

Conquering for the Commuter

A moment of reflection from this morning's drive while listening to Christy Nockels' *Healing is In Your Hands*:

Amongst the lyrics are echoes of Romans 8:35-39

*No mountain, no valley
No gain or loss we know
Could keep us from Your love*

*No sickness, no secret
No chain is strong enough
To keep us from Your love...*

*In all things we know that
We are more than conquerors
You keep us by Your love*

Romans 8:35-39 reads:

35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ESV)

It's a passage that I know well. It's one of my favourites and has been a source of comfort for me when the emotions of the day feel like aloneness, anxiety, or even abandonment.



The phrase that struck me today is this: **"We are more than conquerors."**

It's one of those phrases that has what I call "teleological significance." It speaks to our *purpose*, our ambition, our direction, our goal. There's two facets to this:

The first recognises that what we observe in and around us in the world is a form of *conquering*. I see Islamic extremists beheading Christians; they are trying to *conquer* the world with their expression of Islam. I see areas of my own society, the Western World, which is blindly slipping into intolerant impositions that gives little value to freedom of conscience; it's another form of attempted conquering. It has ever been the way of the world. This should not surprise us.

The natural response is fear. What does the future look like? Will I and my children and my children's children be safe? To be safe, we look to *win*. We *fight* back. We use the same sword as what we perceive is against us: we spin and tear down, we demolish people as well as ideas, we demonise, we hound, we yell; we try to conquer.

The second facet recognises the reality: we are more than conquerors. And our safety and security rests not on the ways and woes of what is around us, but upon the love of God in

Jesus Christ. The Kingdom of God is not headed by a weakened or sin-wracked king, but by the one who has conquered even death. The foundation of our ultimate citizenship is sure, as is the certainty of its future. God is the God of history, do you think he has abandoned this part of it?

And on that basis we face the conquering hordes (whoever or whatever they might be), not with fear, but in love-filled confidence. We speak and act on truth with our confidence not in ourselves, but in the love of God. We apply ourselves to *his* purpose. We *invest ourselves* in *his* loving works. We seek to capture every thought that's floating through the social conscience and reimagine it in the light of the fact that God is actually real, and Jesus has actually risen and inaugurated the life of a renewed world. *He* is so much more than any pretentious conqueror. And we rest and work and have our being in *him*.