

Turning To A New Page – P.T.O.

I lived through the last World War as a pre-teenager. I was 6 years old when it started. I remember the first Sunday of the war, we heard the scream of aircraft engines overhead during the final hymn and as it ended I rushed outside to see a “*dog fight*” taking place above us and spent cartridge shells were falling from the sky. To my delight I saw one German plane disengage with smoke pouring from his engine.

A vivid memory among many.

The event that is really fixed in my memory happened some months later in the spring of 1940.

I was playing with some other boys on the recreation field when we heard the dread sound of an aircraft in trouble.

Looking up we saw a hurricane fighter spiral out of the clouds creating a trail of fire and smoke as it plunged into the ground just about 300 yards away from where I was standing.

I ran full tilt towards where it crashed and arrived before the local fire brigade.

Gathering souvenirs of the war that was being fought above and around us was a hobby of many young boys of my age at that time.

I burnt my fingers picking up a small part of this crashed Hurricane that was scattered over a large area as a result of the impact explosion.

Then I began to see things I did not want to collect; parts of human body also scattered by the explosion.

The fire brigade arrived, the blaze was put out and the scattered parts of the pilot were gathered into the tatters of his unused parachute.

One other object I did see that I would have loved to collect, but was not allowed to, was the aerial map blown clear from the cockpit.

The pilot had been over France to reconnoitre the enemy and had flown unarmed for speed and range. No guns and no exploding ammunition at the crash site.

This young man had sacrificed his life to warn others of the dangers they faced from the common enemy.

After many more young men had also sacrificed their lives we as a nation did overcome the common enemy.

All those brave young men, most of them still in their teens, sacrificed their lives to give us the freedom we experience today in this country.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

We as children of God are being asked by our Creator God to sacrifice our lives so that others may experience the freedom we have.

The freedom from the slavery of sin that others can receive by belief in the sacrifice of their Saviour Jesus the Son of God.

Jesus in His message to the seven churches directs each church to “overcome”.

Revelation 2:7,10,17,26-29 [NIV] *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **To him who overcomes**, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.” ... “Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, **even to the point of death**, and I will give you the crown of life.” ... “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. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.” ... **“To him who overcomes** and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations, ‘He will rule them with an iron sceptre; he will dash them to pieces like pottery’, just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

Revelation 3:5-6,12-13,21-22 [NIV] *“**He who overcomes** will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ... **“Him who overcomes** I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ... **“To him who overcomes**, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

Overcome what?

Revelation 12:7-11 [NIV] *“And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or **Satan**, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. **They overcame him** by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; **they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.**”*

Overcome the power of Satan our common enemy.

And this was done with the blood of the lamb and our testimony.

Revelation 12:9 [NIV] *“The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or **Satan**, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”*

Satan has led the whole world astray.

1 John 5:19 [NIV] *“We know that we are children of God, and that **the whole world is under the control of the evil one.**”*

At this time Satan rules this world.

1 Peter 5:8-9 [NIV] *“Be self-controlled and alert. **Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.** Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”*

Satan wants to devour people, tear the life out of them as the lions did the early Christians in the Roman arena.

Matthew 13:19 [NIV] *“When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, **the evil one** comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.”*

Tries to stop people hearing the Good News of what God has done for them through Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 2:18 [NIV] *“For we wanted to come to you, certainly I, Paul, did, again and again, **but Satan stopped us.**”*

Satan will resist any attempt to reach out to the world that he has deceived.

What we are asked to do by Jesus Christ is a dangerous mission, life threatening.

Hebrews 2:14-15 [NIV] *“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he **might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil,** and free those who all their lives were **held in slavery by their fear of death.**”*

Christ took on human flesh to destroy the power that Satan holds over all humanity, the fear of death.

A person pointing a gun at another can hold great power over the actions of that person.

Christ’s death in the place of our deserved death frees us from that fear, if we really believe it.

Revelation 12:11 [NIV] *“**They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb** and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”*

Christ has done His part, what is our part in this overcoming Satan?

This is what Christ’s message to all seven churches is!

Do we have ears to hear Christ’s message and hearts to accomplish it?

We centre on our own salvation and did not have the compassion for the world that our God has.

The Holy Spirit is convicting us to turn to a new page in our Christian life.

He is saying P.T.O.

What do those letters stand for?

Pray – for this lost world. A world that is lost because it is blinded by Satan to the very purpose of life that God has revealed to us.

Testimony – let all we have contact with know that we are Christians and show by our day-to-day living what that means.

Outreach – to this world by going through any door of opportunity that the Holy Spirit opens for us to preach the Good News.

To make such a change we need to cry out to God in prayer to give us a “heart for the lost”.

A heart that will compel us to make any sacrifice to fulfil the commission that Christ has given us.

Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV] *“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore **go** and **make disciples** of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

The key word is “go”.

Don't expect people to come to us.

The job description is “make disciples”.

Matthew 25:24-30 [NIV] “Then the man who had received the **one talent** came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, **harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed**. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! **So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?** Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. **“Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”**”

On the surface this action of the Master [Jesus Christ] seems very unfair, hardly loving.

Paul helps us understand this scripture.

1 Corinthians 3:6-8 [NIV] “**I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labour.**”

God expects us to labour [work hard] at sowing and watering.

This then allows God, for He has chosen to work through us, to give the increase that we can harvest.

John 4:35-38 [NIV] “Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? **I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.** Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, **so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.** Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.”

We sow, water and reap the increase that God causes.

2 Corinthians 9:10-14 [NIV] “**Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.** You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. **Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.** And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.”

God will provide all we need to sow and harvest.

People who are offered righteousness, that is a relationship with the Holy Creator God, will praise God and thank us.

2 Corinthians 9:6-9 [NIV] “Remember this: **Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.** Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will**

abound in every good work. As it is written: “He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever.”

We decide what we do to sow the seed that will make grace abound to all we have contact with.

Galatians 6:7-10 [NIV] “**Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.** Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, **as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.**”

To sow the Good News of what God has done for all humanity through Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world, that is what must take priority over everything else we do.

Matthew 6:31-34 [NIV] “So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. **But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.** Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

If we read carefully the message that Jesus Christ gave to all the seven churches we will see that **the rewards offered are always linked to overcoming.**

Proverbs 11:18 [NIV] “The wicked man earns deceptive wages, but **he who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward.**”

Our present and future are assured when we **sow** righteousness.

Let us all turn over a new leaf in our Christian life.

People died in two World Wars to bring us freedom.

Let us become “*living sacrifices*” to bring freedom from sin to all we meet in our day-to-day living.