

The Growing Christian and His Enemy

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Preacher: Pastor Bart Leger

[0 : 00] Well, good morning. Good to see everyone this beautiful Sunday morning, and we are going to be in the book of Ephesians this morning as we're continuing our series on spiritual growth.

And the reality is, if you are a growing Christian, someone does not like it. If you realize it or not, we have an enemy that frowns on your spiritual progress.

And his purpose is to hinder your road to higher ground. He will do whatever he will to stop or to slow your progress.

And this morning, we're going to be talking about our spiritual enemy because we have an adversary.

If you're following along in your notes this morning, Satan is the adversary. He is the one that will do his best to try to hinder our growth in our Christian life.

[1 : 03] And according to Ephesians 6, verses 10 through 18, where we're going to be spending our time today, we read in verse 10, And finally, my brethren, the apostle Paul writes to the Ephesian Christians, Therefore, because of what Paul says, This is true about our adversary.

Take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end, with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

So we have a determined enemy in Satan. So verse 10 tells us to be strong, be strong in the Lord. Verse 11, put on the whole armor of God. Verse 12 says that we are in a wrestling match. We are in a battle. And contrary to popular belief, Satan is real.

[3 : 08] And he is not a caricature of someone in a red suit with a pointed tail and horns and a pitchfork. The Bible says that Satan, if we are to understand what the Bible teaches about Lucifer, was created as an angel of light, was created as probably one of, if not the top angel in the hierarchy of angels in God's creation.

And he rebelled against God and ultimately was cast out of heaven by God. And today God has given him a certain amount of power to, as he is called, the God of this age.

And he is one who goes about trying to thwart God's plan. He is the one that, in the Garden of Eden, tempted Eve to take a bite of the fruit that God said that they were not to eat of.

Otherwise, their eyes would be opened and they would realize what sin really is because they disobeyed the command of God. So Satan is real.

The Bible speaks of him again and again. And the Bible also says in John chapter 10, verse 10, that his purpose is destruction. Look with me in the Gospel of John chapter 10.

[4 : 40] Well, the Bible says the thief does not come except to steal. And he's referring to Satan here. And to kill and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.

So Jesus says the thief comes to kill. The thief comes to destroy. But I've come to give life. I've come to give peace. To give life. And not only just life.

But to give life more abundantly. To have a full life. For us to be able to enjoy a complete life. And that is only found in Jesus Christ.

So our enemy is Satan. And he often operates as an angel of light. Like we said before, in the way Jesus was created.

Verse 14 of 2 Corinthians 11 tells us. And no wonder. No wonder people are deceived. For Satan himself does what?

[5 : 42] He transforms himself into an angel of light. And so many people, when they think about what Satan does to thwart God's plan or to slow us down, he's not necessarily trying to make us as evil as possible.

Satan is not necessarily trying to make us bad people so much as he comes masquerading very often as someone who is a purveyor of truth.

And someone who has your best interest at heart. But yet couched in his message is untruth or lies. In order to keep us from being who and what God wants us to be. So he comes as an angel of light. And he masquerades. And rather than one who sheds light, he is a purveyor of darkness.

He also goes about the earth as a roaring lion. We see in 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse number 8. We're told by Peter, be sober.

[6 : 54] Be vigilant. Because your adversary, the devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. So he says, be aware.

Be alert. Be vigilant. Because the devil is walking around and he is trying to get your life off the track. He is wanting your life to ride off the rails and not grow as a Christian.

Not grow in the fruit of the Spirit. Not be a kind, gentle, caring follower of Jesus Christ who is sharing the gospel. And what he wants as much as possible is to neutralize our testimony.

And help people and cause people to see, well, there's no reason why I should listen to that person.

They're just a hypocrite. And their life is no different from mine, so why should I listen to them?

And so he's walking around seeking whose life he can destroy. So the first thing that we see is we have an adversary.

[7 : 57] But the good thing is, the second point that we see this morning, is that we have allies in this battle. We have allies in this skirmish on earth.

And we see that our allies, Paul says, finally, brethren. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

We are not alone in the battle. We have other followers of Christ who is going through the battle right along with us. Others face the same foe.

So every Christian is facing the same enemy. And as we saw in Ephesians, our enemy is not flesh and blood.

Our enemy is not the person sitting across the aisle. Our enemy is not the person on the other side of the political spectrum. Our enemy is not the one that we disagree with here on planet Earth.

[8 : 57] Our enemy is Satan. And he's the puppet master. He is the one that is trying to run this world. And he is the one that is trying to get this world off track and to forget about God, to ignore God.

So Satan is the one that is our enemy. At salvation, whether you realize it or not, we're all born into this fighting fellowship.

We're all born fighting against Satan the moment we trust Christ as our Savior. Because at that point, Satan becomes your enemy.

Before, the Bible says, Jesus was saying, you're of your father the devil. In other places, the Bible talks about that those who are not following Christ are doing the devil's bidding.

And he's fine with that. But the moment we change sides, the moment we trust Christ as our Savior, he will do his best to thwart everything that we do.

[10 : 02] So Satan is our enemy. So let's be sure we fight the real foe. Let's be sure we are fighting against Satan and his minions and not each other.

And so let's learn how to help one another along in this battle with the enemy. Do we see another follower of Jesus struggling with temptation? Let's come alongside them and help them.

Do we see a brother or sister in Christ discouraged? Let's come alongside and share with them a word of encouragement. And maybe just simply the ministry of presence to be there for them.

As a fellow Christian going through a difficult time, passing through a difficulty. You see, we're a pilgrim.

The Bible says we're pilgrims passing on life's way. But the reality is we're not the only one. We're not the only pilgrim. We're not the only alien here on planet Earth.

[11 : 01] There are fellow Christians. I don't care where you travel on planet Earth. Chances are you have the possibility of running in to a fellow alien, a fellow pilgrim.

Now, we're not talking about illegal aliens that cross the border. We're talking about people who have begun to follow Jesus Christ by placing their trust in Jesus, who no longer belong to planet Earth, but belong to heaven.

And one day we'll be ushered from this life into the presence of God. And so the Bible says we have another citizenship. Our citizenship is in heaven.

And so that's where we're sending our retirement is up to heaven. And so the works that we do, it is to prepare our eternity and prepare for our eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ.

So let's rush to the aid of a fellow follower of Christ who is going through a difficult time. And be quick to go to our knees in prayer.

[12:03] Verse 18 says, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance. And he ends verse 18 with, and supplication for all saints.

So Paul says we're not alone. We're not alone in this battle. We're not alone. We're not the only pilgrim on Earth. And when we see another brother or sister in need, we're to go to our knees.

We're to go to prayer and pray for and intercede for our brothers and sisters in Christ. And to make supplication for all the saints, as he says in verse number 18.

The next thing that we see is we have available resources in this battle. Not only are we not alone in this battle against Satan, but we have supernatural resources available.

Just like God told Israel when in the Old Testament that he said, It's not your horses. It's not the chariots. It's not having faster horses that will help you win.

[13:11] It's having God on your side. And what we see in our Christian life is we have supernatural resources that will help us fight this battle against Satan.

Verse 10 says, Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in what? The power of his might. It's not our power. It's not our ability to say no to temptation.

It's his ability to produce that power within us. The same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is the same power that is available to you and to me to say no to temptation.

And to be victorious in this battle with Satan. He says in verse number 14, Stand, therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Above all, taking the shield of faith. We see these resources that are ours, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

[14:37] So we're told in verse 10 to be strong. We have resources that are available to us. Reality is you might feel weak. You might feel, I can't say no.

I can't bear up under this pressure. Life is getting too difficult for me to go on. Don't lose hope. Don't lose faith.

Don't lose sight as Peter did when the wind and the waves were beginning to howl around him and as he was walking on the water, going to Jesus. The only reason Peter was able to walk on the water was because Jesus was upholding him.

And the moment Peter began to take his eyes off of Jesus, he began to sink. The same is true for us. We may feel weak, but we need to keep our eyes on him and to realize that his resources are at our disposal.

We can draw on God's strength and it's available for us. We're told to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

[15:48] We have the power of God and we have the weapons of warfare available at our disposal. All of these things that he just listed. We have our loins girded about with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

We have for our feet the preparation of the gospel of peace. We have the shield of faith. We have the helmet of salvation. We have the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And we have prayer that will marshal these resources for us when we need it. So we have the power of God and we have the weapons of warfare at our disposal.

And we have the power of the Holy Spirit within each believer, every single one of us. The moment we trusted Christ as our Savior. The Bible says we were sealed from that moment forward to the day of redemption.

The Bible says that we were baptized into the body of Christ. And we were provided the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit, severally to each one as he will, provided the gifts of the Spirit.

[17 : 02] So that we can be building up the body of Christ. We're going to be talking about that this evening in our Bible study. Talking about we are to recognize and to support and utilize the gift of the Spirit that God has given to us.

So what do we have available to us? According to our text this morning, we have the power of God available to each believer.

We have the power of prayer. That's available to each one of us. We have the power of the Word of God at our disposal. We have the power of the blood of Christ.

And we have the power of a conquering Savior. So all of these things are available to us today.

So as we're growing in the Christian life, we need to recognize that we have an enemy. And there is no such thing as coasting our way to heaven.

[18 : 11] Because if we stop exercising and practicing the disciplines of the faith, which would be prayer and Bible study and sharing our faith and evangelism and supporting one another, encouraging one another.

If we stop, then it's like being in a river with a strong current. If we stop swimming against the flow, it will take us downriver where we don't want to be.

So we need to continue growing and to allow God's Holy Spirit to continue giving us the power to combat Satan and his forces.

So in conclusion, we were born to win. We were born again to win. We were born into the family of God victorious. Not only that, the Bible says we are super conquerors.

We are hyper conquerors. We are more than victorious in Christ. So we don't have to be defeated.

We have the Holy Spirit within us. We don't have to live lives of defeat.

[19 : 25] So let's make use of our resources and keep on growing. So as followers of Jesus Christ, don't give up.

Don't give in and decide that you're going to be used by God every single day of our Christian life.

We don't have to live a life of defeat. We have victory against our enemy. Let us pray. Father, this morning, we are so excited that you have given to us the victory through your Holy Spirit.

We are thankful and we thank you this morning for the weapons of warfare available at our disposal. So Father, we thank you that you have already provided the victory.

Help us to utilize the weapons of our warfare in Christ. We thank you for this. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.