

Christ's Devil-defeating Death

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Preacher: Rev. Iver Martin

- [0 : 00] Turn with me to the chapter that we read, Hebrews chapter 2, and look with me, if you will please, at verse 14.
- Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 14. Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself, that's Jesus, likewise partook of the same things.
- That through death, his death, he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.
- At first sight, for the person who knows nothing about the cross, Calvary is the scene of the greatest tragedy in human history.
- Not only is it testimony to mankind's cruelty on the grandest scale possible, it is testimony to mankind's injustice.
- [1 : 45] At a very basic human level, nobody can come away from Calvary without being utterly appalled at how corrupt human rulers can be in putting to death an entirely innocent man for the sake of political convenience.
- Calvary, to the person who knows nothing more, is a place of miserable defeat.
- The killing of an innocent man, the tyranny of injustice, and the annihilation of good. And that would be perfectly true, if not for one moment, which transformed and transforms everything.
- And that moment is the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. That was the moment which proved that what had taken place on the cross, with all the cruelty and all the pain and the agony, was not as it first appeared.
- It was not the victory of Rome over Jesus, neither was it the victory of the devil over God.
- [3 : 29] The resurrection demonstrated once and for all God's ultimate victory over sin and death and over the evil one.
- The verse that we are looking at today speaks about this very thing. Christ's victory over the devil.
- We often speak about Christ's death and we are going to remember the death of Jesus as the sacrifice by which Jesus was made sin for us.
- And by which he secured our forgiveness and our justification. But we have to confess, don't we?
- At least I have to confess, that I don't often think about the death of Jesus as the moment in which he destroyed the work of the devil.
- [4 : 34] But if you look closely at the New Testament, that's exactly the message that you will find. So we ignore this aspect of the death of Jesus at our peril.
- For example, Colossians chapter 2 and verse 15, it tells us, He, Jesus, disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

And then 1 John in chapter 3 and verse 8, we read very plainly, very clearly, The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

Jesus himself, on at least one occasion, he said, he told of how he saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

And so I'd like us to look at this verse that very clearly takes us into this great theme, This great truth, this great encouraging truth, That declares to us that the works of the devil have been destroyed by Jesus, Particularly at Calvary.

[5 : 54] Here is what the writer says once again, Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He himself likewise partook of the same things, That through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, That is, the devil.

And he goes on in verse 15, And deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. I'd like to ask three questions about this verse this morning.

I want to ask first of all, In what sense can it be said that the devil has the power over death? How are we to understand verse 14?

Which tells us about how Jesus came, That he might destroy the one who has the power over death. In what sense does the devil have the power over death?

That's the first question. The second question follows on from that. In what sense could Jesus, By death, That's what the verse says, That Jesus by death, Bring about the destruction of the devil?

[7 : 15] What's the connection between the death of Jesus, And the destruction of the devil? And then thirdly, And again following on from the first two questions, In what sense can it be said that Jesus, By death, Destroyed the devil?

Is the devil destroyed? That's what we're going to ask in the last instance. Is he destroyed? If he is, Why do I sin so easily? If he is, Why is there still such carnage in the world?

But if he isn't, Then what does it mean? What does this verse mean? That Jesus by death destroyed the devil. That's what it tells us. That is the devil.

And deliver all those who through fear of death, Were subject to lifelong slavery. So these are three questions I think, That we're bound to ask, If we're reading these verses carefully, And as we should do.

And asking questions all the time, As to what they mean, And what we are to make of them. I hope that we can go some way, In answering these questions, As we apply our minds, To this passage today, As we prepare, For the Lord's table.

[8 : 35] In what sense then, Does the devil have power, Over death? That's what it tells us in verse 14, So that he might destroy the one, Who has the power of death.

That is, Just in case there was any doubt, That is, The devil. Well first of all, What does it not mean? It does not mean, That the devil, Has the power, Or the authority, To decide, When a person, Dies, Or lives.

That's not the kind of authority, Which has been spoken about, In this passage. God's, Authority, Is when, We live, And die.

He has the, When we talk about power here, We're not talking in any sense, That the devil has ultimate power, He doesn't. That belongs to God, And continues to belong to God, Even in a fallen universe.

Whenever we talk about the authority, Or the power that the devil has, And he does have power, But it's not the kind of power, That supersedes, God's power.

[9 : 53] It is not ultimate. It's extensive, But it is not ultimate. What then, Does it mean, That the devil, Has power, Over death?

Well, We have to go all the way back, To the old testament. Until when God created, Adam and Eve, In the first place, In a state of bliss, And perfection, And placed them, In the garden of Eden.

And when he gave them, The command, Not to eat of the tree, Of the knowledge, Of good and evil. And you remember, The story of course, Of how sin, Came into the world, And destroyed, The balance, And the harmony, And the joy, The unbroken, Perfect joy, That existed, In the garden of Eden.

The fellowship, That there was, Between Adam and Eve, And God, The communion, Which made, For a perfect, Human existence. And that was destroyed, By the devil, In coming in.

Now he, Did not, Once again, Have ultimate power, Over Adam and Eve. He could not force them, To do his will. What he did was, He influenced them, And used, That influence, The power of persuasion, We call it.

[11 : 08] To deceive, Eve, And Adam, So that instead, Of fixing, Their minds, And their allegiance, To the Lord, And what he had commanded them, They chose, A path of disobedience.

And the Bible tells us, That that was the moment, When the perfection, In which God created the world, Was transformed, To the darkness, And the shame, And the misery, And the death.

The day that you eat thereof, Said God, You shall surely die, And that's exactly what happened. The devil promised, That they would not die, But he could never keep his promise, Because he was a liar, From the very beginning.

And that's exactly what happened, The moment that Adam and Eve, Turned their faces away from God, And chose, What they thought, Was a path of liberty, And freedom, And greater happiness.

They chose the path, Of destruction, And death, Paul tells us, Came into the world, Sin came into the world, And death, By sin. And so that all, Men and women, Sinned, Invading, The whole of human existence, And we believe, The whole of existence, In the universe.

[12 : 24] It became a broken world, A world full, Of carnage, And lostness, And confusion, And despair, And fear, That's what this passage, Tells us about, Fear, The fear of death, And the fear, Of the unknown, That's the kind of world, That you and I live in, That's the kind of world, That we have been saved in, A world that is full, Of confusion, And fear, And that fear, Surrounds, The confusion, As to who we are, As a human race, Having lost sight, Of the purpose, For which, We were created, And designed, In the image, Of God.

And that was the moment, When, When Adam and Eve, They handed over, Their allegiance, To the devil. They didn't know, That that's what they were doing, They were deceived, But by so foolishly, Turning away, From the command of God, The simple command of God, Not to eat of the tree, Of knowledge of good and evil, They were handing over, Their allegiance, And their obedience, To God, To the devil, And allegiance, Had been given, 100% up until that moment, To the Lord, And they had lived, In perfect happiness, But now, There was, The misery, And the shame, That sin, Brought into, The world, And death came, Through sin, Every single person, That was born, Into the world, From that moment onwards, Was born, Under the power, And under the authority,

Of, The one, Who had, Influenced, Adam and Eve, And so, That the moment, Cain was born, He was born a sinner, The moment, Abel was born, He was born a sinner, The moment, Zeth was born, He was born a sinner, Unable, Anymore, To obey the Lord, And to give that, Allegiance, That God had designed, Adam and Eve, To give, They were dead, In trespasses, And sins, That is the human condition, We are unable, To please God, We are unable, To live for God, We don't want, To live for God, We want to live, For ourselves, We want to put, Ourselves first, I remember, Hearing John Carson, Once many years ago, Putting it this way, That in the garden of Eden, The center was God, Up until the moment, That Adam and Eve, Broke the command of God, And that moment, In which everything, Before then, Revolved around God, All their eyes, Were fixed of God,

All their pleasure, Was in God, Their delight, Was in God, Their joy, Was in God, That was when, The perfect balance, Was maintained, But the moment, That sin came into the world, Then, They became, The center of attraction, They became, The center of everything, I, Rose out of nowhere, And became, The all important, Objective of living, And that's the way it is, Isn't it?

In a sinful world, And that's what we have to be saved from, The great I, Me, Me first, Over and against God, And that's why, If you go to somebody today, And tell them, That they are under the condemnation of God, And that, That we were made, We were designed, In order, To live for God, And we'll never find, Our true happiness, Or true meaning, Until we come to, To know him, And Jesus Christ, To laugh at you, They don't want it, It's repulsive to them, That's the last thing, They want to hear, Why is that?

[16 : 18] If we were truly designed for God, Why is it that, That's the last thing, We want to hear? Because, We're under the power, Of death, We're under the power, Of the devil, And he is active, In sustaining that, And using every means, At his disposal, To keep everyone, On earth, That he possibly can, Away, From the gospel, Where they can hear, The message, That will give them, Everlasting life, And he does that, Because he has a willing audience, An audience, That doesn't want to hear, That they're sinners, And doesn't want to hear, That Jesus, The greatest message in the world, That Jesus died, For them, So that's, How the devil, Has the power, Over death, We live in a condemned world, That was brought about, By under the, Condemnation, Under the influence, Of the evil one, We are condemned, Because God said, In the day, That you eat thereof,

You shall surely die, What then, Coming on to the next question, What then does, In what sense, Could Jesus, By his own death, Bring about, The destruction, Of the devil, Let's read the verse again, Let's keep going back to it, Since therefore, The children share, In flesh and blood, He himself likewise, Partook of the same things, That through death, He might destroy, The one, Who has, The power, Of death, Now not only, When you think of, The destruction of an enemy, You don't even have to go, Beyond the Bible itself, To read time and time again, Of how, Enemies are destroyed, In the Old Testament, Particularly, The great battles, That took place, Between the Israelites, And the Philistines, David and Goliath, To take one, Example, Enemies are destroyed, By force, Aren't they, By military might, By a sword, By killing, The person,

The person, Who is, Who is threatening, Coming against, The army, Like David and Goliath, There was only one way, In which Goliath, Could be defeated, And that was by, By him being killed, It wasn't, By David's death, Indeed, It was the very opposite, David stood over him, With a sword in his hand, Victorious, That was the way it happened, And that's the way it still happens, When we think about, The destruction, Of an enemy, Because that's the context, Of the verse, Here's an enemy, There's a war, Even today, You'll have the same thing, But here, We have something, Quite different, The enemy, Is destroyed, By death, But not just, Any death, He's not just talking about, Death, Generically, He's talking about, A specific death,

A one-off death, A different death, A special, Unique death, That took place, Once and for all, On one particular day, In human history, That will never take place again, And that never took place before, Look at it again, That he might, Through death, His death, His death, That Calvary, That he might destroy, The one, Who has the power, Of death, Now we're really going to understand this, You have to understand the context, In which the writer, Is making this statement, He's talking about, Psalm 8, He's talking about, How Psalm 8, We've just sung it, About things of, The dignity, Of humankind, Men and women, And boys and girls, How God has made them, A little lower, Than the angels, But Psalm 8, Points forward, To the coming of Jesus, As well, And here, We have it explained for us,

In these words, Since therefore, The children share, In flesh and blood, That's what makes us, We are the same species, We share, In flesh and blood, And in order, For God, To redeem, And to rescue, People like ourselves, Who had been lost, And estranged from God, And who were dead, And trespasses, And sins, And guilty, And condemned, Before God, The first thing, That had to happen, Was that God himself, Had to come, Into this world, As one of us, It could not be given, To an angel, An angel, Could not become, A man, In order to save, It's an interesting question, Isn't it?

[21 : 09] What capacity does, An angel have, I'm not going to go into that, At the moment, But God, When it came to our salvation, He took it upon himself, He chose himself, To enter into our world, Because there was no other way, And whenever you're tempted to wonder, Was there another way, In which sin could be eradicated, From this world?

The answer is no, There was no other way, That we could be saved, From sin, Sometimes people say to you, Well if God is all powerful, Why could he not just, Decide?

Why could he not just, Give the command, That sin be eradicated, And destroyed, Once and for all? That's, That's a question, That simply cannot be, Answered simply, It cannot be answered, In a soundbite, We live in a world, Where we love to have, Soundbite answers, We love to have, Simple answers for everything, But there is no, Simple answer for that, The Bible says, Jesus said, When he was in the garden, Of Gethsemane, If it be possible, Let this cup, Pass from me, The fact that the cup, Did not pass from him, Meant that he had, To go through the pain, And the suffering, Of the cross, Why?

Because, That was the only way, In which you and I, Could be brought, Into, Redemption, There was, No other way, It was entirely, Necessant, For God, To become man, But he did it, And he did it willingly, He did it because, He so loved the world, That he gave, His only begotten son, That whosoever, Believes in him, Should not perish, But have, Everlasting, Life, His purpose, In coming into the world, Was to be, Incarnated, Which meant that he, That he took our nature, Our human nature, To himself, And the son of God, When he was born, In Bethlehem, He was born, With two natures, We only have one nature, We only have human nature, But Jesus, Possessed two natures, The God nature, And the man nature, The one person,

He was always God, In this person, But he had two natures, Why was that? Why did God, Have to do, Something so, Incredible, So utterly unique, So extraordinary, As to come, Descend, Into this world, As to condescend, Into this world, As one of us, As a human baby, In the arms, Of his mother, Mary, Why did God, Condescend, To grow up, To learn to walk, To learn to talk, To learn to feed, Why was it, That God, Became, One of us, Why was it, That he partook, That's what it means, In verse 14, There are texts, That he partook, Of the same things, What are the same things?

[24 : 28] The flesh and blood, That is common to all of us, That is what Jesus, Took to himself, Becoming one of us, Why? In order, To, Die, As our, Representative, And as our, Sacrifice, Because we, Are the ones, Who have sinned, The human race, Is fallen, It's become separate, From God, And there was only one, Way, In which that separation, Could be resolved, And that was through the death, Of Jesus, But that still doesn't answer, Why it had to be death, Well in order to answer that question, You have to go again, Back to the Old Testament, And to the place that death takes, In the Old Testament, You remember how God said to Adam and Eve, In the day that you eat thereof, You shall surely die, Death was the wages of sin,

And of course as you go through the Bible, You discover that that didn't just mean, Physical death, At the end of life in this world, It meant, Eternal death, Eternal estrangement, From God, But what you also discover, In the pages of the Old Testament, Is, That death had another place, And this time, It was in the sacrifice, That appears very early on, Right at the very beginning of the Old Testament, There is sacrifice, Right at the very beginning, As soon as Adam and Eve, Sinned, And hid themselves from God, God provided, Skins for them, And in so doing, He put to death an animal, And all the way through the Old Testament, The way to God, Is through the sacrifice, Whether it is, Abel, Or whether it is through Noah, Or whether it is through Abraham,

Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, The sacrifices in the Old Testament, And what the message, That the sacrifices gave, Were this, That without the shedding of blood, There is no forgiveness, The death of the sacrifice, Was God's way, In which, A sinful human world, Could be reconciled to him, And in which the guilt of their sin, Could be put away, And annulled, And cancelled, And all of these sacrifices, In the Old Testament, Whether it was the sin offering, Or the guilt, The fellowship offering, Or the peace offering, Or the burnt offering, They all pointed to the day, When Jesus, Would lay down, His own life, At Calvary, As the, Once and for all, Sacrifice, That secured, Our forgiveness, And our liberty,

And our salvation, So it had to be, God became man, And gave himself, With all the pain, And with all the agony, That that involved, So that, He might destroy, The one, Who has the power, Of death, So is the devil destroyed, And if not, Then what does this verse mean, The state and destroyed, That's a really perplexing question, Isn't it?

This is quite a perplexing verse, Because if you, Read it at face value, And if you, If you understand, By being destroyed, That he no longer exists, That somehow, He has no influence anymore, That he doesn't do anything anymore, Or even that he's locked away somewhere, No longer to be unleashed, In the world, Then how can you explain, A world, In which, There is so much, Wrong, So much sinfulness, But furthermore, How can I explain me, In which, There is so much wrong, And sinfulness, Why is it, That as a Christian, For many years, I still, I am, Made more, And more, The older I get, As a Christian, The older I get, As a Christian, The more aware, I become, Of the fact, That I'm one step away, From disaster, I'm that close, And I'm quite sure,

[29 : 11] That those of us, Who have been in the Christian life, In the Christian life, For many years, Will know exactly, What I'm talking about, You know the power, And the strength, Of temptation, You know our own weakness, And how often, We listen to the wrong voices, How often, We give our minds, To the wrong things, We do the wrong things, We make the most foolish, Mistakes in the Christian, We trip, We fall, We stumble, We backslide, We begin, We grow cold, We become prayerless, You name it, Why is it, If the devil, Has been destroyed, Is it so difficult, To be a Christian, If the devil, Was destroyed, Surely, It would be easy, To be a Christian, Every day, Would be plain, Sailing, And it's not, Is it, Do you know, What I discover, In the Christian life, That there are temptations,

That never used to bother me, As a young Christian, That bother me now, There are things, I wrestle with now, That, Thirty years ago, Wouldn't even enter, Into my head, And I read this passage, And the devil is destroyed, So I need to find out, What does this mean, Because it clearly, Doesn't mean that he doesn't exist anymore, Because he does, He most certainly does, Well, Let's take it, In the light of, The rest of scripture, Always, When you're asking a question, You're asking, What is the bible, How do we understand this, In the light of, The rest of the bible, That's the only safe way, To come to any, Secure understanding, Of a verse, Or a passage, In the bible, So that through death,

He might destroy, The one who has the power of death, That is the devil, Well the first thing, That was destroyed, When Jesus died on the cross, And rose again, Was, The guilt of our sin, As long as, There was no sacrifice, For sin, Then the world, Stood condemned, Because the world, Was guilty, You and I, Stood condemned, Rightly so, Because the wages of sin, Is death, But when Jesus, Died on the cross, Our guilt, Became his, He became guilty, For my sin, Paul puts it this way, He who knew no sin, Was made to be sin, So that, I could be made, The righteousness of God, In him, So what God does, To a person, When that person,

Comes to faith, In Jesus Christ, Is to remove, That person's guilt, From sin, And I can say now, There is therefore, Now no condemnation, To those who are, In Christ Jesus, Because of what, He has done, In his death, On the cross, The second thing, I can say today, Is that the dominion, Of the devil, Has been broken, No longer, Does he have, The power, And authority, To tell me, What to do, I know, How often I sin, I'm so aware of that, And yet, I also know, Because I come to the Bible, That tells me, That his, Is dominion, No longer, He no longer, Has dominion, I am no longer, His slave, Which of course, Makes,

Sin, In the Christian, All the more, Anomalous, And senseless, Why do you sin, As a Christian, There actually, Is no reason, There is no logical reason, And I'm talking to myself, As well, Don't ever try, And make some excuse, For sin, There's never an excuse, For when we sin, It's like, If I can put it this way, We all know, The appalling history, Of the slave trade, We've read about it, We've watched movies about it, And we're all aware, Of how appalling it was, And the treatment, That some of these, Poor people, Got, The cruelty, Was just immense, And of course,

[34 : 17] A slave is someone, Who belongs to his master, It's not a servant, It's not paid, By the master, He belongs to the master, So he has to do, He had to do, Every single thing, I guess it still goes on, In some places in the world, But whatever, There's slavery, You have to, You have to do, What your master says, That's, What the old life, Was all about, Under the dominion, And under the power, Of the devil, But when Christ, Comes into a person's life, That dominion, Is broken, That authority, Is broken, So that, The person, Is a new creature, If any man, Is in Christ, He is a new creation, The old, Has gone, Behold, All things, Have become new, What that means, Is that we no longer, Have to do, What the devil asks us, Now I want you to imagine this, I've said this to some of you before, I sometimes forget,

The illustrations I give, But I think it is, A very powerful illustration, I want you to imagine, Someone who was a slave, And for years, Of that person's life, He was under the cruelty, And the dominion, And the tyranny, Of a cruel master, Having to do, From the very fact, He was born into the master's home, And from the very moment, Of his childhood, Or his birth, He had to do everything, That the master said, So, It was a no brainer, Every single thing, The master told him to do, He was just doing, Now imagine, Someone else comes along, And buys that slave, From, The old master, So he becomes the slave, Of a new master, But this time, The new master, Is a good man, He's a man, Who loves the slave, And wants the very best, For the slave, And so the whole thing, The life of that slave, Has totally changed, He's a free man, But he doesn't want,

To use his freedom, To just go off, And do what he wants, He loves the master, Who has bought him, And he wants to spend, The rest of his life, In the master's service, For him, It's not, Difficult, He wants to, Love the master, And he wants to do, Everything, Because, Because, Because of what, The new master, Has done for him, Now imagine one day, This slave, Is in the new master's field, Working away, To his heart's content, Enjoying every moment, Of life, And he looks up, And to his horror, He sees, A horse, And on the horse, Is, The old master, And the old master, Shouts to him, Hey you, Go and get me some water, Do you know what he does?

He goes and gets it, Why? Because, He's so used to, The old master's voice, But on his way, To get water, He meets the new master, The one he really belongs to, And the new master says, Where are you going?

He says, I'm going to get water, Why are you going to get water? He says, Because my old master, Told me to, The new master says to him, You don't have to do that anymore, The dominion of Satan, Has been broken, And yet we're so foolish, Aren't we?

[38 : 06] We still listen to his voice, All too often, You don't have to, He has no authority, Over you, And you know what, The Lord's table, And with this I close, The time has gone, The Lord's table, Is a place, Where we look back, At what Jesus has done for us, We're reminded of, His sacrifice for our sin, That has purchased us, And has broken, And it has cancelled our guilt, His death has set us free, To serve God, And to enjoy God, To love him, With all our heart, But the Lord's table, Is also a place, Of determination, A place, Where we, Where, We ask the Lord, That in view, Of the death, And the suffering of Christ, That we're remembering, That God will place within us,

A hatred, For sin, And an utter determination, To live for God, That's how we, Rise from the table, With that endeavor, The catechism puts it like this, An endeavor after, New obedience, You don't have to listen, To the evil one, His power is broken, His dominion is broken, We have been set free, From, The guilt, And from, The dominion, Of sin, Free to serve, Free to live, Free to enjoy the Lord, As he, Has, Purchased us, And redeemed us, By his own, Blood, Let's pray, Our Father in heaven,

We ask that, This morning, In preparation for, The Lord's table, That, Our hearts may be fixed, On Jesus Christ, That our eyes may be focused, On what he did, We pray, Oh Lord, That you will give us, That resolve, That as we, Confess our sins, In the light, Of what Jesus, Has done for us, That you will give us also, A new resolve, To, Obey only Jesus, To live for him, Alone, In Jesus name, Amen.