

VICTORY OVER VICTIMHOOD

Romans 8:37

INTRODUCTION

- Until recent years, children were taught, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names can never hurt me”
- But today, children are taught that certain names and words *do* hurt them
- Australia has shifted from being a nation of dignity, honour, resilience and perseverance, to being a nation of *victims*
- Instead of striving to improve one’s self and society, we are rather encouraged to be the greatest victim we can be
- The new generation must have *safe spaces* and *trigger warnings* to shield them from *microaggressions*
- Every day, these people are finding things to be offended at, and lobbying to have them cancelled
- We are commanded to “give none offence”, that is, to do or say anything that might cause others to stumble and sin (1 Corinthians 10:32; 2 Corinthians 6:3; Philippians 1:10; Acts 24:16)
- Yet the saying, “Offence is taken, rather than given” is largely true
- We cannot control what people say to us, but we can control how we react to it
- For the person who chooses to be a “victim”, *anything* can be offensive

- In 2012, Prime Minister Julie Gillard took offence when the opposition leader *looked at his watch*, during her speech
- These self-made “victims” make a mockery of the many *true* victims of violent crimes
- This selfish mindset is the complete opposite of the life that Christ calls us to
 - ✓ Victimhood demands *rights*, while Christ calls to *duty*
 - ✓ Victimhood strives to *get*, while the Christian strives to *give*
 - ✓ Victimhood complains “I’m a *victim*,” but the Christian confesses, “I’m a *sinner*”
- As the age draws to a close before the Second Coming of Christ, many shall be offended (Matthew 24:10)

I. VICTIMHOOD EMANATES FROM A PROUD HEART

- A. The victim mentality has been described as a form of *selfism*
1. It is self-love, self-worship, narcissism
 2. The serpent successfully tempted Eve with the proposition, “Ye shall be as gods” (Genesis 3:5), and that same sinful desire drives these modern-day victims
 3. Man was created to worship, and when he rejects the true worship of the one true God, he will direct that worship to idols
 4. “Self” is one of the most popular idols today, where a person’s love is directed inwardly, and where his life is devoted to bringing pleasure and glory to himself
 5. It is covetousness, which is idolatry (Ephesians 5:5-6; Colossians 3:5)

6. This view is consistent with Darwinism, which is based on the concept of self-preservation, often by crushing others
7. Such a person is obsessed with “personal rights”, whose allegiance is to himself, rather than the family, church or community

B. Victimhood is self-righteousness

1. They see themselves as morally superior to others
2. They see those of another race or ideology as “oppressors” and morally evil

C. The selfist has a false view of himself and his relationship to God

1. In his pride he says, “I *deserve* to be honoured and respected”
2. If we think we *deserve anything* good from God or man, it indicates fleshly pride, and a false view of ourselves
3. The cry of a humble heart is that *hell* is the only thing we deserve, and anything less than that is undeserved grace (Ezra 9:13)
4. Each one of us is to be careful “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think” (Romans 12:3; Galatians 6:3)
5. The reality is that we are *nothing* – “For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Galatians 6:3)
6. “Jesus calls us to His rest, and meekness is His method. The meek man cares not at all who is greater than he, for he has long ago decided that the esteem of the world is

not worth the effort....Only yesterday you were telling God that you were nothing, a mere worm of the dust. Where is your consistency? Come on, humble yourself, and cease to care what men think.” (A W Tozer)

7. There is only one thing the Christian may glory (boast) in, and that is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:14)

II. VICTIMHOOD ELEVATES PASSIONS OVER TRUTH

A. *Feelings* have become the highest priority today

1. Our civilisation was built on the presumption that we are created by a higher being, who has endowed us with reasonable minds, that are to be employed with logic for the betterment of society
2. But today, man has rejected the notion of “God” and consequently the need for reason and logic
3. The baser part of man – his appetites, passions, emotions, instincts and feelings now rule, and society must be reconfigured to accommodate them
4. People now must be made to “feel safe”, and the rest of us must change our lives to accomplish this
5. We are being forced to pander to the feelings of these self-professed victims, no matter how ridiculous, illogical or destructive these demands are
6. Such people cannot be reasoned with, as they do not operate by reason

B. Human sensibility is driven from either one of two internal sources – what the Bible calls the *bowels* or the *belly*

1. The ancient Greeks used the metaphors of the *splankna* (chest or bowels) to designate the noble affections and the *koilia* (belly) for the base appetites
2. In the New Testament, Paul used these same terms to distinguish the life of a believer from the life of an unbeliever
 - a. The believer is exhorted to put on the “bowels (or affections) of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” (Colossians 3:12)
 - b. Note that the Christian life is not is not merely one of a cold faith and obedience to God, but it is a faith combined with the *affection* of trust, which moves us to a holy life
 - c. But the enemies of God are described as those whose “god is their belly” (Romans 16:18; Philipians 3:19)
3. The modern concept of “emotions” is closer to the belly and the base passions of man
4. Hence, the modern narcissistic victims who operate by emotion and feelings are reverting to the lowest carnal sensibilities of the fallen human nature, behave as “natural brute beasts” (2 Peter 2:12)

III. VICTIMHOOD ELIMINATES PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- A. God created man as a free moral agent
 1. In doing so, God commanded man to do that which is right, and refrain from that which is evil (Leviticus 18:5)
 2. As descendants of Adam, we enter this world as sinners whose nature is inclined to sin (Psalm 51:5)

- B. God will hold each person accountable for their thoughts, words and deeds
 - 1. God shall bring every work into judgment (Ecclesiastes 12:14)
 - 2. The individual shall bear his own sin, not another's (Ezekiel 18:20)

- C. It is in our nature to shift blame away from ourselves
 - 1. From the very first man and woman, from the very dawn of creation, we have been shifting blame
 - a. Adam (Genesis 3:12-13)
 - b. Eve (Genesis 3:13)
 - c. Esau (Genesis 27:36)
 - d. Aaron (Exodus 32:22-24)
 - e. Saul (1 Samuel 15:20-21)
 - f. Pontius Pilate (Matthew 27:24)

- D. Sinful behaviour now becomes a “disorder” or “condition” that is outside of the sinner's control or responsibility
 - 1. The drunkard is a victim of *alcoholism*
 - 2. The glutton has an *eating disorder*
 - 3. The disobedient child has *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*
 - 4. The sodomite and paedophile have *sexual orientations* they were born with

- E. The parable of the Prodigal in Luke 15 graphically illustrates both how we *ought* to view ourselves, and how the self-professed victims view themselves
1. The Prodigal, when he “came to himself”, saw himself as nothing but a sinner against God, made no excuses for his sin, but with self-abhorrence, humbly approached the Father seeking his mercy
 2. The elder son had a sense of self-righteousness, self-centredness, entitlement, aggrievement and envy
 3. Remember that these two sons represented the two types of sinners that Christ dealt with – the Prodigal representing the repentant “publicans and sinners”, while the elder son represented the Pharisees
 4. Today’s victim-culture warriors are modern-day equivalents of the self-righteous Pharisees of old
 5. They are as “certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others” (Luke 18:9)

CONCLUSION

1. The prevailing victimhood of today is nothing new
2. The Jews were offended by Christ’s words and sought to kill him (Matthew 13:57)
3. Multitudes are blind to their true state before God, thinking they are righteous, and have need of nothing, not realising they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked (Revelation 3:17)
4. When we see ourselves in the light of God’s word, with the illumination of the Holy Ghost, we realise we are not victims, but *offenders* against God

5. If there is one Person who can claim to be a Victim in the truest sense of the word it is the Lord Jesus Christ
6. He offered up himself for our sins (Hebrews 7:27)
7. Instead of playing the victim, we ought to follow the example of Christ, “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Peter 2:23)
8. We must learn that the best course is not always to “stick up for ourselves”, but to “turn the other cheek” (Matthew 5:39-41), and to “take wrong” (1 Corinthians 6:7)
9. There are times when it is proper to push back against evil doers, and when we must answer fools according to their folly (Proverbs 26:5)
10. But ask yourself the question, “Am I seeking to defend *myself*, or to defend the Name of Jesus Christ and the cause of truth and righteousness?”
11. We need to seek from God a spirit of contentment, and shun envy – there is always someone worse off than you
12. “That is the true way of thinking...in whatever concerns bodily wants and bodily comforts, it is our duty to compare our own lot with the lot of those who are worse off, and will keep us thankful: on the other hand, whenever we are tempted to set up our own wisdom or goodness, we must compare ourselves with those who are wiser and better, and that will keep us humble.”
(Hannah More, *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*)
13. If you have Christ, whether you suffer tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword, you are not a victim, but “more than a conqueror” through him that loved us