

***D**ynamic Worship **N**ew Insights **A**ppplied Knowledge*

The DNA of FlagNaz is relatively simple (see above). We believe there is a collective wisdom rising up out of our shared experiences and interaction.

Inspiration lasts for the moment. Application a lifetime...

★Write down one new insight you received today...

★Thinking...

- How does participation in the Lord's Supper make me feel?
- In what ways can I make the ongoing victory feel more real in my daily life?
- What, if anything, blocks me from believing in divine healing?
- How would I live differently today if I knew Jesus was returning tomorrow?
- What does it mean to me to "savingsly believe in, and obediently follow, Jesus Christ our Lord?"

★Applying...

- Keep record of the shortcomings in living Christlike this week to prepare to receive a renewal next time we celebrate Communion.
- Meditate on the joy and relief that there is no shame in these shortcomings if you allow Jesus to heal these moral wounds.
- Record the ways in which you live differently this week due to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- Celebrate these with gratitude when we next celebrate Communion.

★Praying...

- Pray in faith for healing over any sickness, physical or spiritual, you are experiencing.
- Offer prayers to those in your inner circle who are sick.

FlagNaz

Be Healed and Thrive

July 24th, 2022

Nazarene Faith Part 4 – Eternal Victories

1 Cor 11:26 – For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

I) **Proclaiming Victory...**

The Christian life can be a paradox. We are forgiven yet continue in disobedience. We are empowered to live righteously yet struggle to do it. We have hope but mourn much. Christian life declares eternal victory while we are urged to battle on. Jesus recognizes this paradox, praying on our behalf that we be protected from the evil one because we remain in this world while we are not of it (John 17:15-16). Jesus gives us the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, also known as Communion and the Eucharist, as a means of reconciling this paradox.

◆**Ongoing victory:** Living out this paradox can be painful. Try as we might to live righteously, none succeed perfectly. We slip into old behavior patterns, accidentally harm others, fail to live up to the standard of perfect love. The world offers no mercy, shaming us for any failings and suggesting perhaps that old victory of salvation is not so powerful. Worldly victories are historical events that quickly diminish in power. Jesus's victory is different. The Lord's Supper connects to a power source that renews the event itself. When we reverently eat the bread and drink the cup, "Christ is present by the Spirit," and through Him we are "renewed in life, salvation, and in unity as the Church." Communion is an act by which we remember Jesus's victory in our behalf and are freshly victorious.

◆**Hope in victory:** Renewed in our victory and reconnected to the fresh power of salvation into the Kingdom of Heaven, Communion offers something no worldly celebration can. The world tempts us with its victories, those that come with immediate benefits of fame, fortune, and personal power. It misleads us into thinking these benefits are permanent and should be our source of hope. Communion, however, is a vehicle of grace by which to receive and proclaim biblical hope, or the firm expectation of a promise of God to be fulfilled. Our Articles of Faith affirm that celebrating the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of "the Lord's death until He comes." The benefits of victory we enjoy now will be far surpassed on the day of His return. It is on this our hope rests.

♦**Scripture references:** Ex 12:1-14; Mt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; John 6:28-58; 1 Cor 10:14-21; 11:23-32.

II) Living Victoriously...

This paradox in mind, living victoriously is tricky business. We are tempted to wait until the paradox is resolved before seriously attempting to live His ways in earnest. Until then, the only way to fight fire is with fire. This is another of the world's temptations to destruction. Living victoriously is the pursuit of Christlikeness in the present with an eternal horizon. It is the rejection of the world's ways for His both as a means to live well now and in preparation for an eternity in the next age.

♦**Responding to adversity:** The world conditions us to react from anger, frustration, and resignation. We can be deceived when these reactions lead to our desired outcome. Yet again, the world focuses on temporary results while Jesus points to eternal realities. Jesus calls us to be transformed into His image through our handling of adversity, while promising to do well for us. Our ultimate adversity is sickness. It saps our faculties draining us of energy, physical and mental abilities. While we have many remedies we trust, reality is we have no direct control over our condition. Nazarenes "believe in the biblical doctrine of divine healing," that full and faithful reliance on Jesus in this most adverse situation is being drawn to the true source of abundant life. We do not limit God's methods, believing that He uses the miraculous and that "God heals through the means of medical science." Victorious living is to seek the victor in all we observe.

♦**Life is a team activity:** In serious adversity we are trained to approach life as *us against the world*. This may be useful inspiration for underdog sports teams, but it is the antithesis of Kingdom living. The Bible teaches us to request prayer and anointing from church leaders. Living victoriously is to rely on and support each other using the power of God given to us through His Spirit. Nazarenes "urge our people to offer the prayer of faith for the healing of the sick."

♦**Scripture references:** 2 Kings 5:1-19; Ps 103:1-5; Mt 4:23-24; 9:18-35; John 4:46-54; Acts 5:12-16; 9:32-42; 14:8-15; 1 Cor 12:4-11; 2 Cor 12:7-10; James 5:13-16.

III) Anticipating the Victor's Return...

The Christian paradox is brought to a close when this age ends, and we are removed from the world in which we are foreigners. This is the hopeful end toward which we are sustained by the Lord's Supper and the Spirit's empowerment to live holy lives. This will be the moment of the real victory celebration, when all doubt dissipates, and every created thing acknowledges the Truth of Jesus Christ.

♦**Victory parade:** Humanity celebrates its victories with parades. The conquering party returns to the adoration and joy of its people. Central to the

victory parade is the spoils. Today this is most evident in sports parades during which the trophy is presented to the team's fans. Jesus's spoils, His glory, are the multitudes of souls He has saved through His death and resurrection. We look forward to the day when His reward is complete, all those who will be saved have been, and He returns in victorious parade shrouded in glory. For Nazarenes this is not figurative. "We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again."

♦**Scripture references:** Mt 25:31-46; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Php 3:20-21; 1 The 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; Heb 9:26-28; 2 Pet 3:3-15; Rev 1:7-8; 22:7-20.

IV) Final Victory...

Paradox resolved, there are eternal consequences to how each of us responded. The results of our decisions to follow Jesus or not may have appeared to be those experienced in the paradox. Did we get our way engaging in the world's ways, or did we suffer loss and indignity while trying to live impossibly? Those results, real as they are, have nothing to do with our eternal consequences. Rather, did we keep our face turned toward Jesus through the ups and downs of life...learn to be content with His provision...seek the maturity of character that we carry with us into the next age? We believe in Resurrection, Judgment, and Destiny as our final Article of Faith.

♦**Resurrection:** We see the beauty and potential perfection in the physical bodies God gave us. They are damaged as we engage in our battles with the flesh. As Jesus concludes His victory, "the bodies both of the just and of the unjust shall be raised to life and united with their spirits," restoring all to their original state of physical perfection in which to enjoy or despise eternal destiny.

♦**Judgment:** All will be tempted to claim allegiance to the Lord once the victory parade commences. Sadly, the moment to believe in Jesus and repent will be gone. Once resurrected, "every person shall appear before God to be judged according to his or her deeds in this life." God will hold each of us accountable for the decision we made regarding the Truth of His Son during our life in this age.

♦**Destiny:** "[G]lorious and everlasting life is assured to all who savingly believe in, and obediently follow, Jesus Christ our Lord." This final statement summarizes Nazarene beliefs. We are a hopeful people who have faith in God's desire and power to not just save us from future hell but empower us to thrive in life now evidenced in our obedient following of Jesus.

♦**Scripture references:** Gen 18:25; 1 Sam 2:10; Ps 50:6; Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2-3; Mt 25:31-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-31; 20:27-38; John 3:16-18; 5:25-29; 11:21-27; Acts 17:30-31; Rom 2:1-16; 14:7-12; 1 Cor 15:12-58; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 The 1:5-10; Rev 20:11-15; 22:1-15.