

# Three Enemies

by Chip Brogden

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*Chip Brogden's sermon emphasizes the necessity of overcoming the three enemies of Sin, Self, and Satan through God's provisions of the Blood, the Cross, and the Throne.*

**Scripture:** Luke 9:23, Ephesians 2:6, 1 John 1:7, Revelation 3:21, Revelation 12:11

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Victory"

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## Description

Chip Brogden preaches on the importance of being overcomers as Christians, emphasizing that overcoming is the normal Christian life and not just for a select few. He highlights the three main characteristics of an overcomer: overcoming Sin through the Blood of the Lamb, overcoming Self by taking up the Cross daily, and overcoming Satan by living out of our heavenly position with Christ in His throne. Brogden urges believers to press into God to learn the truth and experience victory over these three enemies.

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## Transcript

"And they overcame [the dragon] by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their Testimony, having loved not their own lives unto the death (Revelation 12:11)."

How many Christians would like to be described as overcomers? Here we see that there are three main characteristics of the one who overcomes. To overcome is the normal Christian life, and not for a select few to enjoy. It is a fact that few Christians live as overcomers; nevertheless, the Christian life is characterized by victory, not by defeat. If this is not our experience then we have much yet to learn. We should not accept things the way they are, but we should press into God and ask Him to show us the Truth.

It is helpful to identify the three enemies that present themselves to us, then the above verse will make even more sense. The overcomer must learn how to defeat each one. So what are they? First, there is the enemy of Sin. Second, the enemy of Self. Third, the enemy of Satan. All contrary things, whether they be of spiritual, natural, or human origin, find their root in one of these three sources.

The glorious thing of course is that God's provision meets all three enemies and defeats them in order to demonstrate the preeminence of Christ. This, in essence, is what it means to overcome. It is to demonstrate the preeminence of Christ over all things. Of course, if He does not have the preeminence in us individually as disciples it will be impossible for us to demonstrate His preeminence elsewhere. We

need not travel too far outside of ourselves. We can begin right in our own backyard, right in our own home, right in our own lives.

So what is God's provision against these three enemies? For the enemy of Sin, there is the Blood. For the enemy of Self, there is the Cross. And for the enemy of Satan, there is the Throne. These three are sufficient to answer to everything which we may encounter. They are contained in the verse cited above: "the Blood of the Lamb" of course is the Blood of Jesus; "the word of their Testimony" speaks of the Throne; and "loved not their own lives unto the death" speaks of the Cross. We will look at these more particularly. I pray God will encourage us to overcome through these truths.

## OVERCOMING SIN

"If we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin (I John 1:7)."

The first enemy the Christian comes into contact with is the enemy of Sin. Before we are Christians we never give sin a second thought. A man is not a sinner because he sins, he sins because he is a sinner. We are born into sin. That is not a popular teaching today, but the Scriptures bear that out. When do we experience a conflict with sin? Not until we become a Christian. Then the presence of Christ within us makes us uncomfortable when we sin. We cannot claim ignorance. The Living Christ teaches us the things which are and are not pleasing to God.

So the first conflict a Christian experiences is between that which is godly and that which is sinful. This explains why a new Christian is obsessed with their own sins and can be so easily discouraged. There is much of the former life still hanging on. Old habits die hard. So it is not surprising that early in the Christian walk much of the battle is centered around putting away sin. This is as it should be. But there is a problem if, after ten or twenty years of calling ourselves Christians, we are still dealing with the same old sins. A single "thorn in the flesh" might be understandable, but not one or two dozen. That is not to say we can achieve sinlessness, but it is to say that after a reasonable period of time we should not still be struggling with residue from our former life of sin. After all, Sin is only one of three enemies for us to overcome. Let me be clear: if we cannot overcome Sin, we cannot overcome Self and Satan.

I am all for preaching against sin, but it is a shame that we are still preaching it to the same people after so many years with little effect. Some Christians just continue to lie, cheat, steal, gossip, and sow discord no matter how many times they are instructed. Some Christians still struggle with alcoholism, drug abuse, sexual uncleanness, and the like. The divorce rate is as high for a Christian marriage as it is for any other kind of marriage. Something is wrong.

God's Answer to the problem of sin is the Blood of Jesus. According to I John 1:7, if we walk in the Light then we have fellowship with one another and the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. This includes sins past and present, so long as I continue in the Light, confessing my sins when they occur. The Blood not only cleanses me from what I have done, it keeps me from sinning further. That is the missing element we have failed to tell people about. Everyone knows how to apply the Blood AFTER we have sinned, but how often do we apply it to KEEP us from sin? This overcomes the Dragon, for he can find no grounds to accuse me before God. Otherwise, it is useless to take a stand for anything spiritual because the moment I do, Satan will rightfully accuse that I am no different than anyone else, for I am full of unconfessed and unforsaken sins. We should keep short accounts with God and with men, put away all known sin, and quickly confess and forsake all discovered sin. This is so important that it must be done at

least daily (Matthew 6:12).

## OVERCOMING SELF

"Anyone wanting to walk in My footsteps must deny Self, take up the cross daily, and then follow after Me (Luke 9:23)."

The second enemy to overcome is Self. In many respects this enemy is even more formidable than Sin, for the strength of Sin is Self. Indeed, if we are completely dead to Self then Sin has no ground in us. It is only when we are alive to Self that we are tempted by Sin. This enemy is difficult to recognize and acknowledge. We prefer to think of the enemy as being "out there", but the reality is that the greatest enemy is staring back at us whenever we look into a mirror.

We must understand that whatever comes from Self is defiled. Paul says, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing (Romans 7:18a). Some have not learned this lesson. They still think they can serve God in their own strength, according to the flesh, by doing enough good deeds to outweigh their bad deeds. We must learn, as Paul learned, that Sin is not the only thing which defiles, but that "good and proper thing" which proceeds from Self also defiles. It is easy to identify the evil in Sin because such behavior is recognized as "bad". It is not so easy to identify the evil in Self, because Self can prompt us to do many seemingly good things, such as reading the Bible, praying, attending Church, paying tithes, and witnessing to the lost. But Paul proclaims that anything coming from "the flesh" is totally worthless.

Some feel they are victorious because they have long ago given up the outward sins of the flesh. They do not drink or cheat on their spouse. They go to church and live a good life. Are they not victorious? Perhaps - but the true test is not their outward deportment but their inward mastery. Before they served satan, and now they say they "serve" God, but in whose power do they serve Him? Do they serve Him in Spirit and Truth, or in flesh and blood? Often they do not serve God or satan, they serve Self. This explains why "church people" are often found to be self-righteous. Their holiness consists of outward things - do not eat, do not touch, do not wear, do not say, do not go, etc. It is a religion which consists of doing or not doing to be seen and approved of men, while the weightier matters - pride, greed, jealousy, ambition, etc. - are covered up. Such is a holiness which comes from Self, and not from Christ; hence, "self"-righteousness is not the same as Christ-righteousness.

God's answer to the problem of Self is the Cross. The Blood takes care of sin, but the Cross takes care of the sinner. The Blood cleanses me from sin, and keeps me from sinning; the cross executes Self so that I no longer desire to sin. By removing the sinner, the problem of sin is eliminated. If I have died to Self then I have died to everything. It is one thing to put away Sin; it is quite another thing to put away Self. Both are necessary in order to overcome.

## OVERCOMING SATAN

"[God] has raised us up together and made us to sit together with Him in the heavenly places in Christ... far above every principality and power and name which is named, in this world and in the world which is to come (Ephesians 2:6, 1:21)."

The third enemy a Christian must overcome is satan. The name "satan" means "accuser", so it stands to reason that in order to overcome the accuser we must have nothing in us which gives credence to the accusation. This is why it is so important that we understand the Blood and the Cross. If we have

overcome Sin and Self then satan has nothing to accuse us of.

Satan's primary task is to accuse the brethren night and day before God (Revelation 12:10b). What is the goal of this continual accusation? In essence, satan hopes to demonstrate the inconsistency between the Testimony of Jesus and the actual experience of the brethren. It goes something like this: "They say they stand for the Kingdom of God, but there is no evidence of this Kingdom in their lives. They say there is no power but God's, but they themselves are powerless. They say they want the preeminence of Christ, but look at how quickly they take charge of one another. It is nothing but talk; it is proof positive that the Christ cannot change men into His likeness."

So day and night this challenge rises up before God. How do we overcome these accusations? God's answer is the Throne. Our overcoming of satan has to do with position. Since we are seated in the heavenlies with Christ, His overcoming is our overcoming. To bear the Testimony of Jesus is to live out of our heavenly position while maintaining an earthly existence. "For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever." This means that there is no Kingdom but God's, no Power but God's, and no Glory but God's. To stand fast in this Truth, in spite of all "evidence" to the contrary which satan, men, or our circumstances may provide, is to bear the Testimony.

Unfortunately, some Christians are more zealous to proclaim the "kingdom" and "power" of darkness than the Kingdom and Power of God. Whenever I write on this subject I always get dozens of letters giving me anecdotal evidence of satan's alleged power, or words of warning to remain "balanced" in my approach to dealing with satan, lest I offend him! People who bristle at this teaching are the very ones whom satan uses to perpetuate the illusion of control. They like the idea of a powerful devil because it gives them an excuse for being defeated. They have fallen prey to a strong delusion. The truth is that satan has no power except what he gains through Sin and Self, and when we see that we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies then we will overcome satan altogether. Satan's entire operation is based on deception and illusion. The fact is that all power in heaven and in earth is given to Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18). If satan had any intrinsic power at all he would not have to use such deception. Those who most loudly speak of the power of satan and the demons are the ones who have listened to satan for so long that they believe everything he says.

#### OVERCOMING AS HE OVERCAME

"The one who overcomes will sit with Me in My throne, just as I have overcome and have sat down with My Father in His throne (Revelation 3:21)."

What a glorious promise this is! We have seen that there are three characteristics of the overcomer. Let us sum them up again. First, they overcome the enemy of Sin through the Blood of the Lamb, which not only cleanses them from sin but keeps them from sin. Second, they overcome Self by taking up the Cross daily to follow Jesus, thus making no provision for the flesh outwardly or inwardly. Third, they live out of their heavenly position with Christ in His throne, demonstrating mastery over satan, having no grounds through which he can accuse.

When we overcome all three enemies then we are overcoming as Christ overcame. When you think of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus, does He not demonstrate preeminence over all three enemies? He is the Sinless One as well as the Selfless One. Because He is sinless as well as selfless, the enemy can tempt Him with nothing. Even death cannot hold Him.

For us to overcome as He overcame is not as difficult as you might imagine. The Law of Life says that "He must increase, but I must decrease (John 3:30)." When Christ has the preeminence in us then we will begin to experientially know what it is to be an overcomer. We may fail a thousand times, but He cannot fail. Thus, we need only rest in Christ as He brings us into a victory that He has already secured in Himself. It is time for us to mature into all that He intends for us, and enjoy the provision He has made for us as "more than a conqueror." After all, what better describes "more than a conqueror" than someone who wins without having to fight?

Father, I thank You that Christ is our Victory. Raise up overcomers who will have the Revelation of Christ and will bear the Testimony of Jesus, demonstrating the preeminence of Your Son over Sin, Self, and Satan. The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory all belong to You. Let it be so forever. Amen.

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