

Victory Over Despair

Blaise Pascal said, "Knowing God without knowing our wretchedness leads to pride. Knowing our wretchedness without knowing God leads to despair. Knowing Christ gives the balance."

When I read these words this morning from the famous French scientist and mathematician, I thought of how this summarizes Paul's life in the book of Acts. As a Pharisee, he knew God but was full of pride and self-righteousness. After he met Jesus, he still looked at himself as the chief of sinners.

No wonder Paul could endure all of his hardships for Jesus. Despite his sufferings he never despaired. What a message for us as we seek to finish this season of the pandemic without falling into despair.

I know some people whose lives are often lost in desperation because they do not know Jesus. They reject God because of the pain and agony they have endured. Yet Paul knew more trials and tribulation, hate and rejection than most people ever experience.

In Acts 27, Paul is finally sent to Rome after two years of imprisonment. On the way, they encounter a deadly storm, and they become shipwrecked on the island of Malta. As they recover on the beach, he is bit by a poisonous serpent!

Paul never despairs. He knows God has a purpose for his life. Part of that plan is for him to witness to Caesar of Jesus and His salvation.

The two great kings in the world, Caesar and Christ, will come into conflict at the very throne of authority. We know Christ conquers all, even Caesar! Paul is God's messenger.

God has a plan for your life. It may seem small and simple

compared to Paul's calling, but God loves you just as much, and your life is very important to Him. In knowing Christ as your Savior, you know God and know how He saved you from the wretchedness of sin. In Christ you have overcome your pride and do not need to fall into despair.

The love of Christ released in the power of the Resurrection in your life gives you the hope of glory and the triumph over sin and death that we all long to know.

Whenever despair threatens me, I always go back to Jesus, His love for me and His plan for my life. This motivates me and liberates me. God has a plan and purpose for my life, and it is for good and for me to prosper in my love for God and for others.

When I turned 60, I asked God to give me 20 more years of health and strength to serve Him. At 65 now, I can only trust Him for 15 more years, but He continues to show me how I can use my life for His glory and His kingdom. It is a great gift to walk in victory in this life and not despair.

God will do the same for you if you give Him your life and ask for Him to use you in His plan of salvation. He will give you the vision, the plan and the strength to do all He has called you to do, especially to become more like Jesus in your character and lifestyle.

For me that is one of the key messages in Acts through the life of Paul. You can have it too if your heart desires it for God.

Listen to this episode of *Awaken* on Charisma Podcast Network [here](#).

Author's Note: The Presence of God lives in us. The Word tells us the Holy Spirit comes into our lives the moment we are born again. We also know that the Father and Son abide in us as they have made Their home in us. This life we have in Jesus is

a glorious one. We are being changed from one degree of glory to another to be like Jesus. We hunger for less of us and more of God to fill us completely. There are also moments when God's presence fills the atmosphere where we worship as our Lord did when Solomon dedicated the temple or when Isaiah saw Jesus, the Lord of Hosts, in the temple, or when the Holy Spirit was poured out in Cornelius' house in the book of Acts. When God acts in His glory, lives are transformed to live for His purposes and plans to redeem the world.

We have set our hearts on God to come in His glory at our "Hosting His Presence" event on Sept. 9-12. We do not want only an encounter with God but for Him to remain, so it is not just a visitation but a habitation that draws us daily to Himself. This glory moment will inspire us with dreams and visions to go into the world as Jesus sent His apostles and disciples to the nations of the earth. Begin praying now for this Holy Spirit gathering, that Jesus will be exalted, and we will see a nation transformed for Jesus.

Our gathering is free. You can register at [. {eo}](#)

Once a professional baseball player with the Chicago Cubs Organization, **Blake Lorenz** was called to Asbury Seminary after a radical encounter with Jesus, where he received his master's degree. He has pastored in the Orlando area for 33 years and has been blessed with the opportunity to evangelize globally, visiting five continents and preaching the gospel to tens of thousands. Blake has also helped plant 500 churches. He has been working in Israel for the past 20 years, includes serving on the board of the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast in connection with the Knesset. In 2020, the Awaken podcast launched to teach and challenge others to join him on a journey of anticipating the return of Jesus. He has used the three books he's written in his seminars and conferences. He and his wife, Beverly, share three children and six grandchildren.

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