

# Overcoming the World

## FAIRVIEW, TX

### April 10, 2010

Yesterday afternoon's news brought me down again for personal reasons. A single mother and her grandmother in Tennessee adopted a little boy from Siberia. After a period of time, and I don't recall how long, they decided they could not handle him. So they put him alone on a flight to Russia and sent him back. He is 7 years old and has some mental issues. That just hits too close to home for me. We know firsthand what abandonment can do to an adopted child. And to be abandoned in such a cold manner is difficult to understand. Adopted children feel abandoned by their birth parents to begin with. This young lad will have a lot to overcome in his life.

Then, this morning, came the news about Ron Dart's fall. This story is especially difficult for me since I have monitored the fall of two others recently. One, Paul Hooper, was a long time EDS associate of mine. He, Nita and I played golf every Sunday for quite some time before he moved to the Houston area. Paul died of his head injuries. The second, Rip Boss, had similar injuries and operations. Rip has since fully recovered and has gone back home. We pray for Ron's complete recovery.

We all have issues and events in this world to overcome. While at EDS, I witnessed several of these successes by managers within the company.

1. overcame devastation when his parents moved
2. overcame a verbally and physically abusive parent
3. overcame intense prejudice and hatred
4. overcame depression, 2 divorces, shyness and an alcoholic spouse
5. overcame parents' early divorce and 2 divorces of their own
6. overcame drug addiction, 2 divorces and depression
7. overcame an alcoholic father and an inferiority complex

### Revelation 2

- 1 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:
- 2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;
- 3 "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.
  - The church at Ephesus was a true and faithful church.
  - They held on to the true gospel by testing false prophets
- 4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.
- 5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.
  - They needed to overcome the loss of fervent love of Christ
  - Perhaps they were no longer looking after the sick, the orphaned or the widows as they should. We are not told the details
- 6 "But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

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- 7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."
  - They were urged to overcome

**Revelation 2**

- 8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:
- 9 "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.
- 10 "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.
  - Smyrna was urged to overcome tests and 10 days of tribulation
- 11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."

**Revelation 2**

- 12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:
- 13 "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.
  - They held on to the name of God and Christ, but Satan's teaches had crept into their doctrine
- 14 "But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.
- 15 "Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.
  - Pergamos was urged to overcome doctrines of Balaam and Nicolaitans
- 16 'Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.
- 17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."

**Revelation 2**

- 18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:
- 19 "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.

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- 20 "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.
- 21 "And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.
- 22 "Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.
- 23 "I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.
  - Thyatira was urged to overcome the teachings of Jezebel
- 24 "Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.
- 25 "But hold fast what you have till I come.
- 26 "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations--
- 27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' --as I also have received from My Father;
- 28 "and I will give him the morning star.
- 29 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

### Revelation 3

- 1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
- 2 "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.
- 3 "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.
- 4 "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.
  - Sardis was urged to overcome their imperfect works
  - This church was doing some good things, in their assessment
  - They had apparently become less than diligent in some things
- 5 "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
- 6 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

### Revelation 3

- 7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens":

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- 8 "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.
  - This church had “a little strength”
  - So this indicates they had weaknesses
- 9 "Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie--indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.
- 10 "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.
  - Philadelphia was urged to overcome the temptations of Satan
  - Philadelphia means “brotherly love”
    - Philos = loving
    - Adelfhos = brother
- 11 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.
- 12 "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.
- 13 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

**Revelation 3**

- 14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:
- 15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.
  - They simply existed
  - This church reminds us of those who pay and pray
  - There was no active work to speak of
- 16 "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.
- 17 "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--
- 18 "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.
- 19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.
  - Laodicea = overcome indifference
- 20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.
- 21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.
- 22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'""

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These seven churches were apparently all regarded as true Christian churches. Yet none of them was perfect. Neither are we perfect.

**Revelation 12:**

- 10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.
- 11 "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

**John 16:**

- - We have read these verses over the past 2 weeks several times
  - The last verse sums it up for us
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- 33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."
  - Jesus was tempted as we are, yet He overcame those temptations.

**Romans 12:**

- 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.
- 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
- 3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.
- - Paul describes variant gifts in verses 4-8
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- 9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.
- 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;
- 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;
- 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;
- 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.
- 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.
- 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.
- 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

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- 17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.
- 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.
  - This is a good definition of “overcoming the world”
- 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.
- 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."
- 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
  - By doing the will of God and obeying His commandments, we are overcoming evil

### WHAT DID SOLOMON HAVE TO OVERCOME?

*2 Chronicles 8-9* describe the opulence of Solomon

The entire book of Ecclesiastes relates lessons learned by Solomon. This book, along with Proverbs and James, provide the most direct philosophy of practical life.

#### *Ecclesiastes 12:*

- 8 "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "All is vanity."
- 9 And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs.
- 10 The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and what was written was upright-words of truth.
- 11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.
- 12 And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh.
- 13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.
- 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

#### *Mark 10:*

- 25 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Some people actually have to overcome the good that they enjoy on this earth!

#### *James 1*

- 2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,
- 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

In his book “The Road Less Traveled”, M. Scott Peck writes “Being about spiritual growth, this book is inevitably about the other side of the same coin: the impediments to

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spiritual growth. Ultimately there is only the one impediment, and that is laziness. If we overcome laziness, all the other impediments will be overcome.”

Dr. Peck describes laziness as the true “original sin”. He continues “They (*Adam and Eve*) listened to the serpent, but they failed to get God’s side of the story before they acted ... The step missing is the step of debate. Adam and Eve could have set up a debate between the serpent and God, but in failing to do so they failed to obtain God’s side of the question. The debate between the serpent and God is symbolic of the dialogue between good and evil which can and should occur within the minds of human beings. Our failure to conduct – or to conduct fully and wholeheartedly – this internal debate between good and evil is the cause of those evil actions that constitute sin. In debating the wisdom of a proposed action, human beings routinely fail to obtain God’s side of the issue ... We make this failure because we are lazy ... it is quite probable that Adam and Eve were afraid of what might happen to them if they were to openly question God; instead they attempted to take the easy way out, the illegitimate shortcut of sneakiness, to achieve knowledge not worked for, and hope they could get away with it. But they did not. To question God may let us in for a lot of work. But a moral of the story is that it must be done.

Abram did it. Moses did it. David did it. And we must do it. Then, we, too, will overcome the world.

**Revelation 3:**

- 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne