

Victim Or Victor?

Joe Slater

Crime victims want justice. We should understand. They don't always get it. That's a sad reality. People in this sinful world seldom behave fairly, especially in matters that don't rise to the level of criminality. Even God's own people sometimes fail to treat each other equitably.

How should you handle unfair treatment? Some play up their status as a victim, wallowing in self-pity and feeding on the sympathy of any who will listen to their tale of woe. Others seek revenge despite the fact that vengeance belongs to God (Romans 12:19).

Joseph chose a different approach, that of a victor. Victimized by his envious brothers, then by Potiphar's designing wife, and once more by the Pharaoh's forgetful chief butler, Joseph maintained confidence in God and made the best of his less-than-ideal situation. We find not the first hint of self-pity or personal vengeance in him. Long before Peter wrote 1 Peter 5:6, Joseph embodied what the apostle said: *"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."*

Who has been victimized more than Jesus? The Sanhedrin, the Roman authorities, and even one of His chosen disciples made Jesus the victim of all victims! Yet He gained the ultimate victory in spite of everything. Far from seeking vengeance, Jesus prayed for the very ones murdering Him and *"committed Himself to Him who judges righteously"* (Luke 23:34; 1 Peter 2:23).

Choose to be a victor, not a victim!

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Stop making what people do TO you bigger than what Jesus did FOR you!

Looking Upward

"But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ" (Philippians 3:7).

As a college English instructor, I periodically use handouts with numerous essay topics which offer the student a choice of subjects to address. On one occasion, a student submitted an essay on this subject: "Your life has taken a downturn, and you now reside in a homeless shelter. Discuss three ways you would go about getting back on your feet." This student's essay was borderline magnificent. When I praised the student for the good work, she said, "This is what I did."

Talk about straight from the heart! I was amazed! She had lived it! I've thought back on this encounter more than once. Here was an individual who had defied incredible odds to regain her life, to find work, and to seek higher education. She knew the meaning of rock bottom and decided to look up. I greatly appreciated her efforts and admire anyone who strives to improve his or her life. At last report, she was working as a restaurant manager while attending school.

Life offers many choices. Some pursue greatness; others find contentment with mediocrity or anonymity. From an earthly standpoint, Paul had achieved higher education, power, and high social status (Philippians 3:4-7). Yet, he abandoned it and counted it loss (v. 7) to serve Lord Jesus. I applaud anyone who desires to "rise up" in life, but greater accolades go to those who heed the *"upward call of God in Christ Jesus"* (v. 13).

Only through serving Jesus can we avoid an eternal rock-bottom.

--Kenny Westmoreland (Celina, TN)

Rock Bottom can be a good foundation from which to build and grow.

Preaching Jesus

Preaching should always center on Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:1-3). However, "preaching Jesus" is more than talking **about** Jesus. When Philip "preached Jesus" to the Ethiopian treasurer, he included what Jesus said about baptism (Acts 8:26-39).

When some of the Ephesian Christians turned back to immorality, Paul said, "That that is not the way you learned Christ!" (Ephesians 4:20-210).

Preaching Jesus includes preaching about baptism, moral purity and many other things.

--Cecil May, Jr. (via Preacher Talk)

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Seven Blunders Of The World

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2. Pleasure without conscience
3. Knowledge without character
4. Commerce without morality
5. Science without humanity
6. Worship without sacrifice
7. Politics without principle

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What The Gospel Is

The gospel is not God hatefully saying, "Turn to Me or I'll send you to Hell!"

The Gospel is God's mercy and grace saying, "You're already on your way to Hell. Turn to Me and I'll save you."