*Grace Group Study Guide*

*Greater >*

*Colossians 2:13-15*

**Triumph:** noun

1. The act, fact, or condition of being victorious or triumphant; victory; conquest.
2. A significant success or noteworthy achievement; instance or occasion of victory.
3. Exultation resulting from victory; joy over success.

**John MacArthur** comments that **triumph ...**

*.. .is a technical term, and it had some very significant meaning in the Roman world. The
Romans had what they called, "e triumph." It was the highest honor that could ever be paid
to a victorious Roman general. When the Roman government gave a general a triumph that
was the ultimate. Before any Roman general could be granted a triumph, he must have
achieved certain things. He must have been the actual commander-in-chief in the field, and
not a secondary leader; the campaign that he engaged in must have been completely
finished; the region which was conquered completely pacified, and the victorious troops
brought home. Furthermore, according to Roman history, 5,000 of the enemy, at least,
must have fallen in one engagement* so *that it fell into the category of a slaughter.
Furthermore, as a result of this campaign, a positive extension of Roman territory must
have been gained, and not merely a disaster retrieved or an attack repelled. And the victory
must have been won over a foreign foe, and not in a civil war. Triumphs didn't happen very
often.*

*But in an actual triumph, the procession of the victorious general marched through the
streets of Rome all the way to the capitol. And you can even read about the sequence of
that march and the order of the people in the parade itself. First, there came the state
officials and the Senate-- always the politicians. Then there came the trumpeters, who were
heralding what was coming. Then came the spoils taken from the conquered land, carted
along. For example, when Titus conquered Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the seven-branched
candlesticks, the golden table of showbread, the golden trumpets were carried through the
streets of Rome in his triumph. Then there came some painted pictures of the conquered
land and some models (can you believe it?) of conquered citadels and conquered ships.
Then there followed the white bull, which was going to be offered as a sacrifice to the gods.
Then there came the wretched captives, the enemy princes, leaders, and generals in chains,
shortly to be flung into prison and, in all probability, to be executed. Then there came the,
what were called lictors, or punishers, who were beating these people with rods. And then
there came the musicians. And then there came the priests swinging their censors with the
sweet-smelling incense burning.*

*And then came the general himself after all of this huge entourage. He was in a chariot
drawn by four horses, he was clad in a purple tunic embroidered with gold and palm leaves,
and over it a purple toga marked out with golden stars. In his hand he had an ivory scepter
with a Roman eagle on the top of it, and over his head a slave held the crown of Jupiter.
And after him rode his family. And finally, at the very end, came the army wearing all their
decorations and shouting, "Triumph! Triumph! Triumph!" I mean, it's a pretty impressive
scene.*

*And all this massive procession moves through the streets of the city, all decorated and
garlanded with flowers all shouting and, along the edge of the road of course are these
mobs of people cheering. It was a tremendous day* -- *a day which probably happened once
in a lifetime. That is the picture in Paul's mind. "*

Now that you have a. deeper understanding of that word "triumph," go back and re-read
verses 13-15 and think about the ways in which that triumph was accomplished.

The only other time we see this phrase in the NT is in 2 Corinthians 2: 14 ***"But thanks be***

**to *God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the
sweet aroma* of *the knowledge* of *Him in every place.*** *"*

The most important work of Christ's triumph was bringing salvation to those who were dead
in sin, but the use of the word in 2 Cor. 2: 14 speaks of a continuous action - *"always leads
us in His triumph in Christ.* "Now, I know we are crossing from one book into another but
there is a connection that I want you to see. In 2 Corinthians 2 and specifically in the verses
leading up to this polnt, Paul is dealing in a bit of distress. But, as with the flip of a switch
light shines into darkness, so switches Paul's demeanor as he moves from 'an attitude of
distress to an attitude of victory. So we must ask the question: what happened? How can a
man who is so greatly distressed be so sure of victory and triumph?

As he works through some of the problems he is faclnq, Paul asks a question that we see in
verse 16 - **"who is adequate for these things?"** It's at this point that I would throw my
hand up and start saying "oh, oh, oh, me, me, pick me!" If you've learned anything from
our study in Colossians, I hope that it is "Christ is greater, sufficient, pre-eminent,
sovereign, etc," and in ALL things He is victorious. Folks, Christ *always* leads us in triumph.
His victory is not contingent on world events or the stock market or our circumstances. His
victory is constant and as believers, that victory is ours! Remember from Sunday, it is
complete.

On the other hand, Paul considers what would have been the case had Christ not risen vic-
torious. Consider 1 Cor. 15:16-19- ***"For*** *if the* ***dead are not raised,*** *not even* ***Christ has
been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still
in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ*** *have. perished.* ***If we
have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are* of *aI/ men most* to *be*** *pitied~ "*

What a distressing thing to consider! However, in the very next verse (20), Paul says **•..• but
now Christ HAS been raised from the dead ... "** In ALL things He is victorious and
triumphant. Who is adequate for the distresses and difficulties in our lives? The risen Christ!

**Discussion-** In verses 13 through 15 how many times do you see the phrase "in him"or
"with him"? Who triumphed? Who was made alive by God after death?

Being "in Christ" means what's true of Christ is now true of you. Is this just theory, or is it
the basis of your life as a follower of the cross? Discuss the practical application of 13-15.
Don't forget 2 Corinthians 2: 14 - it's huge. Ponder these questions - What will my life look
like if I live my life as though these verses are true? What role does faith play in this?