

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of Saint David  
Early Morning Service March 18, 2012

# We will all be changed by the Victory of our Lord Jesus Christ 1 Cor. 15:51-58



## Changed by the Lord's Victory over Evil *Overcome evil with good (Rom 12:21)*

This day takes us deeper into the struggles against evil. Victory in Christ is an overcoming of all that damages God's creation, and keeps us apart from one another. In Jesus we are called to share in this new life, struggling with him against what is wrong in our world, with renewed confidence and with a delight in what is good. In our divisions we cannot be strong enough to overcome evil in our times.

**Gathering:** *Almighty God, through Jesus you say to us that whoever wishes to be first must become the least and the servant of all. We enter into your presence, knowing that your victory is won through the powerlessness of the cross. We come to pray that your church may be one. Teach us to accept humbly that this unity is a gift of your*

**Spirit; through this gift, change and transform us and make us more like your Son Jesus Christ.**

Hymn: Lord Jesus think on me (vs. 1-2) **207**  
Prayer of Confession: *The arrival of the Kingdom of God is the defeat of the kingdom of evil. Jesus, when He defeats the tempter in the desert, and frees people from the power of evil spirits, anticipates the great victory on the cross. The ruler of this world is cast away. In the last request of the Lord's Prayer – but deliver us from evil – we pray to God to reveal the victory already won by Christ. In the spirit of this request, we call: Save us, O Lord! Save us, O Lord! From all evil Save us, O Lord! From every sin Save us, O Lord! From evil's snares Save us, O Lord! From hatred and all ill will Save us, O Lord! From eternal death Save us, O Lord! Save us, O Lord, from all evil, and support us in Your mercy, You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.*

Hymn: Lord Jesus, think on me (vs.3-4) **207**  
**Absolution:** *Christ hears our prayer and answers the deepest longings of our heart. Christ, have mercy on us and show us a new way.*

*Sung response: Lord, have mercy* **336**

**Passing the Peace** Let us share the peace of the Lord with one another. **The peace of the Lord be with you.**

**Words for reflection:** Ex 23:1-9 Do not follow the majority in wrongdoing Ps 1 Happy are those whose delight is in the law of the Lord Rom 12:17-21 Overcome evil with good

Mt 4:1-11 Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only  
Hymn: My faith looks up to thee **677**

Reflection: In Jesus we learn what 'victory' really means for human beings - that is, happiness with one another in God's love through overcoming of all that keeps us apart. This is a sharing in Christ's victory over the destructive forces that damage humanity and all of God's creation. In Jesus we can share in a new life which calls us to struggle against what is wrong in our world with renewed confidence and with a delight in what is good. The words of the Old Testament give a categorical warning against engaging in wrongdoing and injustice. The attitude of the majority must not in any way provide an excuse. Neither do wealth or other situations in life entitle a person to do wrong.

Psalm 1 draws attention not only to the need to observe the commandments, but especially to the advantages of doing so. A person who loves the law of the Lord above all else is called

happy and blessed. The word of God is a sure guide in adversity and is the fulfillment of human wisdom. Meditating on the word of God *day and night* enables a person to lead a life full of fruitfulness for the good of others. In the apostle's admonitions we find encouragement to *overcome evil with good*. Only good can interrupt the endless spiral of hatred and the human desire for revenge. In the struggle for what is good, not everything depends on human beings. However, the apostle Paul calls for every effort to be made to maintain peace with others. He understands our continuous struggle against our instincts to harm those who hurt us. But Paul appeals to us not to let ourselves be overcome by these destructive feelings. Doing good is an effective way of combating wrong-doing among us.

The gospel describes the Son of God's struggle against evil. Jesus' victory over the temptations in the desert is fulfilled in his obedience to God, which leads him to the Cross. The Saviour's resurrection confirms that here God's goodness ultimately wins: love overcomes death. The risen Lord is near! He accompanies us in every struggle against temptation and sin in the world. His presence calls Christians to act together in the cause of goodness. The scandal is that because of our divisions we cannot be strong enough to fight against the evils of our time. United in Christ, delighting in his law of love, we are called to share in his mission of bringing hope to the places of injustice, hatred, and despair.

**Prayer** Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for your victory over evil and division. We praise you for your sacrifice and Your resurrection that conquer death. Help us in our everyday struggle against all adversity. May the Holy Spirit give us strength and wisdom so that, following you, we may overcome evil with good, and division with reconciliation. Amen.

### Questions for reflection

1. Where do we see evil in our own lives?
2. In what way can our faith in Christ help us to overcome evil and the Evil One?
3. What can we learn from situations in our community where division has given way to reconciliation?

**Invitation** This is the table, not of the Church, but of the Lord. It is made ready for those who love God and for those who want to love God more. So, come, you who have much faith and you who have little, you who have been here often and you who have not been here long, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. Come, because it is Christ who invites you. It is our Lord's will that those who want to find God should meet God here. Come, for all things are now ready. Come to the table and share with all in need: the gift of healing for those in pain, the gift of forgiveness for those in sin, the gift of assurance for those in doubt, and the gift of hope for those in tears.

**May we who share these gifts share Christ with one another and all humanity.**

Hymn: Let us break bread together **548**  
Prayer of Thanksgiving, concluding with...  
*Pour out your Holy Spirit on all gathered here, that we might be your light in the world.* **Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and wine, that we might be infused with the gift of your nourishing guidance.**

**Hymn:** Be present at our table Lord **456**  
**Communion**  
Prayer following communion: *We thank you, gracious God, for your gracious gifts. We pray that through these same gifts you will preserve us in faith in you, unite us in your love, and confirm us in the hope of everlasting life, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Hymn: Now thank we all our God **457**

Dismissal Blessing

*Changed by the Lord's victory over evil -*  
**Send us and together we will go!**  
*Changed by the peace of Christ -*  
**Send us and together we will go!**  
*Changed by God's steadfast love -*  
**Send us and together we will go!**

Hymn: Thine be the glory (verses 1 and 3) **258**