

Understanding the Battle

2 Corinthians 1:20-22

Preface

Illus: Deer's Watchful Eye – Yesterday Austin, myself and Brad were working up at our hunting camp. We are building a small room under the barn for a camp house. We were making all sorts of noise with saws and nail guns. Every so often we would look up and see a large deer about 200 yards away eating around the feeder. It didn't matter how much noise we made, it didn't seem to bother her. But if one of us walked away from the building towards the truck which was in her direction, she bolted to the woods. This told me that while she appeared to not be concerned about us, the opposite was true. She was keenly aware of our presence and was keeping a watchful eye on our every move.

Christians must be like that when it comes to Satan. We must understand that Satan is alive and real. We must keep a watchful eye for his deceiving ways.

Scripture

²⁰For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. ²¹Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, ²²set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 2 Corinthians 1:20-22 NIV

Introduction

Everyone faces struggles and difficulties. Everyone faces temptations. Whether it is in the area of drugs, sex, integrity, money, anger or faithfulness, we all face temptations and struggles.

We are constantly in a spiritual battle with Satan. Every day he attacks us and tempts us to draw us away from fellowship with God.

But as our text tells us, **we are God's children sealed with His ownership and anointed with His Holy Spirit.**

The Bible says if we are not familiar with its teachings, we become deceived and have no power to defeat the devil in our lives. The truth is that the Bible has a lot to say about those who are "in Christ" and the battle we face.

1. We Only Have One Enemy

We are so busy fighting all the little crises in our lives that so often we don't have time for spiritual matters. Worship becomes neglected, Bibles go unread, Prayers remain unsaid, and God continues to be left out leaving room for Satan's lies.

Satan strives to put small struggles into the lives of Christians so that we stay occupied with these things and **neglect the one true enemy we DO have – Satan himself.**

We find ourselves overwhelmed fighting all the little enemies we have of our own happiness, not realizing that the Enemy who seeks to kill, steal and destroy us is given free reign.

We need to understand this important truth, **people are not our enemies. Satan is our enemy and he uses other people to tempt and anger us.** But when we can truly understand who our real enemy is, we can begin to make an impact on people.

I remember reading a book years ago called, "Tracks of a Fellow Struggler." It was written by a Presbyterian Pastor. He wrote about his struggles sometime with people in his congregation. He points out that when we recognize our true enemy, rather than seeing that person who is always on our case as the enemy, we will see that he is just a fellow struggler fighting the same battle with the same enemy – the devil.

1 Peter 5:8 says, *“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”*

It is extremely important for us to recognize who is our real enemy - Satan.

2. Satan’s Power is Limited.

It is also important to recognize how much power our enemy has.

Most people will tell you that the devil is second in power only to God. And it is true that we should never underestimate the power of Satan.

1 John 5:19 says, *“We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.”*

There is no doubt Satan carries a lot of power over this world. But **for those of us who are in Christ, Satan’s power is limited.**

1 John 5:18 says, *“We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.”*

Notice it does not say that we do not sin; it says that we cannot continue to live in a state of sin.

And what is the reason we cannot continue in sin? Because Jesus, the One who was born of God keeps us safe and the evil one cannot harm us.

Philippians 2:13 says, *“...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”*

Don’t ever get the **mistaken idea that God saves you and then leaves you alone** to fight and scratch your way through this world.

2 Thessalonians 3:3 tells us, *“But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”*

God is on our side. The devil cannot do anything to us when we are in Christ without the Father’s permission or our permission. Our Father strengthens and protects us. Satan’s power is limited.

Illus: I heard a story about one church in a small town. Before the services started, the townspeople were sitting in their pews and talking about their lives, their families, etc. Suddenly, the Devil himself appeared at the front of the congregation. Everyone started screaming and running for the front entrance, trampling each other in a frantic effort to get away from evil incarnate. Soon everyone was evacuated from the Church, except for one gentleman who sat calmly in his pew, not moving, seemingly oblivious to the fact that God’s ultimate enemy was in his presence. Now this confused Satan a bit, so he walked up to the man and said, "Don’t you know who I am?"

The man replied, "Yep, sure do."

Satan asked, "Aren’t you afraid of me?"

"Nope, sure ain’t," said the man.

Satan was a little perturbed at this and asked, "Why aren’t you afraid of me?"

The man calmly replied, "Been married to your sister for over 30 years."

Well, that is one way to not fear Satan. But for those not married to the sister of the devil, there is a better solution; **to remain and walk in fellowship with Christ.**

The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 6:16, *“In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish ALL the flaming arrows of the evil one.”*

We need to recognize that when we are in Christ the devil no longer has power over us unless we give it to him.

Contrary to the popular slogan “The devil made me do it”, the devil cannot make us do anything!

He is the great deceiver! And he will try to deceive you but in Christ, he has no power over you and me. He can only defeat us if we allow him.

3. In Christ there is Victory

Ephesians 2:3-5 says, *“³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.”*

And verse 10 reads, *“¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

We have lost hold of the fact that **“we are”, not “were” and , not “used to be”**; **we ARE God's workmanship.**

And he has prepared IN ADVANCE for us to do His good works.

The secret weapon to battling Satan is the truth. Our weapon is the truth of who we are and to whom we belong.

Illus: Is there anyone here who would stand back and watch as Satan beat up and destroyed one your children? Of course not! You would do everything in your power to protect them. God has given us the power over Satan through Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:31 says it best, *“... If God is for us, who can be against us?”*

We have let the devil deceive us into thinking that we ought to live just like anyone else in this world.

But we ARE NOT LIKE anyone else in the world. We are the children of God – Victorious in Christ Jesus.

We are NO LONGER separated from God. We HAVE DIRECT ACCESS to the Father. We need no longer live as if we were in the battle alone.

God never intends for his children to live in defeat. The battle continues to go on, but the war has already been won! You are victorious over Satan through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Satan can hiss but he cannot harm you!

Conclusion

Romans 8:37-39 reminds us, *“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, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

So pull yourself together and pull yourself up from defeat. There is victory in Jesus.