

1 John 2 - Knowing God

by Gareth Evans

The sermon emphasizes the journey of knowing God as the essence of Christian maturity and the importance of overcoming spiritual battles through faith and forgiveness.

Duration: 47:53

Scripture: Romans 8:38, Colossians 2:15

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of using the truth of God's word to combat the lies and attacks of the evil one. He emphasizes the need for believers to have faith and trust in God, as well as to rely on His provision for their needs. The preacher also addresses the challenges of being a missionary in today's world, highlighting the dangers and obstacles that missionaries may face. He concludes by reminding listeners of the power of Satan's lies and the importance of holding onto the truth of God's word.

Transcript

I'm delighted to get to know so many of you over the past couple of weeks. I'm hoping I'll get to know more of you over the next couple of weeks. I do like invitations, you know, to a cup of coffee now and then.

So don't hesitate, you know, if you... I come up here on Friday morning, I'm here right through to Sunday evening, plan to be, and if you're free some of that time, you'd like to give me a call, say, come over, let's get to know you. I'd love to do so. Not too much coffee, I don't want to do too much of it.

I'm going to take a moment, I want to make a special announcement. I asked the deacons for permission to do so, and they said I could. Years ago I lived in Hong Kong, I was with the British forces there, and I joined a choir.

A couple of choirs, actually, we sang them a sire on one occasion. But the other choir was led by a lady from the States, it was a Christian choir, maybe about 50 people, 45 of them Chinese, and four of us or five of us non-Chinese. And it went well, it was all in English, it was a Christmas cantata.

And then at Easter time, the same lady called me, said they were going to do an Easter cantata in Cantonese. She had written and translated from English into Cantonese, and she couldn't get a tenor soloist, and she asked me if I'd come and sing the tenor soloist, which I'd done in the Christmas one. So yours truly stood up in front of over 2,000 people on occasion and sang in Cantonese the solo parts of a

Chinese cantata.

Now I'd like to do a cantata at Christmas time in English. And I'm wondering if there'd be enough interest here to do a Christmas cantata here. I'll conduct you and lead it.

Would there be enough people interested in doing something like that? Just wave to me if you might be interested. We've got quite about 15 so far. Yeah, we could probably do that.

I'm thinking maybe Friday evenings would be an opportune time, not next Friday, because we have this youth barbecue, but maybe the following Friday, if some of you are free, I'd love to see what the interest would be to do a Christmas cantata. Amen? Would you like that? Would the rest of you like to hear a Christmas cantata at Christmas time? Then we'll go ahead with it. Great.

Wonderful. Last week I said to you that part of the burden upon my heart during these next four months that we're together is to challenge you to become a people who hunger after knowing God. I spoke last week of the Psalmist David who cried out these words, as the dear pants for the water so my soul longs for you.

I talked of Moses who had spent time with God, had seen his glory at the burning bush, had met him face to face, had communed with God, was called God's friend, how that he says to God, God, I've seen all this, I've experienced all this, but I have one request. Please show me your glory. Hunger to know more of God.

I've been a Christian now 50 years. I still hunger to know more of God. I want to know him in all the revelation that he's willing to open up of himself to me.

And so last week I introduced you to the thought by bringing my text from that prayer of Paul to the Ephesian church. I pray that the God and Father of your Lord Jesus Christ will grant you wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of himself. Such knowledge comes by revelation from God.

It is his sovereign act in making himself known to us. From the same portion in Ephesians I showed you some of the prerequisites for that revelation of God. For the people for whom Paul prayed, to whom he wanted God to reveal himself, were the people who were noted for their love for one another and their faith.

Prerequisites. In the course of that message I mentioned also to you John's letter, the first letter of John, wherein he writes to people and he declares those to be mature, for whom he calls spiritual fathers, because they are people who have come to know God. Christian maturity is coming to know God.

And I would like to take that as my text today and develop that thought. So if you have your Bibles with you, please turn to 1 John chapter 2. If you do not have your Bibles with you, shame on you. 1 John chapter 2. I'm going to start reading at verse 12.

I'm writing to you little children because your sins have been forgiven you for his namesake. I'm writing to you fathers because you know him who has been from the beginning. I'm writing to you young men because you have overcome the evil one.

And then John appears to be repeating himself. I've written to you children because you know the father. I've written to you fathers because you know him who is from the beginning.

I've written to you young men because you're strong and the word of God abides in you. I shared in the adult Bible class this morning a little bit more of my testimony. I'm not going to develop that much more today.

But I would just say again, when I was 17, having been challenged with a question by a lady in a youth meeting which she held in her home. The question was, tell me, Gareth, what will you do with the Lord Jesus Christ? I didn't even understand the question, let alone know what the answer should be. But over the next five weeks I came to realize that the whole crux of our faith, of Christianity, is this, that Jesus Christ died upon a cross and he rose from the dead.

If Christ be not risen, said Paul, our faith is vain, but of all men most miserable. The fifth of those five weeks I attended a little Baptist church in the village where I lived. I doubt if there were more than about 12 people present.

The young man who spoke, I was speaking to him afterwards, he was from the same school as myself. He was about three years ahead of me. Anthony Hopkins, the famous film actor, was one year ahead of me.

And I was in this class and this young man spoke to me and he said, tell me, Gareth, what will you do with the Lord Jesus Christ? Same question I'd been avoiding for five weeks. But in those five weeks I'd come to understand what I just shared with you. So that night I went home and I knelt by my bed and I asked Jesus Christ these words.

My prayer was almost this. Jesus, if you can hear me right now, if you're real, if you're alive, will you please come into my life? Will you forgive me my sins and make me a child of God? I repeat that little children's chorus, into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Come in today, come in to stay, come into my heart, Lord Jesus.

Amen. I didn't know what else to say. I hadn't prayed for years since I was a little child when my mother was alive.

My mother died some years before. And I got up off my knees and I didn't feel any different. It was another three or four days before I really knew that Jesus Christ had met me.

I knew nothing of the Bible. I could probably tell you that the Gospels were Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I could tell you the stories of Jesus I'd heard as a little child in Sunday school.

But I certainly couldn't tell you the order of the books in the Bible. I couldn't tell you anything about the Old Testament except maybe Moses and the bulrushes and a couple of things like that. But I did know two things.

I knew that my sins were forgiven and I knew I could call him Father. That is the definition of what it means to be a child of God. Jesus said, unless you become as little children, you cannot even see the kingdom of heaven, leave alone enter in.

To become a little child like that, says John, I write to you little children because you know your sins are forgiven. I write to you little children because you have come to know the Father. I trust every one of you this morning knows that truth that your sins are forgiven and that you've come to know the Father.

If not, today could be the day when you could know that truth as I did as a 17-year-old boy. What I've learned over the years is that that's only the beginning of a journey. It is almost as though, I'll stand over this side of the church.

Here I am, a little babe in faith, a little babe in Christ. I'm 17 years of age. I did not realize that this journey had a goal.

And this life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who gave Himself for me. He is operative in me by the Holy Spirit to bring me to a place of Christian maturity. And Christian maturity, says John, is this, I write to you fathers because you've come to know Him.

It was from the beginning. The Christian walk is a walk of getting to know God. The goal of this Christian life is getting to know God.

It is not how much work you can do for Him. But that's always valuable. It's not even how many people you can lead to Christ.

That is not the goal of your Christian life. The goal of your Christian life, of which you've been called to God, is to bring glory to His name by getting to know Him. Christian maturity is knowing Him who is from the beginning.

The Alpha, the Omega. In all the revelation of His glory that He wants to make known to His children. He longs for you to know Him.

He longs to make Himself known to you. But it is dependent upon your seeking Him, longing for Him, and journey toward Him. But in between those two, John writes to little children, I write to fathers, but in between the two, he has what he calls young men.

I want to make it clear, we're not talking genealogical age here. We're not talking about people in the 70s and people of 17. I know men and women who naturally are 70 years of age who sadly are still little children in faith.

Well, they know their sins are forgiven. They know that they can call God Father, but they've never grown beyond that. How tragic.

I also know young people, 17, 18, 19, 20 years of age who are spiritually mothers and fathers because they've experienced God and have come to know Him in deep, deep rituals. But in between the two, John writes these words, I write to you young men. He's not talking genealogical age, nor is he talking gender.

I know young women of 17 who are spiritually fathers, mothers. I know women of 70 who are spiritually little children, certainly. You see, though we are called to be as little children that do not bear malice, I preached here a few months ago about offenses.

Do you remember that? A little child does not hold offenses very easily. It is amazing how many Christians hold offense. Somebody did them wrong.

A little child can't hold offense. I remember when our daughters were young. Andrea would come in the house one day and she's crying, and Mother said to her, what's the matter? She said, Mary threw sand in my face.

I'm not going to play with Mary anymore. Well, go upstairs and play with your dolls. Fifteen minutes later, she's coming downstairs, she wants to go out to play, and Mother says, where are you going? I want to play with Mary.

Little children can't hold offense. But we do, don't we? That's what Jesus meant when he said, if you want to be great in the kingdom of heaven, become like a little child. He wants us to be like little children, but he does not want us childish.

He calls us to himself. He said, unless you become as little children, you cannot see the kingdom of God. You cannot even see it.

You can't enter it. But he doesn't want us to remain childish. He wants us to grow into maturity.

And the pathway to maturity is through whom John calls young men. I write to you, young men, because you're strong. Because the word of God abides in you.

Because you've overcome the evil one. There is no reaching Christian maturity unless you're strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you've overcome the evil one. You cannot become spiritually a father unless you are spiritually a young man.

Precondition. You're strong. The word of God abides in you.

And you're an overcomer. Is that true of you? Do you realize, I'm sure you do, that we're in a spiritual war? There's spiritual warfare going on all around us day by day. On the one side, there's Satan, whatever your picture of Satan might be.

Certainly you all acknowledge there's evil in the world, and there's an author of evil. On one side there is Satan, and all the hordes of demons, whatever they are, whether they're fallen angels. All the forces of darkness in this world that non-Christian young people in this world are very, very aware of even if the Christian people are not.

And that's on one side. What's on the other side? Who are these fighting against? The saints. I often get people say to me, well they're fighting, if Satan's on one side, Jesus is on the other side.

Jesus is not on the other side. Now listen carefully. I hate it when I say controversial things and people go away and quote me without referring to what I really said.

I've had people come to me when I was pastoring, oh I disagreed with you saying this, and I say, what did I say? You said so and so. I said, I never said that. Oh yes you did.

I had an elder in my last church who was going to leave the church because of something I said. Fortunately they taped the service. So of course next day I'm in my office, what did I say? Did I say something wrong? And I listened to the tape, and then I caught the part that he had caught half of and misquoted.

Very dangerous, it happens so often. I want you to listen to me. On one side there is Satan and the force of darkness.

On the other side is not Jesus. There is no battle going on today between Satan and Jesus. Let me repeat myself.

There is no battle going on today between Satan and Jesus. The battle between Satan and Jesus was 2,000 years ago, and I've got good news here, Jesus won. In the book of Colossians, Paul writes this in 2 Colossians 15, for he has defeated Satan and all the principalities of power, and made a show of them openly upon the cross.

Who was the victory of the cross? It was Jesus' victory on the cross. Amen? There is no battle going on today between Jesus and Satan. The battle today is between Satan and you.

Does that frighten you, Holly? Does it frighten you that I say there is a spiritual war going on today between the enemy and you? I want to tell you something, that Jesus expects you to be more than conqueror. For he that is in you is greater than he that is in the world. You're expected to be an overcomer.

You're going to get conflicts in your marriage, I'm going to tell you right now, you're going to get days of problems. You're expected to be overcomers, because Jesus lives in you. The Spirit of God lives in you.

Amen? You know, I'm one of these... I like speculating. I don't mean gambling. I'm not talking about gambling.

I'm talking about thinking beyond what the scripture says. When I read a story, I like to take myself into the story. I like to imagine what is there to see the 5,000 being fed, for example.

I'd like to be there. I'd like to have been... No, I'm not sure I would. But I can imagine what it must have been like in the caverns of hell when Jesus died upon the cross.

I want you to imagine what Satan and the hordes of demons must have felt like the day when they saw Jesus die upon the cross and expire and give up his ghost. Party time. Satan had finally defeated him.

He had tried tempting him, he had never succeeded. All the time, for three and a half years of ministry, he tried to raise the Pharisees and the leaders all against Jesus. And finally he had succeeded, because finally this man was nailed upon the cross.

He died. And it's party time in hell. And all the caverns of hell are filled with partying demons.

And all the balloons around the wall must have been black and purple ones. I'm sure they wouldn't have been red and yellow. And Satan's there on his throne at the front and seated by him are his lieutenants, death and hell and all the others.

And they celebrate him. And suddenly in this quiet moment, you start thinking, you have footsteps outside the door. And Satan says, who's missing? I sent invitations to all of you.

Who's missing? And they quickly look around to see who's missing. And there's nobody missing, they realize. And suddenly the doors are thrown open and Jesus stands there.

Can you imagine it? And he walks through the caverns of hell. And Satan begins to cower at the front. And Jesus looks at him with absolute disdain.

For this is the beloved angel who stood before the presence of God at one time was being cast out. He looks at death. And he said, that belongs to me.

He takes the keys from his hand and he looks at hell. He said, that belongs to me. Takes them from his hand.

And he walks back out of the caverns and he begins to shout, David! Abraham! Come forth! And the graves give up the dead. The Bible tells you that's what happened. When he died upon the cross, the veil of the temple was rent in two.

I want to paint a picture for you, though it may be speculation, of my Jesus. He is more than conqueror. When he died upon the cross, I do not see a defeated, defeated man.

I see a victorious king who has conquered death and hell for you and for me for all eternity. Amen? Don't ever, ever, ever live in a life as a Christian where you somehow think that Jesus is struggling to overcome Satan. My Jesus today is King of kings, Lord of lords.

He's seated at the father's right hand waiting for this world to be made his footstool. He wants me to walk in this world as a child of the king and an overcomer because he dwells in me by his spirit. There is a battle going on today.

It's between you and Satan. And God and the Son expect you to be overcomers. But why is it that most Christians aren't overcomers? Why is it as a pastor I used to spend so much time with defeated Christians? Why is it that Christian marriages break up just as often as non-Christian marriages? Is it because Satan is more powerful than we think? Well, maybe he's more powerful than you think, yes.

I suggest to you that the reason that we get so easily defeated is because we do not understand his tactics. Right into the Corinthians, Paul says this in 2 Corinthians chapter 2, When I have ought, when somebody has something against me or I have something against him, I am quick to forgive. I will not hold forgiveness, unforgiveness in my heart.

I am quick to forgive because I am not ignorant of Satan's tactics. For I know that if I hold unforgiveness in my heart, I am opening a doorway for Satan to defeat me. I told you last week or two weeks ago over the communion table, Paul very carefully says when you take the communion ticket, do not take it unworthily because this causes many to weaken sickly among you and many sleep.

Many Christians have a sickness upon them because they have taken the communion emblems unworthily. I understand that to mean that when you take the communion emblems, you are committing yourself as the disciples in the upper room are called to commit themselves to serve one another, love one another, obey his commands. That's what he told them in the upper room, a commandment I give you.

And when we take the communion emblems, declaring ourselves to be part of the body of Christ, recognizing the covenant call of Christ, but we are not forgiving those who have wronged us. When we are not in a right relationship with brothers and sisters in the body, we are in a danger of bringing sickness upon ourselves. We need to understand the awful place we place ourselves in when we refuse to forgive those who have wronged us.

How many times do we forgive, said Peter? Seven times. Jesus calls us to a life of constant forgiveness. Paul said, I'm not ignorant of Satan's tactics, but I suggest to you the great majority of Christians are.

And today, I just want to outline three of his tactics. Three months ago, I spoke about offenses. Be sure of this, said Jesus, offenses will come.

And I described them to you as monkeys that jump on your shoulders. Do you remember that? Hope some of you are a little lighter today than you were when you came into that service that you got those monkeys off. I spoke in a church in Haiti once on that message.

And as the people are coming out, they all had to shake my hand. It was that kind of church. And one man came to me.

Do you know, he said, I'm at least two stone lighter today than I was when I came in. I said, what do you mean? He said, I've just got rid of a few monkeys. Been on my shoulder for years.

Do you not understand that Satan has a horde of trained monkeys? He's going to do everything he can to get people of God offended. The biggest division in churches, the biggest reason, number one reason why churches split is because somebody got offended by somebody. I'm not talking about sin.

I'm talking about they did not like the new carpet that was laid down. There should have been a blue one and they preferred a red one. Does that sound childish to you? Believe me, there are churches that have been split over issues no more serious than that.

Totally ignorant of the fact that Satan delights in it. But I read these words in Peter's letter. Peter writes, your enemy goes around like a roaring lion.

Now, I've been in Africa. I've worked in Africa for four years, but I was in the west coast. There aren't as many lions on the west coast.

In fact, there weren't too many monkeys even in the part of Africa where I was. But I have been in a zoo and I've been close to a lion. But every lion I saw in the zoo was either behind fences and a distance away or behind bars in a cage.

And they look big and beautiful, but they didn't look particularly dangerous to me. I could go quite close to them. I've seen lions on television and on the films.

I've noticed this. Whenever a lion is stalking its prey, it creeps around very quietly. Have you ever noticed that you've seen it? It's exactly like every other cat because a lion is a member of the cat family.

And I've been close to lots of cats. We've been close to cats. Have you ever watched a cat in the garden stalking a bird? It's very, very quietly near the ground.

It creeps around the ground, getting very quiet, trying to make use of all the cover it can find. And as it comes very, very close to that little bird, that innocent little bird who doesn't realize the danger it's in, it goes, meow! Does it? Does a little cat come up to the bird and go, meow? What will a bird do? Your enemy is a cat who goes around meowing, roaring, roaring. Have you ever thought about that? We know that our enemy is like a lion.

But have you realized that Peter says, roaring. His tactic is to roar. Now while I'm speaking to you this morning, if suddenly you heard a commotion out in the fire and you heard this noise out there and somebody came through the door shouting, lion, lion on the loose! And you could hear this roaring out in the fire, what would you do? And you'd be behind me and I'd probably be behind Denzel Merriman.

Roaring lions have got their effect upon us. They affect our emotions. They frighten us.

And we run. But before you run, I want you to turn around and look at the lion. It's got no teeth.

Jesus disarmed him on a cross 2,000 years ago. He's got no claws. All he can do is roar.

In Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan tells a story of pilgrims seeking to know God. He's told that on his journey he will come to this castle where he can stay the night and be suckered for the rest of the journey. He's very weary at the end of the day as he approaches the castle and as he comes towards the castle, he hears some screams and running down the path past him from the castle are two other would-be pilgrims.

Their names are Timorous and Doubtful. Remember I told you last week that your character is given in your name. And Pilgrim looks at them and wonders what's wrong and then he hears the roar of the lion.

And he's filled with fear. His heart starts beating five times faster. A cold shiver goes up his spine.

And he looks to the castle and there at the gateway to the castle he sees two lions. Ginormous lions. And they see him the same moment he sees them.

And as they see him they rear up and they roar! The same roar that frightened Timorous and Doubtful so he ran away. But Pilgrim notices that both lions have chains around their necks. And the chain is taut.

It's a strong chain. It's tight. It's taut.

And it's anchored in the foundations of the castle. And Pilgrim realizes that so long as he keeps the straight narrow path to the gateway though these lions may come close though their breath may come upon him they cannot touch him. That's Satan.

And Pilgrim walks between the two right into the castle where he has succored for the journey. Hallelujah. That's him.

You and I are children of God when we keep our eyes upon Jesus when we walk the path that he has called us to he is guaranteed to walk us through and Satan cannot harm you. He will roar he will affect your emotions but he cannot harm you. So look at him.

He's got no teeth. He's got no claws. And there's a chain around his neck.

And the man that holds the chain is strong even though his hands bear marks of nails. The question then begs himself and says well why then does Jesus allow Satan to come and roar at you? Why doesn't he lock him up? Why does Satan allow monkeys of a fence to jump on your shoulder? Why does Satan allow the lion to roar at you? Because he wants you to learn and me to learn to be an overcomer. And you cannot overcome unless there's opposition.

You cannot overcome temptation unless there's temptation. You cannot overcome feelings of fear and emotions of embarrassment and all the other things that come from the roar of the lion. You cannot overcome them unless they happen unless the lion roars.

And Jesus permits the lion to roar so that you will learn to be an overcomer. I do not go along with the theology of health, wealth and prosperity. I do not go along with the theology of name it, claim it, blab it, grab it.

That God's will for you is only blessing, blessing, blessing. I believe God's will for you are mountaintops. But every mountaintop will take you through a valley before it takes you there.

Don't complain, brother and sister, when you go through valleys because it's only God's pathway to the glories. Don't complain when you go through suffering, brothers and sisters, because it was through suffering that Jesus was made perfect. If you want to come into maturity to know God, he's going to take you the same way.

The lion is going to roar. The monkey of offense is going to jump on your shoulders. But he wants you to learn to be an overcomer.

So what does the roar do? Well, it affects your emotions. And every time your emotions are affected to rob you of victory in Christ, you listen to the roar of the lion. So you've been invited to sing up here a solo maybe, and you come up here and sing a solo.

Or maybe you've been asked and persuaded to come up and do the scripture reading. So you stand up here and you forget the second verse. Or you miss that high note that you're supposed to reach.

And you feel embarrassed. Or you mumble the words and you misread something and you come down out of the pulpit and you feel embarrassed. That's an emotion.

And a little voice whispers in your ear and says, you made a fool of yourself. And you decide never to do that again. And what have you done? You've just listened to the roar.

You're a young person in school and your friends talk to you and you talk to them about Jesus. And one day you have an opportunity to tell them how you gave your life to Jesus. You're a Christian now.

And your friends laugh at you and make fun of you. And they embarrass you. And you decide, I'm not going to say anything more about Jesus anymore.

What have you done? It's not the laughter of your friends you've listened to, but you've listened to the roar of the lion. And somebody has done something to you and it's caused you anger. And you've responded in anger to them.

And instead of proacting, you've reacted to them. What have you done? Listened to the roar of the lion. And every time your emotions are impacted by something or someone around you that has caused you to react negatively, what you've done is listened to the roar of the lion.

Can he overcome you? Absolutely, when you listen to his roar. And we need to become a people sensitive to hear what is the voice of God and sensitive to discern it from the voice of the lion. That's his tactic.

Let me give you another tactic. In Paul's letter to Ephesians, he says this, take upon yourself the whole armor of God, helmet of salvation, the shield, breastplate of righteousness. You know it? Upon all, he said, take in the shield of faith whereby you quench the fiery arrows of the wicked one.

Not only does he come against us, his tactic is that of a roaring lion, but he comes against us with his bows and arrows. Now, I ask myself, what are these arrows, these fiery arrows? Well, they're burning, obviously they destroy, they hurt, they affect us. And I believe them to be lies.

He is, after all, the father of lies. It amazes me how many Christians believe lies about God, about themselves, about the church. When I was in university, I was engaged to be married before I knew Anne.

Every weekend, I went home to see my fiancée. Wonderful time. We planned to be married in a year or so's time.

One year, I went home, and she wouldn't speak to me. One week, I went home. I stayed there that night, and the next morning, I'd get up and left to go back to university, and she would never speak to me and couldn't tell me why.

Six weeks later, she married another man. He was a friend of the family whose divorce had come through and was like on the rebound for me. She married him.

Through mutual friends, I heard that she had a pretty horrendous marriage, and many years later, she committed suicide. When she committed suicide, she turned away from the Lord. She was a very brilliant pianist.

She'd been offered contracts by the British TV, and she turned them down because it would impact upon her Sundays and worship. That's how committed she was. When she left me, she turned right away from God.

Horrendous marriage and ended with suicide. After her suicide, I managed to go to visit her mother who welcomed me warmly. I had not seen the mother since our courtship days.

I said, Mum, could you tell me why Brenda finished with me? Yes, she said she heard that you were having an affair with a girl in university. Absolutely untrue. 100% untrue.

I was 100% faithful to her, but she heard a lie and she believed it. I believe Satan gloated. How many lies do people believe about themselves? God can't use me.

Of course he can. But there is an answer to the lies, and Paul gives it also in the book of Ephesians, because in chapter 1 of Ephesians he tells me this, that God has exalted Jesus Christ far above all principalities and powers, amen? So where does Satan compare with Jesus? He's a principality, he's a power, where does Satan compare with Jesus, if Jesus is far above? Beneath his feet. And then Paul goes on in Ephesians chapter 2 and says, And you also, brothers and sisters of Departure Bay Baptist Church, you also, God has quickened and raised you up to be seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Who does that apply to? Any of you? Does that apply to any of you? Wave to me if it applies to you. So where are you seated this morning? Not in Departure Bay Baptist Church, but in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus. Amen? How are you? You excited about this? So where's Satan? Beneath our feet.

I come from the land of Wales. I'll probably tell you that many times in the next three months, four months. My land is noted for its castles.

As a boy, I played in the ruins of a castle in my home. Hundreds of castles in Wales. You can go and tour, some of them are still occupied.

Catherine Zeta-Jones wanted a bike and I went and castled a couple of years ago, I don't know if you knew. You know Catherine Zeta-Jones? I played in castles when I was a boy. I took my granddaughter from Nanaimo, I took her over to Wales two years ago, three years ago, and I took her to the castle where

I played.

It's now a protected building. And I looked at the walls that I used to climb up and my heart sank. I couldn't believe I was ever so stupid.

And I'm talking twice the height of the house, you know. Ruined walls and I climbed up them. Those castles were built by little landowners who used to build them to protect themselves from their neighbours.

They were always petty fighting, Welsh love petty fighting, we're petty people. And my neighbour, I used to be suspicious that he was pinching my cattle. So I'd go and raid his farm and pinch his cattle.

So he'd get his own back by pinching my cattle. And now and then we'd get together and go across the English border and pinch their cattle. That was alright.

But they built the castles to protect themselves because warfare at that time was by bow and arrow and lance and spear. They didn't have guns. And if you were going to come and attack me with your bows and arrows, I made sure I built good defences.

So I built myself a castle on the highest land in my territory. And there was my castle and I built these high walls with a parapet so I could look over and when you came to attack me, it was much easier for me to fire my arrows down at you than for you to hit me with your arrows fired at me. So you would come and attack me and you could shout and rant as much as you want to, the door was closed, the moat was filled with waters and if I could have imported crocodiles I would, but I couldn't.

And you fire your arrows like, ah ha, missed. Try again, missed. It's so easy to fight a battle when you're up in the castle.

It is so easy to quench the fiery arrows of the evil one when you know who you are in Christ seated in heavenly places. Amen? You see this battle is not fair when you think about it, is it? It really isn't fair to poor old Satan, he hasn't got a hope. When the people of God truly know who they are in Christ and walk that reality, oh yes he will throw his arrows and yes they will hurt at times, but you're expected to be an overcomer.

You see this morning I'm seated in a heavenly place in Christ. And I allow the word of God to become important to me. And like the young men of John, I look at the word of God and I become strong because the word of God abides in me.

And I quench the fiery arrows of the evil one with the truth of God's word, the shield of faith, believing and trusting. I say, ah I saw that one, I quenched the arrow, saw that one, and I answer his lies with the truth. Young man, you want to be a missionary? You can't be a missionary.

To be a missionary now today you've got to have two degrees, you've got to have financial support at least 35,000, 40,000 US dollars a year for support. And most of the world today is the countries that are, you know, violence is just beneath the surface, there's danger there. There are fundamentals and radicals in every society, Hindu and Muslim.

Very, very dangerous being a missionary today. You can't be a missionary. Furthermore, you've got to have inoculations, and the needles they use, I'm not kidding you, they're this big.

And in Africa, the mosquitoes, I tell you man, they're like little bomber planes. You can't be a missionary. That's the lie Satan wants you young people to believe.

What's the truth? What's the truth? Paul writes to the Philippians, I can do, I didn't quite hear that, all things. Through Christ who strengthens me, and if he is calling you to be a missionary, can you do it? Absolutely. When you're walking with him, the mosquitoes suddenly shrink.

He didn't even feel the needle. I did once or twice. We need to answer his lies with the truth.

And young parent, you're struggling financially at home, you've got these couple of kids you're responsible for, and money is really, is not sufficient for your needs, you think. And everybody else in work is taking a few of the things from work, home with them. You know the writing pads, and a couple of the pens, and things like that.

I mean after all the company, they never notice a few of them missing. Or maybe some of the grocery you can take from the shop where you work. Everybody's doing it, it's part of society today.

It amazes me how many Christians have got such watered boundaries between what is right and wrong today. One of the greatest problems I have in the church is when I deal with it, it's the ethics or lack of it in my leadership often times. We've got a blurred vision when it comes to these things.

Because everybody does it. The world does it. So why can't we? I need it because I've got to make ends meet.

What does the word of God tell me? My God shall supply all, not some of them, all my needs. He's not necessarily my wants, but my God supplies my wants. It's the most amazing thing.

He more than abundantly supplies. But his promise is he will supply all my needs. And young man, you've fallen again.

You know your thought life isn't what you want it to be. And yet again this last week you've watched things on the internet you shouldn't have been doing. Maybe young father, you know you've struggled again because you're so determined to overcome and not lose your temper, but you did lose your temper again this week and you shouted at your wife.

Or wife to your husband. And now today this morning you feel guilty about it and you don't really think that you're worthy to be here. And Satan wants to whisper in your ear and say, you call yourself a Christian and yet you can't handle this? You keep doing this thing wrong.

You keep failing. Don't you remember when you promised Jesus you were going to do this and witness for him? You've not done it, you're a failure. Do you expect Jesus to still love you? Oh yes, he loves you in the collective sense that he loves all people who come to him.

But you particularly, he doesn't really have any destination for you, a destiny for you because really he's lost all trust in you. He doesn't love you as much now as he used to. Many, many Christians believe that, that's the lie they believe, that God doesn't love me anymore.

What does the truth say? Nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Did you hear that? What can separate me from the love of God? I didn't hear that. Just a little louder so that Satan can hear it too.

Nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Do you believe that? The option is yours, believe the lie or quench it with the truth. The option is yours.

And maybe this morning there's someone here, you do not yet know the Lord Jesus Christ is your saviour. You listen to people speak and you listen to people say and you say, I wish I had faith like that. I wish I had peace with God like that.

I wish I knew my sins were forgiven. And Satan will tell you that you're not good enough. Satan will tell you, well these people don't know the sin I've done, the things I've done in the past, the things I've been involved in.

And Satan wants you to believe and you can't be saved. In my first church in Kitchener, I had a woman with two children, her husband was living in Britain. They'd come to the Lord through a little fellowship in the States, a house fellowship.

But the first thing they were told was because she had been divorced that they could not go to heaven. And so for the sake of their children, so that their children would not be damaged by this, he went to England and they parted. That was the lie they believed.

Because they had sinned so greatly, she had sinned in being divorced so badly that God could not love her anymore and she could not be forgiven. He showed how the blood of the cross covers all sins. She called her husband back and they became leaders in the church.

The word of God tells me this, if I confess my sin, he is faithful and just to cleanse me from sin, all unrighteousness, not some. There's not a single person in this world, if they did not come to Christ in confession to him, that he is not able to cleanse and clean and make child of God and welcome into the family of God with all the glorious inheritance that are ours from him. Amen? So my question this morning is, this brother and sister, if you're in a battle, there's spiritual warfare going on and you want to be an overcomer, you'll become an overcomer because the word of God abides in you, you become strong.

And unlike Timorous and Doubtful, you do not run at the roar of a lion. But you become an overcomer. And when the fiery arrows are fired at you, you quench them with the word of truth.

Because you're in Christ and you become strong in the word of God. And you begin this progression of journeying from being a little child to becoming a spiritual mother and father strong in God. And as you journey, all the way through the journey, there'll be valleys where you are called to overcome, all the way through the journey there'll be monkeys that jump on your shoulder, you cast them off, you refuse to bear offence.

There will be arrows that will fire at you and you divert them with the word of truth. All the time you journey there will be roaring lions and you overcome them by trusting in Christ and walking the straight and narrow path. And the father at the other end of the journey sees all the battle, he sees you overcoming, he says, come on my child, yes that's right! You're an overcomer! You're not like Timorous and Doubtful running away, come on my child! And as you come near, he wants to reveal more and more and more of his character and his glory to you.

But there is no revelation without the struggle of overcoming. And I pray that you, each one of you, young and old, will be a man or woman today, you'll walk out of here and say, I'm going to be an overcomer for Christ. Not in my own strength because in your own strength you're going to fall.

But in the promise of his word, the book of truth, in the promise of the captain who holds in his hand the chain that binds Satan so that he can only rule but not touch you or hurt you. Committed to walk the path of truth, the path of integrity, the path of straight path into the presence of God and as you walk it you will become an overcomer. Not running every time he wants to point you to a dark valley, but willing to hold his hand and walk in faith through that valley, knowing that the mountain beyond is your destiny because your king is going to take you there.

Amen? May we become a people who are overcomers. May Christ be exalted in our lives for his glory, for his namesake. Amen? It says in my thing, you're closing him, Denzel Merriman is going to lead us.

Praise God. Did I tell you I came up with it once? The first time I ever preached in the Nine was several years ago and I preached at Wacaziah Chapel.

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