What I am going to say is not going to make sense in the eyes of the world, if we compare it with today’s stereotype of life and way of thinking and with what in general we’ve been taught. All of us as soon as we are born and start growing up and learning how to live life and how to behave, are taught specific ideas or philosophies of how to face problems and how to deal with situations. Many times we’ve been inculcated with all of this information, ideas and methods. Not only by our parents, but by the world in general, by what we hear and see.

 There is a stream on which this world goes and most of the people follow it. The idea transmitted to us is that we must never give up, we have always to stick on what we think, we need to fight always, etc. It doesn’t sound bad, but we can’t imply it always and on everything. We indeed have to fight sometimes and we mustn’t give up, but all of this needs to be done in the right attitude and direction. We first need to change our direction and acknowledge our failure, I mean that up until this moment we weren’t able to make it, that we weren’t able to go in the right direction. This is what the gospel is telling us and in the eyes of the world this doesn’t make sense. It goes in the opposite direction of it.

Lets see a verse in 1 Corinthians 1:18

 18For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

 We see here how the message of the cross is taken by those who don’t believe in it, by those who perish. It is a foolishness for them. How is it possible that God is going to save and to manifest His wisdom and strength through a death on a cross? Christ died on the cross and for everyone in that very moment, this was considered as a loss. The disciples and those who followed Him cried as they lost Him, while He told to some of them not to cry for Him. No one believed that the so expected and awaited messiah was going to die. They expected rather a strong warrior or someone to deliver them from their oppressors, the Romans. God instead decided to show His salvation through the weakness of the cross, even though it wasn’t really weak. It was just looking so in the eyes of man.

 Even the enemy (the devil), surely thought that he overcame the Son of God by seeing Him to die on the cross. Just imagine us, if we didn’t have the knowledge we have today for the Son of God and we were to look at that scene, then we were also going to think that it was a defeat. Which common and normal person wouldn’t? **What happened instead, was the greatest victory and triumph ever**. And it wasn’t a failure or an accident. It was something that was premeditated before the foundations of the world. This mighty act of God was done for us. Through this sacrifice, we can be saved today and our sins can be forgiven by believing and asking for forgiveness. This is how the gospel works – in the opposite way of how the world does. That’s why it is considered as something abnormal, as foolishness and that’s why it is not accepted.

 The problem is not just in the philosophy of this world, as it sounds right, it tells us not to surrender and to keep on going, to keep on fighting, but in the direction in which is going. The gospel is also telling us to fight and not to surrender, but it goes in the **right** and opposite direction to the world. Both of them are opposite to each other. There is a line that separates them and for us to **cross** that line, we need to lose, we need to give up on the direction we’ve been going until then. This is to go on the opposite direction. This counts for those who stay on one or on the other side of the line.

 We can see also another verse speaking about something similar, that goes in the same direction. It is found in Matthew 10:39

 39He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

 Again we see something not understood and accepted by the world and our human personality and ego. It is the fact of loosing. It is referred to losing our own way and manner of doing things and reasoning. It speaks about loosing our ego and our own way. Why? Because many times we think that our way is always the right way, but it is not so.

 Jesus is telling us which is the right way, not only because He thought so and it is just better for us, but also because it is not good for us to stick on the wrong path. He is telling us this for our good. That’s why sometimes is good to lose and to surrender. This is the way leading us to true victory. Sometimes it is actually a question of recognizing that we have already lost. This is a fact. Many people keep on defending and fighting for what they have already lost and don’t want to acknowledge the defeat. We lost because of our sin and because our ways were leading us to the wrong direction. I am not saying this to bring down anyone, I am just indicating which is the way to really rise up. We have just to acknowledge it before God and to repent saying: “God I am not ashamed to acknowledge that I have lost. My ways were mistaken and wrong. I surrender my broken life in Your hands, I am giving You my defeat.”

 Many times the man doesn’t want to acknowledge his defeat and mistakes, because of his pride. This is natural. Many times also as believers we can lose a battle and it is obviously not good. I mean that it doesn’t feel right as well. But nevertheless we need to go to God with the same attitude, giving Him our defeat and surrender to His ways. This is not for the people who see their defeat, but don’t care much about it.

 The problem is that some people do acknowledge that they have lost, **but they don’t go to God with their defeat and face it by themselves instead**. This may lead many times to take some wrong and drastic decisions and fall into desperation.

 People get desperate looking at their defeat, looking at the wrong choices they have done and blame themselves, but without looking for the real solution which is to go before God and place it in His hands. Those who do that also have acknowledged that were wrong, but get a new strength and hope, because they feel renewed by God’s uplifting power. This is the real victory. The victory achieved through our failure. God is using all of these things to build something new. He makes all things, including problems and failures to work out for good to those who love Him. On the other side there are people trying to rise up by using different methods to deal with their situation and failure.

 There are many motivational speakers in today’s days and many people looking for the answers there, where they can receive apparently a solution that in a way convinces them that their problem was just something psychological and their mistake was just a wrong way of viewing things. **The problem that we have instead is something real and just covering it with patches won’t help. It is so real that caused Christ to come down to this earth and die for it. He died because of our sin and failure, transforming it in this way in a victory, in an amazing triumph. This is the reason why we need to face it, to face our failure and problem and place it in His hands, entrust it in Him. If we don’t do that we will render His sacrifice in vain for us. His sacrifice instead, had and is having a great value and we need to acknowledge it. He suffered and poured His precious blood for this. If we don’t do that, then we will be guilty for His blood shed on the cross, for His death. Then it is like He died and suffered in vain for us. It is like we killed Him and caused Him to suffer and His blood is going to be on us, not to cleanse us and save us, but to condemn us. One day God will judge the people not on the base of what they have done, but firstly on the fact that they have refused His sacrifice.** The first question will not be: “why have you done this or that, why have you lied or even committed murder”, but why haven’t you accepted the sacrifice of my only begotten son?” That’s the main thing – His sacrifice. He suffered for us. Jesus was crucified because of your sin. You and I are debtors to God in a way and **we can’t pay back**. Not by ourselves. That’s why this sacrifice was done. He paid for us, we just need to accept it, to accept this gift. You would say: “But I didn’t ask Him to do it for me”, but God loved you so much that He did it. So that you can have an opportunity. Because without this, you were going to be lost forever, separated from Him and His glory.

 Why did He have to die? Because that was the only way. Because He had to pay for our sin in this way. Otherwise we pay for it. And so it will happen if we don’t accept it.

 28And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.  Romans 8:28

 As we said before, the real victory comes, when we acknowledge our failure, when we acknowledge that we have lost. Here from this verse in Romans we see the amazing ability of God to turn our failures in something good. That’s why He is so great and is having everything under control. It says that “all things” work together for good to those who love Him. “All things” includes also problems and mainly that, as we naturally know that the good things are good for us. Yes, we can discuss also on the fact that not everything that seems good in our eyes works really for good at the end, but this is something different. Here we speak about the things that we wouldn’t like to face most of the times. They work out for good. Obviously we need to surrender to God, we need to belong to Him and to love Him. That’s why we mustn’t in a way be ashamed to admit that we’ve failed and present ourselves before God in this way. **He is having this capability, to make a beauty out of ashes. But for this purpose, we need to acknowledge our weakness** **before Him.**

 Sometimes even as believers we can see ourselves losing and being defeated. It is hard, but we need to admit our defeat in front of God and be confident, that He can use it for something good. It happens that the devil has premeditated to harm us, but what the Lord actually does is that He manages to turn it into something good. The real believers in any case don’t take lightly the failure or the defeat as they love the Lord and they look not to repeat it. Nevertheless the Lord uses these things for His purpose and this is a mystery. **The mystery of the grace and godliness.**

16And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.

1 Timothy 3:16

 Here we see that it speaks about God being manifested in flesh. We know that this is having to do with Him coming down here to us, giving His life for us and suffering. This is what the mystery of godliness is. This mystery is having to do with His death.

 He took our defeat and suffered and did what no one expected by dying on the cross and making it look as a defeat, but it resulted as a victory at the end. This is that mystery on which only God is having control. We can see situations in the Bible in which certain characters failed and that resulted in their good and God’s glory, because they still looked for the Lord afterwards. The question is not failing, so that He can work in us, but to seek His kingdom and love Him. We don’t want to fail, because we love Him, but when that happens, it could work for good. This is the way how He takes control over the situation. The mystery is in the fact that something that we esteemed as a failure, turned into something good. This is something that we cannot know. **Our desire however should be to love Him and not to fail**.

 We can see the situation of Samson who lost something as he told all his secrets to Delilah. He lost all of his strength and in this way, his enemies, the Philistines got hold of him and blinded him (Judges 16). Samson was enslaved by them and it seemed that every hope was gone, but after a while, he got his confidence in God back and in a precise moment he asked Him for a new strength and managed to destroy and kill more enemies than ever before. There were many consequences of his unwise decisions taken before and he lost almost everything, but the key was that in that moment he looked upon God and cried out to Him. So we see how all of this worked for good. I repeat that we mustn’t look to fail or be defeated as this comes naturally in us, but to love Him.

 In chapter 8 of Romans is where the believers find their hope, in this capability of God to make things to work out for good, to turn our failure into victory. They find it there, because they see their real condition. When we see our real condition we get desperate and we don’t know what to do. Here is where the Lord comes and changes the situation. In the same chapter in verse 37 it is said as well that we are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us.

 37Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Romans 8:37

 To be real conquerors or better said “more than conquerors”, because this is what we are with Christ, means also that we are in this way, because we have accepted His victory on the cross. It is not that we overcame. He overcame and we benefit of being more than conquerors because of Him. We need to give up our own way, we need to “lose” our life as Matthew 10:39 tells us. The question is that in Him and His way we are victorious. **We can be conquerors in this world, we can have victories (apparently), but when we are in Him, we are “more than conquerors”. More than we expected, as this goes for eternity.**

 Many people don’t want to admit that they have failed, because they don’t know how to face it, but the Christians, I mean the real believers, have their eyes set on the cross, on the one who overcame there, despising the shame and the failure, the author and finisher of our faith.

 Do you know why He had to be crucified and the crucifixion in itself seemed as a failure? Because He took our failures there on the cross. He took our defeat. **He was “defeated” instead of us. He let this to happen. And this caused Him to achieve the greatest victory ever over evil. That was the reason why He didn’t come apparently as this great deliverer as they expected Him to be**. He indeed will come in this way one day. At His return. He came to die as a Lamb and will return as a Lion. The Lion of Judah. We see that this is His real condition and position. As a conqueror, as an overcomer. He had to go through this shame of dying on a cross and suffer for us. Because that is our condition. That’s why, He let Himself to be defeated.

 From our side we just need to acknowledge it, to acknowledge what we are and what we deserve – the punishment and the shame, and He will give us His victory and will make us more than conquerors. He will not let us feel everything He felt on the cross and He will not let us to be punished for our sins. He just wants us to acknowledge our real condition. Yes, sometimes, we can go through tough situations, so that we can get to the position to acknowledge it, but we will never get to be fully punished for our sins. He already took that. If He corrects us and teaches us something, it is for our good, so that we can set our sight on Him.

 This is obviously for those who believe and leave themselves in God’s hands. All the rest of the people will have to face the just retribution for their sins. It sadly happens with those who considered themselves as conquerors (winners) here in this life, those who were always successful and winning according to the standards of this world. I am not saying that Christians cannot be successful. Yes, they can, and this will be in God’s eyes at first place, which is the most important. This will happen only after acknowledging their weakness and condition before Him and in this way giving up their ways.