

The Victory

A glorified moment in the ring

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The bell dings. The match has started. You are in it for the prize, but your opponent is a nasty one today. Tormentor of the Mind—fearsome, right! But your belt of truth is fastened. Your helmet of salvation is on. Your shoes of peace are snug. Your breastplate of righteousness is mounted. Your shield of faith is grasped.

You prepped. Your heart is ready. Let's do this!

Then, out of nowhere, the lights in the arena shut off. You are blinded, and suddenly afraid. You begin to swing your sword in terror rather than strength, and in the process trip. Stumbling, your shoe ties loosen and you drop your shield of faith.

Shoot. The darkness is pervasive. You can feel your heartbeat thrashing against your breastplate. The terror is rising like bile. Stepping and scouring to grab back your shield feels like a lucrative task. The Tormentor has gained an upper hand. This wasn't supposed to happen. It's not fair and it's not right.

Taking a deep gulp, you bend down—arms outstretched lunging through the haze. *Where is that silly thing anyway?* You're angry now. Beyond flustered. You can feel your foot sliding within your shoe, no doubt it will slip out anyway—might as well kick it off!

The task takes more effort than anticipated. Shaking harder—the dramatic flailing feels enjoyably justified—it eventually flies off. You hear a ping from the far corner of the room as it crashes before landing. Or was that the Tormentor edging closer? Standing tall again, you feel a sudden drop from atop your shoulder. The strap of your breastplate came loose. You swear in frustration as it too falls to the ground.

Reaching your hand up, you feel for your helmet. Still on, still tight. *Phew!* Still saved, at least that's secure! But now what? Is there any hope left for this match? The Tormentor is calling out; his shrieking voice sends shivers up your spine. His audacious words sound true. Your defeat feels imminent.

Now stop. Stop right there.

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So what if that Tormentor took the upper hand? *So what* if you've been flailing in fright and messed up along the way?

When in doubt that overwhelming victory is still yours through Christ Jesus, stop and think. Think on things that are true, noble, right. Think on things that are pure, lovely, admirable. Think on things that are excellent and praiseworthy.

Think on things you've read in the Word, things you've heard and seen in Jesus's life and the lives of other saints that have gone before you. Certainly, this opponent is not new. He's not more powerful and destructive than the Victorious One you fight for...

When you fix your thoughts, it settles your spirit. Nerves calm. God's peace manifests.

The Tormentor and his tactics are no longer frightening. They are understood and rightly judged. You can work out your offensive strategy, masterfully maneuvering your Sword of the Spirit.

The Tormentor feels the switch. The atmosphere has changed. The lights are flickering now, and the tremoring blaze sends him running in fear. The referee starts to count. At the call of ten, the bell will ring for a win. Keep your focus and the count-out will come. You only need to be still and wait.

Eight...Nine...Ten...Ding, Ding, Ding!

The room is aglow with light. You can hear the chorus of the crowd; their cheers lift your spirit into dumb-founded delight. The Tormentor has fled the building entirely. The referee raises your hand in the air as the audience stands to their feet, continuing their congratulatory clamor as you are handed the prize.

Wear it with pride—righteous pride—because your victory was promised by the One who went before you. Your job was to walk it out.

And you did.

Well done, good and faithful servant.

Well done.