

Sermon Notes – June 7, 2015, Erika Clary

“More Than Conquerors”

- **Veggie Tales:**

- When I was younger, I was a VeggieTales fanatic. VeggieTales is about a talking cucumber named Larry and a talking Tomato named Bob who faced many problems, but were always able to overcome them with the help of God. A song that has always stuck in my head from VeggieTales says, “God is bigger than the boogie man, He’s bigger than Godzilla or the monsters on TV. God is bigger than the boogie man, and He’s watching out for you and me.”

- **Romans 8:31:**

- This is one of my favorite verses, because I use it in every situation that I encounter, no matter how big or small the situation is. If God is for us, who can be against us?
- We face many challenges everyday, whether we are in school, the work environment, in public, or even in our homes. I have been persecuted because I am a Christian, and this is an age when people with strong opinions are not afraid to try to force them on you. I have been bullied, and I hear a new rumour about someone every single day. Praying will always help you overcome the situation, and really when you give the situation to God.

- **Romans 8:28:**

- This verse says, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.”
- Our lives are not going to be perfect, and everything is not going to be happy-cheery. This is a very common misconception when people first read or hear this verse.
- God will always bring something greater out of the situation, whether it be you meet a new friend, you come closer to someone you weren’t as close with before, or you learn a life lesson that you don’t realize is a life lesson until days, weeks, months, or years later.

- **Struggles in the Lives of Others:**

- I know people who have dealt with very low points in their lives, including dealing with things such as alcoholism, drug addiction, or maybe they don’t know where their next

meal is going to come from next. This is very common of the men at the Rescue mission.

- If you sit down with one of those men, they will tell you their testimony of how they came to God and how they are building the foundation to better their life through God.
- I have seen the same people out preaching, maybe not to a church, about how things do work out for those who love God. God will always be there to help you better your life.

- **Biblical Strugglers:**

- These struggles don't only happen now, but they also happened all the way back in biblical times. Three examples are Saul, Matthew, and Zaccheus
- Saul held cloaks for people while Steven was being stoned, which was an act of encouragement. After he was blinded by God and became Paul, he was out preaching, was one of Jesus' disciples, and he wrote many books of the bible.
- Matthew and Zaccheus were tax collectors. In the time, tax collectors took more money than what was needed so that they could pocket it and have it for themselves. Matthew was one of Jesus' disciples and wrote one of the gospels. Jesus chose Zaccheus from the crowd and came to his house. He talked to him, and helped to better Zacchaeus' life.

- **Roundtable 2014:**

- Last year, I went to an interdistrict brethren retreat at Bridgewater College. The theme was Out of the Valley, Into the Light. The speaker was Eric Landram, who just graduated from Bethany Theological Seminary with Britnee. Eric has been a huge mentor and role model in my life, because he has deepened my relationship with God and he has led me on my path of ministry.
- The biggest lesson I learned from Roundtable was that when we are in our valleys, we like to feel like we are helpless. **God loves us, so he throws a rope down to us. We can try to catch the rope and He can try to pull us up, but he can't do it unless we hold our own weight by trusting, loving, and giving the situation to Him.**
- This same situation happens in dance when we are partnering. When you are being lifted, you need to hold your own weight and trust that the other person can lift you, otherwise they will drop you.
- We need to love and trust God, so he can pull us out of our valleys.

- **My Valley:**

- In seventh grade, a girl approached me when I was in gym class and told me that everyone hated me. I figured it had to be true because I barely knew her, so rumours must have been floating around.
- This situation put me into a valley from that point in my seventh grade year until winter of my ninth grade year. Just as I started to hit my lowest point, it was time for the Mid-Atlantic District Christmas Lock-in.
- I was nervous because I barely knew anyone there, but I was able to meet my best friends there, who are always there to support me and will always be there for me. This was God throwing the rope down to me and me catching it.
- I went to Winter Retreat with the MAD Youth and was slowly coming out of my valley. Once I got to Roundtable and heard this rope analogy, I knew that I needed to hand my situation over to God, and that is exactly what I did. This is when God brought me out of my valley and when I felt my calling to ministry.
- At National Youth Conference last summer in Colorado, I was literally and figuratively on the mountaintop. I could feel God's presence in every move I made. God had pulled me out of my valley and brought me to the mountaintop, and now here I am, still on the mountaintop preaching.

- **Peter:**

- In John 13:38, at the Last Supper, Jesus asked Peter if he would really lay down his life for Him. Peter said of course, but Jesus told him He wasn't so sure because Peter was going to deny him 3 times before the rooster crowed. Peter was very confused because he believed that was basically impossible.
- Ironically enough, in John 18:17, Jesus was being tried before Pilate. All of the disciples had dispersed, but they found Peter and asked him if he was a disciple of Jesus. He denied knowing Jesus, sure enough, three times. Peter's faith was shaken, and he was at his deepest point in the valley.
- After the resurrection, Jesus has a meal with the disciples in John 21:9-19. Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" and Peter told him, "Of course Jesus." Peter started to get upset, because Jesus asked him three times, but this is when Peter's faith was reaffirmed and he gave his situation to God.
- In Acts 2: 14-36, Peter preached at Pentecost. Peter, the same guy that denied Jesus 3 times even though he said he wouldn't, gave the first sermon about Jesus.

- This is a great example of God taking the situation and moving someone from the valley to the mountaintop.

- **David and Goliath:**
 - David was tiny in comparison to Goliath, and Goliath also had a whole army behind him, while David only had a sling and some stones.
 - We know who won that battle, and that was David because God was on his side. Nothing can conquer God, so nothing can conquer anyone who loves God.

- **God is on Our Side/More than Conquerors:**
 - No matter how far we stray off of the path, as long as we send our eyes back to God and give him our situation, he will always have our backs.
 - The last part of the scripture talks about how nothing, not even death or demons, can separate us from the love of God.
 - God used the greatest symbol of love by sending Jesus to die for everything that we had done wrong and everything that we were going to do wrong, so he will always love us and that is one thing that will never change.
 - When you have climbed out of our valleys and you are having a mountaintop feeling, you realized that because God was on your side, you are more than a conqueror, you are living the way God wants you to, on the right path in your life.
 - **Are you willing to catch that rope and hold your own weight so that God can lift you out of your valleys?**