

THE ENEMY'S DEFEAT

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"For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12)

There is a supernatural aspect to our life on earth, we shouldn't ignore it.

"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are." (1 Peter 5:8-9)

HOW IS THE ENEMY DEFEATED?

We live in a fallen world. Genesis 3 recounts the first sin of the human race which really starts off the Biblical story, the beginning of human moral failure.

Adam and Eve were given an instruction from God, the devil lied, tempted them, and they disobeyed God – they sinned, they ignored His command. God takes sin very seriously, as a consequence they were separated from Him, so we are also separated from God (Romans 5:12).

Sin is universal and when we sin, we sin against God.

- Sin affects everyone (Romans 3:10)
 - We are wholly fallen and therefore wholly in need of redemption
- Sin affects everything
 - It keeps us from the presence of God – we cannot know God or have a relationship with Him
 - It makes us unable to do God's will
 - It makes us unrighteous before God's law
 - We become insensitive to God's word
 - We are subject to God's wrath

It is in this situation that we find ourselves and that the enemy uses to do his work.

GOD'S VICTORY

Death and hell have no victory over us.

"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:55-57)

The work of Christ on the cross is the ultimate basis for that victory. It was the place that Satan was decisively defeated. Because of Jesus' death on the cross our sins are completely forgiven. (Col. 1:13-14; Romans 5:1-11)

For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. (Col. 1:13-14)

It was the death of Jesus, because of His great love for us, that bridges the gap between us and God

- It covers our sins, we are shown grace
- Allows us to have a relationship with God
- We are justified, we are sanctified
 - A process of renewal and transformation
 - Being set apart by God
 - Being made holy

This is also therefore everything the enemy wants to stop but he can't.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it." (John 1:5)

Satan and the demonic forces have been overcome by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Satan has no rightful authority over us (Hebrews 2:14; Col. 2:13-15)

"Christians can be assured that they will be preserved for the Kingdom of God, not because of what they are capable of themselves, but because they are in the hands of the sovereign God of grace who has brought them life from the grave, holds them now in face of all the assaults of the world, flesh and devil and can be trusted to continue this ministry of grace to all eternity."

— Bruce Milne, *Know The Truth*

HOW DO WE LIVE THIS?

Remember this truth – it is easy to get used to the idea of grace and forgiveness.

‘Only when grace is still "amazing" – when we return to Christ and the cross where God's love for us was demonstrated to us – does it retain its power in us. Only a we retain a sense of our own profound sinfulness can we retain a sense of the graciousness of grace.’

— Sinclair Ferguson, *In Christ Alone*

Don't get overfamiliar or complacent about grace (Romans 6:1-2)

Realise the authority we have been given. It is not our job to defeat the devil because that has already been done, but we have been given authority to rebuke the devil, to rebuke his work and to rebuke evil spirits (Luke 9:1; Luke 10:17-19; 2 Corinthians 10:3-4; Acts 8:7; Acts 16:18).

Where we see the lies and deception at work in our lives and other people's lives, we absolutely have the right to stand against it:

- Sometimes this will mean getting rid of the negative
- Sometimes this will be filling ourselves with the positive

"It is funny how mortals always picture us putting things into their minds, in reality our best work is done by keeping things out." — C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

Keep a correct perspective:

- The enemy would love to deceive us about himself as much as anything else
- On the one hand we can ignore it altogether
- But equally, over-emphasis on these spiritual powers is also a mistake (Luke 10:20)

Take responsibility for ourselves:

- We are still responsible for our sin
- He will tempt us, he will know exactly how to tempt us and it will be different for everyone
- Temptation is fuelled by our own evil desires – so those are what we need to address (Matthew 26:41)
- Overcome the sinful desires and actions that remain in our lives – the devil will use any foothold he can get

"And don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil." (Ephesians 4:26-27)

- Areas of continuing sin become weaknesses and vulnerabilities he will exploit – even areas where we think we are doing well can become a stumbling block (Romans 6:12-13)
- We know that we will have victory over all temptation with the help of God (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Focus on our own sanctification and the work of God in our lives and the church:

- Grow in holiness and faith
- Replace our sinful desires with obedience to God (Romans 6:16-18)
- We need the help of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26)
- We need to turn our eyes to Jesus (Colossians 3:1-17)
- God has given us everything we need to achieve this (2 Peter 1:3-11)

Remember the armour of God as our defence (Ephesians 6:11-18)

CONCLUSION

We should know our enemy. We should also know our enemy is defeated and we have nothing to fear from him. Our focus should be on Jesus. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Above all, remember that our victory lies in Jesus, in His death and resurrection, in the hope that we have in Him. Remember what we are heading for. (Revelation 21:3-7)

Thank God, it is finished!