for only

a few of His favorites? Coming through the New Testament is the fundamental truth that this victory does not depend on **how weak we are, but how mighty Christ is**. We do not judge the possibility of victorious living from human deficiencies but from the God's ability. It is in weakness that Christ strength is made perfect. In his letter to the church at Corinth Paul rejoices in his infirmities in order that the power of Christ may rest upon Him. The scriptures do not give any indication that there is reason for defeated living. If we fail it is not because God's power is unavailable; it is because we have relied on our own efforts. Defeat is a result of not appropriating the power of Christ to our lives. Paul believes and declares that this victory can be ours no matter who we are or on what stage of our Christian journey we are on. "We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. He believes in the certainty of victory. "Not somehow but triumphantly." He also emphasizes,

b. The Quality of this Victory. Romans 8:37. Paul says "We are more than conquerors." The operative words that describe the quality of this victory are "More than conquerors." Early in this chapter Paul writes in verse 5. "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires....." And in verse six he reminds us that "the sinful mind is death and defeat, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace." Victory is a result of the Sovereign rule of the Spirit in our hearts and minds. This is the "more than conqueror" experience. The victory of God provided through His Son is overwhelming, but it indicates that God does not work in the realms of mediocrity. The work of God accomplished through His Son on the cross is complete. So much spiritual mediocrity, defeat, spiritual paralysis and superficiality in the modern church, throws a shadow on the Cross and casts doubt on the power of Christ. When Jesus won the victory on the Cross of Calvary it was no small event or achievement. It was a resounding victory of astounding magnitude, and it was for us that He won it. God has not delivered us from the power of darkness to live in the frustration of defeat. He did not **"break the power of cancelled sin"** for us to

limp along in life as spiritual cripples. God always deals and expresses Himself in superlatives. He does this to describe the possibilities of grace and the potential that lies in the life of the Spirit. These gems of the gospel declare that the provision of Divine grace, limitless mercy, abundant life, the power of the Spirit and His unconditional love for us are **not just adequate but abundant! Not simply satisfactory but overflowing. Not just enough but fullness! We are not just conquerors but "more than conquerors.** They are truths which do not fit the limits of common language. They are expressed in superlatives by the Word of God, but one immediately senses that even that is not enough. Language cannot adequately describe what God has prepared and provided for us in the Gospel. It does not always fit into our vocabulary. These superlatives, however, attempt to convey and describe the work and action of God in Christ at the Cross. We must accept them by faith. Paul said we are to be, not simply conquerors, but "more than conquerors." One translation has it "**conquerors and more than that.**" This is not an embellishment of what God can do for us. When God acts, provides for and supplies His love, His grace and His power it is simply more than sufficient. Jesus said "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly." Paul writes in Ephesians 3:20 that God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power at work in us." We are "more than conqueror or as the Greek has it "super conquerors." **Notice the phrases "more abundantly!" "Exceedingly abundantly!" "Above all!"** This is the language of Divine power. It is beyond our full understanding. But to experience it does not need our full understanding. To know the power of His victorious presence comes by faith in the atoning work of Christ. **Through Him "we are more than conquerors."** And so Paul, without apology, highlights the quality of this victory. This is the scope which this victory encompasses. Paul also brings to our attention,

3. THE SECRET ON WHICH THIS VICTORY RESTS. Romans 8:1-39, or the secret on which this victory is dependent. Note The key words are "through Him

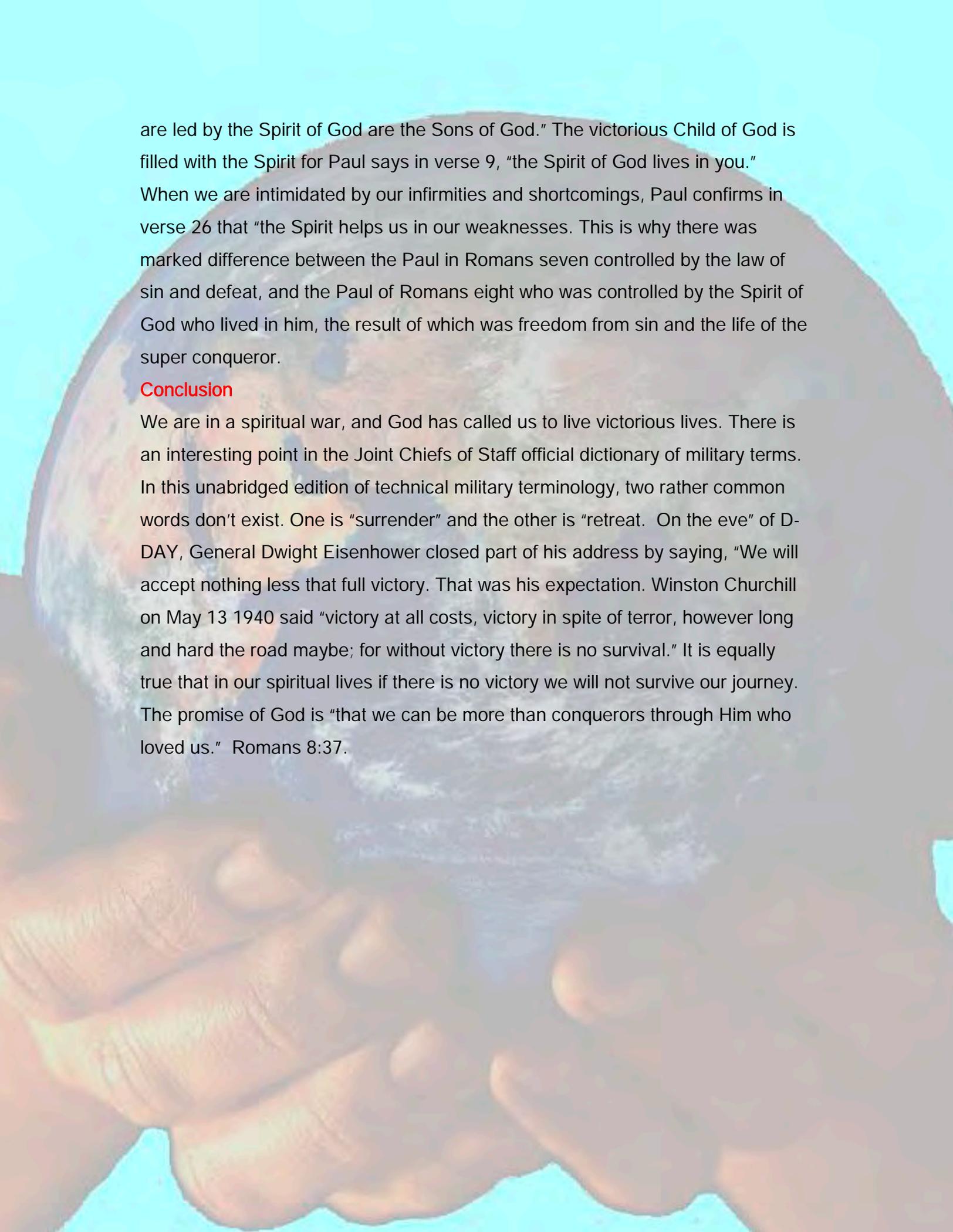
who loved us." This is a direct reference to the death of Jesus on the cross. It defines

a. God's Response to defeat brought on by sin. Romans 8:37. "We are more than conqueror through Him who loved us. It is a phrase which points directly to the love of God in Christ on the Cross." **"WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH HIM WHO LOVED US."** The response of God's love was to defeat and destroy the works of the Devil. The cross which was the symbol of defeat became God's mighty instrument of victory. It was on the Cross that Jesus overcame and routed the awesome powers of the demonic world and the suffocating invasion of the forces of darkness. The forces of malignant darkness lost the battle of the ages and out of it all marched the victorious invincible Son of God. The life of the more than conqueror is the fruit of Christ's death on the Cross which was sealed and approved by God.. Paul asks "if God be for us who can be against us?" This really is not so much a question, as a statement of fact, which reads "since God be for us who can be against us! The lists of those forces are seeking to defeat and ultimately destroy us are formidable, daunting or intimidating. To overcome them seems impossible and so Paul writes, "But", which is a better word than "No" **"but** in all of these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." It is true he is saying that these enemies are formidable and intimidating and they surround us to threaten us and even defeat and destroy us, **"BUT"** even in the face of their malignant powers we can live "not somehow but triumphantly" through Him who loved us." The secret lies in the provision of God at Calvary. The victory on which this provision finds its resources, is the triumphant dynamic love of God revealed on a Cross. The message of the Cross said Paul, is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are saved it is the power of God. Stanley Jones wrote that, "the Cross was sin, He turned into it redemption from sin; The Cross was hate, and He turned it into a revelation of His love; the Cross was man at His worst, and Jesus through it showed God at His redemptive best. The Cross was defeat and Jesus

transformed it into victory." This was God's response to the defeat resulting from paralyzing grip of sin. Herein lies the secret of living the life of the more than conqueror. There is another dimension to this victorious life and it is,

b. The Human Response and relationship to the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:1-11, 26. The relationship of the Child of God to the Holy Spirit of God is the theme of this eighth chapter of Romans.

It describes life by the Spirit. Paul sees that the victorious life is impossible without the presence of Holy Spirit in the life of the Child of God. The Holy Spirit's abiding presence is tied in with the life of the more than conqueror. Up to Romans chapter eight the Spirit is only mentioned three times, but in chapter 8, He is referred to no less than nineteen times. In Romans seven Paul lived under the Law of sin. He was driven by it and in bondage to it. But in Romans eight he discovered and described what it means to live under the Law or rule of the Holy Spirit. He makes clear that now the Holy Spirit was Sovereign in his life. He had moved from the misery of Romans seven where walked in the valleys of defeat to the glory of Romans eight where he rejoiced in the dimensions of victorious living and walked on the plains of triumphant rejoicing. Living life by the Spirit made the difference. This is the foundation for exalting in the life of the more than conqueror. What he tells us in chapter eight is that life by the Spirit is enjoyed by those who have responded in a continuing relationship Him. They are those he says who have been justified or forgiven and who are free from condemnation of God. In verse one we read there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. They are those who have been freed from the Law of sin and death. Paul confirms this in verse two where we read that the "Law of the Spirit of Life set me free from the Law of sin and death." The victorious Christian has completely surrendered and chosen to be ruled by the Spirit of God. Verse 9 makes this clear "You are controlled by the Spirit of God who lives in you." And this control is sustained by a daily obedience to the Spirit. In verse five he says "they live in accordance with the Spirit." And being obedient to the Spirit they are led by the Spirit. Verse 14 confirms that "those who



are led by the Spirit of God are the Sons of God." The victorious Child of God is filled with the Spirit for Paul says in verse 9, "the Spirit of God lives in you." When we are intimidated by our infirmities and shortcomings, Paul confirms in verse 26 that "the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. This is why there was marked difference between the Paul in Romans seven controlled by the law of sin and defeat, and the Paul of Romans eight who was controlled by the Spirit of God who lived in him, the result of which was freedom from sin and the life of the super conqueror.

Conclusion

We are in a spiritual war, and God has called us to live victorious lives. There is an interesting point in the Joint Chiefs of Staff official dictionary of military terms. In this unabridged edition of technical military terminology, two rather common words don't exist. One is "surrender" and the other is "retreat. On the eve" of D-DAY, General Dwight Eisenhower closed part of his address by saying, "We will accept nothing less than full victory. That was his expectation. Winston Churchill on May 13 1940 said "victory at all costs, victory in spite of terror, however long and hard the road maybe; for without victory there is no survival." It is equally true that in our spiritual lives if there is no victory we will not survive our journey. The promise of God is "that we can be more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Romans 8:37.