

Sermon - 28 September 2025

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Date: 28 September 2025

Preacher: Ife Ojetayo

[0:00] Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.

! Amen. If you are a visitor among us this morning, I want to assure you, in case you are worried and think what is wrong with these people?

Is it something they do every Sunday? They carry a sword into church? We don't do this every Sunday. We don't always process with a sword. We do so this particular Sunday as an observance of this feast day of St. Michael and all angels.

And we do so as just a symbolic thing to remind us, to especially point out to us that we live amid warfare. To remind us of the conflict in which we are active participants.

The Bible uses many different narratives, you know, to describe the Christian life. Many are positive and comforting. Narratives like imagery and metaphors like God being our Father and we as children.

[1:10] Or like the Lord being our good shepherd and we being sheep in the midst of green pastures, being tended by our shepherd.

Or the metaphor of a wedding with Christ being the bridegroom and the church's bride. These are wonderful metaphors that comforts us. But then there are also harder metaphors, more grueling ones.

Like such as the Christian life being a life of pilgrimage. Or that we are strangers and exiles in this world. And then there is this metaphor that is perhaps the most troubling of all.

Throughout both the Old and New Testament, there is this recurring metaphor that we are in war. We are in warfare. And we see that in our Revelation text this morning.

And I invite you to open up to Revelation 12. We are going to be in verse 7 to 12. It is on page 1226 of your pew Bible. Page 1226. So throughout the Bible, the Bible paints this narrative of a cosmic wall between good and evil.

[2:20] God and Satan. God and Satan. The seed of the woman. And the seed of the serpent. And whether we recognize it or not, as I said earlier, we are active participants in this war.

In this conflict, there are no neutral grounds. There are only two sides. And you are either on one side or the other.

And so two questions then arises. Are you aware that you are in a war? If you are not aware, it may mean you have been deceived by the enemy.

He would just as soon lull you to sleep. Lull your soul to sleep. And lull you all the way to the fire of hell with him. Thinking that you are in safety.

In fact, he prefers deception and subterfuge. And he works best in darkness and confusion. And this is why this observance today serves as an important reminder for us.

[3:26] To awaken us from our slumber if we were to be in one. To recognize the time that we are in. And to rededicate ourselves. Because the consequences, my friends, the consequences are I and stock.

So what are the stakes of this war? The stakes are I. It's the most significant matter to every living soul. Whether you acknowledge it or not.

It has to do with your eternal destiny. Each and every one of us. The stakes of this war has to do with our eternal destiny.

You are either on the side of God and his only angels. Where there is life everlasting. Or you are on the side of the great dragon. Spoken of here in Revelations.

And his fallen angels. Where there is eternal death. There is no neutral ground. And I say this not to make you despair.

[4:29] Actually, I say it to tell you that there is good news. There is reason to hope and rejoice. For that I invite you to open your Bible. Let's look in Revelations 12. John in this vision that he has. Christ has a vision of a battle in heaven. Verse 7. Now war arose. Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back. Now this one verse is a symbolic picture. And it's a symbolic picture from heaven's vantage point. As it were.

It is a symbolic picture from heaven's point of view. Of Christ's birth. His atonement. And his ascension to his throne room in heaven. This is the fulfillment of the long ago promised seed of the woman.

If you know your Bible. You remember in Genesis 3.15. What's just happened? Adam and Eve are eating the apple in the garden. We don't really know. We always say it's apple.

[5:31] But to be really quite frank. Frank. It's a fruit right? They've eaten that fruit. That is forbidden of them to eat. And now they are under God's judgment.

And they've told the Lord that the serpent was the one who deceived them. So in the midst of God cursing the serpent. In Genesis 3.15. We hear this phrase about an inkling of promise. About a seed of the woman who will come. And set all things right. So this picture of this battle is the beginning of this work.

Of the seed of the woman coming to make all things right. After her first parents ate that fruit in the garden. After they rebelled against God.

After they sided with the great dragon, the serpent. Against God, the creator. They deserved judgment and death. For God instead.

[6:33] Instead of judgment showed them mercy. The dragon at that point probably thought he had won. But God in cursing him. And pronouncing his doom.

Also pronounced the means of our salvation. In Genesis 3.15. We have the first pronouncement of the gospel. I will put enmity between you and the woman.

God says. And between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head. And you shall bruise his heel. God has promised.

When all seemed lost for mankind. That he would send an offspring of Eve. Who would put all things to right. And crush the head of the serpent. Once and for all.

So we have now that story. Repeating itself throughout all of scripture. From Adam to Noah. To Abraham. To Moses. To David.

[7:30] Through the exilic period. The Old Testament was all a painted shadow. Pointing to the promised fulfillment. Of humanity's redemption.

This promised seed of the woman. Was none other than Jesus Christ. He is the promised savior of the world. And at his incarnation.

The battle in heaven began. Michael the archangel. One of the chief princes of the angels. When we read about in Daniel. And we also read about him in Jude.

In the New Testament. Michael led the heavenly host. Against Satan. And his fallen angels. And what did Satan and his angels do?

They fought back. We are told. The dragon and his angels. His demons. Fought back. This battle raged on. During Jesus' earthly ministry.

[8:28] But. We are also told. Immediately after that. That there was victory. The dragon was defeated. Verse 8. And there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

The dragon was defeated. And there was no longer any place for them in heaven. The holy angels. Led by archangel Michael. Defeated the enemy.

Based on Christ. Life of perfect obedience. And based on Christ. Atoning sacrifice. Death and sacrifice. And based on Christ. Victorious resurrection. And ascension.

That is the grounds. Of the victory. And so we are told then. In verse 9 to 10. That there was this great banishment. After his defeat. The great dragon was thrown down. That ancient serpent. Who is called the devil. And Satan. The deceiver of the whole world. He was thrown down to the earth. And his angels were thrown down with him. So Satan was not only defeated.

[9:27] But he was also cast out of heaven. Jesus. Of course. Spoke of this in Luke 10. 18. When he says. I watched Satan fall like lightning.

From heaven. And you may ask. At this point. What was Satan doing in heaven. In the first place. Well I think verse 10. Explains the event for us.

Verse 10 says. I heard a loud voice in heaven. Saying what? Saying. Now the salvation. And the power. And the kingdom of our God. And the authority. Of his Christ. Have come.

For the accuser. Of our brothers. Has been thrown down. Who accuses them. Day and night.

Before our God. So what was Satan doing in heaven?

Satan had access to heaven. Primarily. And solely. To accuse us. The brethren. Day and night.

[10:26] Day and night. We're told he does. Before God. Before God. That's what Satan. That's what the word Satan and devil actually means. It means accuser. And he was very effective at it.

We were dead in our sin. The Bible tells us. Our nature corrupted by our rebellion against God. And all this Satan knows. And he rightly accused us. Before God. He says to God.

How can you. A holy God. Spare such people from destruction. How can you love them. How can you make covenants with them. And their children.

Surely you cannot. And still be a holy and just God. You must condemn them for their rebellion. And he was right. And he was right.

In all his accusations. Satan was right. We could not escape this dragon's roaring accusations against us. His every accusation was like a forged shackle.

[11:27] That further binds us. And reminds us of our guilt. And our shame. And our helplessness. And you may be here this morning.

And you feel the weight of Satan's accusations against you. Maybe you look at your life. Maybe you look at your past failures. Or your current failures.

And you wonder if there is a way out. You recognize your helplessness. I hope you've heard me earlier when I said I have good news for you. The way out.

Of that predicament. That we all are in. Because we are all sinners. Unable to help ourselves. But the way out. Is a person.

Don't miss the fact that. The outcome of this cosmic battle. That we've just read about. In here in Revelations. The outcome. Was dependent.

[12:24] On what Christ accomplished. As our representative in history. So when you read. For example. Christmas story. Christmas is coming up soon.

In a few months. When you read again. Those beautiful Christmas stories. You must see. The background of it. Was a wall raging. That's the vantage point. That we're meant to see.

Maybe you can read it then. As you do this year. Through the lens of the angels. The angels. Who bore witness. And marveled. At God's redemptive plan. In sending.

His son. Into the world. To redeem. And to save us. Sears Lewis. Described the incarnation. As the story.

Of the rightful king. Landing in disguise. In an enemy occupied territory. That's what Jesus did. He's the rightful king. But he didn't come.

[13:19] As a rightful king. He came. As a child. So that he may rescue us. So against the backdrop. Of hopelessness.

And despair. Came a rescuer. The long ago. Promised seed. Of the woman. And make no mistake. About it.

Michael. The archangel. Was not the dragon slayer. In this story. It was Christ Jesus. The angels. Were merely. Ministering angels. Who operated.

At God's. Will. And God's command. Their victory. In defeating the dragon. And banishing him from heaven. Was accomplished. Because Jesus.

Through. His. Life. And death. On the cross. Carried. All of Satan's accusations. Upon himself. All of Satan's accusations.

[14:16] About you. About. What a sinner you are. How helpless you are. How you can't save yourself. All of those accusations.

Their punishments. And their guilt. And their shame. Christ. Carried. On your behalf. Upon himself. And that is why. In heaven.

They can say. The salvation. And the power. And the kingdom. Of our God. And the authority. Of his Christ. Have come. For the accuser. The great dragon.

That ancient. Serpent. The accuser. Of our brothers. Has been thrown down. Who accuses them. Day and night. Before our God. Romans 8.1 says this.

There is therefore now. No condemnation. For those who are in Christ Jesus. On what basis. Is there no condemnation. If you are in Christ Jesus. It's on the basis of what Christ has done.

[15:19] And accomplished. So for those who believe in Jesus. For those who have entrusted their life. To him. Such people have the balance of sin against them.

Cleared. You have a clean slate. If you believe in Jesus. Your sins. Past. Present. Future. Have been nailed to his cross.

You have been forgiven. You have been given a new name. You who was a rebel. Alien. To God. You have been adopted as sons and daughters.

This is why. There is a loud cry in heaven. Salvation and power. And kingdom of our God. And authority of his Christ. Christ. Has come.

The accuser of our brothers. Has been thrown down. And this promise of forgiveness. Is for all who come to Jesus.

[16:17] All who come to Jesus. It's not for a select few. You don't have to pay for it. You don't have to earn it. You cannot earn it. But it is for all who come.

To Jesus. Confessing their sins. And asking for God's mercy. And God's help. No matter how many times. You've heard that invitation. To come. Confess your sin. Fall on his mercy.

May I plead with you this morning. Do not shut your ears. From that beckoning call of God. Your savior. Turn to Jesus.

Who alone is mighty. To save you from the same fate. That Satan. That is Satan's. And his demons. Which is eternal damnation in hell. Which is eternal damnation in hell.

So salvation has come. But then. In verse 11. We read this. And they have conquered him. By the blood of the lamb. And by the word of their testimony.

[17:17] For they loved not their lives. Even unto death. Even unto death. And so I invite you to come to Jesus. Because we're in a war. Right? Because in this war. I've said.

There are no neutral grounds. And there's only one side. That has won. There is no doubt about the victory.

And the winning side. Jesus has defeated Satan. Once and for all. If that's true then. If that is true. Verse 11. Seems a little confusing. Because it seems that. Verse 11 is speaking of an ongoing conflict.

I thought you said Jesus has won. Once and for all. And then what's this then. In verse 11 about. Death. Death. Loving their lives. Even unto death. What's that have to do with.

Jesus winning. Ever not just say Jesus won. Once and for all. And that means decisively. Why is there conflict? Why is it continuing? Well the outcome is decided.

[18:19] The outcome is decided. But the enemy. In his wickedness. And his rottenness. Is bent on taking as many down. To destruction. As he can. There's a.

Maybe an example. That might help us to understand. The state of things. In World War II. If you remember. The great decisive battle. Was on the beaches of Normandy.

On D-Day. It was clear. To all sides fighting on that day. That whoever won that battle. Was going to be. Was going to decide. Who wins the war. The Allied forces won.

Conclusively. Conclusively. At D-Day. And they knew. They would win the war. But. That wasn't the end. Of hostilities. The enemy didn't lay down their weapons.

After that battle. The Allied forces. Would still have to fight. Many more skirmishes. With casualties. And deaths. For another 11 months.

[19:18] Before the war actually ended. So what does this have to do. With our Christian life. In life. You may ask. Well. The victorious.

Ascension of Jesus. Into heaven. Until his coming back. As king. To subject all creation. To his rule. And we the church. Between those times.

Between his victorious. Ascension. His death. Buried resurrection. Ascension into heaven. And his coming back again. That the church lives within. For lack of a better word. Those 11 months.

This is the 11 months. This is the 11 months. Where Satan is defeated. It's final. It's fate is assured. Victory has been declared. But yet.

There is still ongoing skirmishes. And here's the danger. Well first. Here's the comforting word. We are. On the winning side. We are the victorious people.

[20:15] We have the winning hand. Because we have Jesus Christ. We are the victorious people. We have the winning hand. We have the winning hand. Because we have Jesus Christ. Our champions. And we are following in his train. God is established.

By his great salvation. His rule and reign in our hearts. He has unleashed on his church. His resurrection power. By which we walk in victory. Over the enemy. That's our lot. God. Only. We must not be deceived. Or be cowed into complacency. Or fear. By the enemy. Because that's what he wants to do. He wants you to be complacent. He wants you to lose sight. Of the promises of God.

He wants you to fall back on the wayside. And we. Must not do that. He wants to take as many down with him as he can.

[21 : 11] We must not be numbered among those. We must bear witness to this Christ Jesus. Our victor and our redeemer. We must not give ground.

That has already been won by Christ's shed blood. We must not give those ground back to the enemy. We must stand firm. And that standing firm begins first.

In our hearts. Know this. Brothers and sisters. Satan knows he's defeated. But this only makes him more wrathful. So if you're in Christ.

He knows he can't accuse you before God anymore. He's been kicked out of heaven. Any accusation that comes now. We have Christ our advocate. Our advocate.

You know what an advocate is? A defense attorney. And Christ Jesus as your advocate. Has never lost a case. He has a 100% winning record.

[22 : 09] When he defends his people. That's why Satan is kicked out of heaven. None of his accusations work against you before God anymore. But Satan knows this too.

So what is he doing? He's redoubled his effort. To accuse you to one another. He seeks to accuse the brethren before the world.

And he seeks to accuse the brethren. Tragically. Even within the church. To one another. And this comes often by way of slander. I know a dear brother who has been falsely slandered in the church. Not this. Not our local church. And I know the very painful travail he's in right now. As he endures a false slanderous accusation.

And as he does so. He bears such wounds. From a fellow brother in Christ. Who is slandering him. And what does that cause to the church?

[23 : 13] It threatens to divide. And cause confusion. Within the body of Christ. Satan knows he can't accuse you before God. So he will accuse you. To your fellow brothers. He will accuse you to the world out there.

Well first let's think about the church. What must we do. To counter. And to stand alert in this war. We must not be an easy tool.

In the enemy's end. To create confusion in Christ's church. We must not be an easy tool in the enemy's end.

To create confusion in Christ's church. And then what about the accusations from the world? Well we know those accusations will always come.

They are false. But they will come. Because the enemy is at work in the world. If they have falsely accused our Lord and persecuted him.

[24 : 14] We must expect the same. But then how do we fight against such accusations? How do we withstand it? Well look in verse 11. Those who belong to Christ. Have conquered.

How? By the blood of the lamb. And by the word of their testimony. For they love not their life even unto death. Well the skirmish is ongoing.

Our weapon is Christ himself. In the midst of that skirmish. And the glorious good news of that gospel of Jesus Christ. Is that divine weapon we must wield in this fight.

So what I'm calling us to brothers and sisters is to do this. Let us double down. Let us triple down. On the proclamation of Christ crucified. Let us love the brethren.

Love one another. Love your enemies. And see how you do that. As you follow Christ.

[25 : 15] Example. See how God will use your faithfulness and your standing firm. To bring glory to his name. Through your joyful and hopeful fight.

For the cause of Christ. Let us pray. Everlasting God you have ordained and constituted.

In a wonderful order. The ministries of angels and mortals. We pray now that you are mercifully granted. As your holy angels always serve and worship you in heaven.

So by your appointment they may help and defend us here on earth. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. One God. Forever and ever.

Amen.