

**Articles and Sermons :: Victory in the Guise of Defeat by A.W. Tozer****Victory in the Guise of Defeat by A.W. Tozer - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2021/2/13 6:13**

"Our Lord Himself, St. Peter and St. Paul appeared to have been defeated." De Tourville.

It is often difficult to tell in a given instance whether we have been defeated or are victorious in a conflict. Sometimes what looks like a defeat will be seen later to have been a positive victory.

When Joseph was sold into slavery, the end appeared to have come for the young dreamer. Years later when the deep ways of God had come to light he could say to his now repentant brethren, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Joseph's humiliating defeat had turned into personal victory for him and preservation for his entire family. God might have accomplished the same end in a different way. All we know is that He did not.

When the three Hebrew children disappeared into the seven-times-heated furnace no doubt many who watched turned away shaking their heads in pity; but things looked different the next moment when the king discovered that the men of God were preserved whole without the smell of fire upon them. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego had not been sure how the whole thing would turn out. They had told the king boldly, "God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods." And possibly for one breathless minute they thought their time had come. But God saw otherwise and turned their defeat into victory.

And it must not be forgotten that this principle works just the same in reverse. When David had succeeded in stealing Uriah's wife he no doubt felt he had scored a real conquest, but subsequent events showed instead that he had suffered a stunning defeat.

He was never the same after his "conquest." What the armies of the alien could never do on the field, David himself accomplished by one act of wrong-doing; that is, he brought about his own defeat. When he met Goliath he turned what looked like defeat into victory. When he met Bathsheba he turned a long record of victories into shameful defeat.

One thing about all this is that we cannot always be sure at the time just who is winning unless we keep our hearts very pure and our minds cool and God-possessed. When the soldiers of Pilate flung Christ to the ground and began to drive him into the nails, everything looked as if our Lord had ended a failure. Surely this ignominious death would not come to a man of God. There must be some mistake. The man Jesus had been an idealist, a visionary, but now His hopes and the hopes of His followers were collapsing under the brutal attacks of tough, practical men. So reasoned the onlookers. But our Lord could die with the same calm in which He had lived. He had known all along how things would turn out, He had looked beyond the cross to the triumphant resurrection, He knew His apparent defeat would eventuate in universal glory for the human race.