

Who Really Wins?

Regular readers know I'm not much of a sports fan. "Not much" as in not at all. To be more accurate, when it comes to team sports, I am ambivalent. I can watch a game without ever getting worked up over the score.

But I do not begrudge my friends for their fanaticism. Be a fan. Go all out. Paint your face. Scream your head off.

I didn't know what a fan really was until I moved to Middle Tennessee. Holy cow. No school can rival the Universities of Tennessee and Alabama for the level of all-out insanely fanatical commitment of their fans.



Need I say more?

There is one aspect of fans that used to bemuse me.

- At the end of the game, half the crowd leaves with heads hung low. "We lost."
- The other half of the crowd is still screaming their heads off. "We won."

No, we didn't win. The players won. The coach won. We sat in the stands eating bad nachos and dodging the spilled beer coming from three rows up.

But to the true fan, "We won" is a spot-on statement. Whatever school or sports franchise you favor, that is *your* team. You so identify with the team that their victory is your victory. And you've got the \$124 sweatshirt and giant foam finger to prove it.

That is even truer for the Christian life. **Christ's victory is our victory.**

Life has a way of defeating us. Our sin and failures pile on—and we can do nothing about it. But Christ did. He defeated sin and death on the cross and rose victorious. And when we choose to follow Him and identify with Him, His victory becomes our victory.

Toward the end of his life the apostle John had a vision of Jesus—the same Jesus he walked with for three years. He had seen Jesus tired. He had seen Jesus hungry. He had seen Jesus verbally attacked and physically abused. He saw Jesus die. But as an old man, John now saw this same Jesus in a completely different way.

He saw Jesus in all His victorious glory.

"The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters" (Rev. 1:14-15).



And Jesus spoke:

"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades" (vv. 17-18).

Jesus stands victorious, and because we are His children—identified with Him—the fact that He lives forever means we live forever.

We're more than fans. We're full-on participants in victory.