

Quenching the Fiery Darts of Satan

by Paul West

The sermon teaches that faith in the blood of Jesus Christ is the shield that quenches Satan's fiery darts and gives us the power to overcome his attacks.

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Faith Victory"

Description

Paul West delivers a powerful sermon on spiritual warfare, emphasizing the reality of persecution faced by those living a godly life and the need to be vigilant against both physical and spiritual opposition. He highlights the importance of understanding and countering the tactics of the powers of darkness, urging believers to submit to God's defensive directions and wield the shield of faith against the fiery darts of the enemy. Through the example of Paul's forgiveness and the necessity of humbling ourselves, he stresses the significance of faith in the blood of Jesus as the key to victory over Satan's schemes and the restoration to a state of perfection.

Transcript

Paul warned Timothy that everyone who endeavored to live a godly life would suffer persecution (II Timothy 3:12). Undoubtedly, the bulk of this persecution comes not only from physical entities, but from spiritual ones as well. That's because we wrestle not against anti-Christian governmental authorities and belligerent people who oppose the gospel, but against invisible powers and principalities, against wicked spirits in high places who seek to control our minds and distort our thought patterns (II Corinthians 10:3-5). Indeed, the powers of darkness are just as active and influential here in North America as they are in communist nations and other countries closed off to the gospel.

In the game of chess, one player makes a move and the other opponent then reacts to the move with a strategy of his own, usually in defense or attack. The same can be seen in the spiritual realm. Paul, for instance, was very clear about his intentions to forgive a man so as to not allow Satan the advantage of entering into his own life (II Corinthians 2:10-11). He explained this was because he was not ignorant of Satan's devices. Paul knew the moves he had to make in order to safeguard his soul. He knew that as long as he harbored unforgiveness toward any person, the powers of darkness would have an advantage over him. And so he followed the direction of the Holy Spirit and forgave the man in question. Satan's entry into Paul's life was blocked!

God's Word shows us how to prevent the powers of darkness from taking advantage over us. In fact, the Bible not only shows us what we are to look for, but how to respond to Satan's schemes when we are

attacked. When we submit ourselves to the defensive directions God's Word, the Holy Spirit alerts us to every attack of the enemy and equips us with the grace we need to overcome in the moment of our testing. This grace is given to all those who humble themselves and bow their will to the power of the cross (James 4:6).

By humbling ourselves, we allow the Lord to break us. The Word of God says that we are like vessels (2 Timothy 2:20-22). And when a vessel is broken, light begins to shimmer through the cracks and shards. The inside of the cup then becomes exposed as the light shines in and out of it. And with this light, we begin to see how the powers of darkness move and the tactics they so often use to beset us.

To defend ourselves from their schemes, God gives us several pieces of spiritual armor. Above all, He gives us what the Bible calls the "shield of faith" (Ephesians 6:16). Shields, like all other pieces of armor, are defensive. They are used to deflect arrows and block sword thrusts. In this case, we are told that Satan has "fiery darts" which he hurls at us in battle. These darts are poisonous impulses and corrupt suggestions which seek to enter our minds and paralyze our walks with God. Darts can come in the form of unforgiveness and grudges, sexual lust, the love of money, the cares of the world, the fear of the future, religious pride, accusations and criticism. These flaming darts are aimed at the mind and seek to penetrate our thought life. If they enter in and stick, the fire they bring ignites into blazing strongholds and we become consumed with depression, defeat, fear and doubt. This is Satan's consuming fire.

The Lord has decreed that it is often necessary that we go through these fiery trials (I Peter 4:12), as the purpose for them is to break us to the point where we are able to receive His grace and be a ministry of life to others. But before this can happen, we must first suffer many defeats, and these defeats are designed to crush our pride. During these defeats we learn that we are not strong enough to quench Satan's darts in our own power, and that simple faith, void of any kind of human willpower or determination, alone is the victory (I John 5:4). But what is this victorious faith based upon?

Before we answer this, we must first understand that the Christian life is both a battle (2 Timothy 2:3-4), and a rest (Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:10). This seems like a paradox! When we realize the war has already been won on Calvary (Colossians 2:15), we can think there is nothing for us to do now but to sit back and relax and enjoy life. But this is not so. We still find ourselves in the midst of a campaign where the forces of darkness battle for our minds and seek to vex our souls. This is because when Jesus defeated Satan on the cross, Satan was not destroyed. The power for him to tempt God's children and the possibility for them to fall into sin was not done away with. Satan was still allowed to keep his grip over the world's system the same as he always had since Adam and Eve ate of the fruit in the garden. The significance instead would come to those who were predestined to have their "old men" slain in Christ before the foundation of the world, and be installed with "new men" who would no longer be slaves to sin, but fashioned in the image of Christ (Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:4, 2 Timothy 1:9).

But this is blessed transition not available to the unconverted. Satan still has control over the children of the world, for they are his own (John 8:44). He has blinded his own children to the truth of the gospel (II Corinthians 4:4), so they would remain enslaved to his obedience (2 Timothy 2:26). Indeed, the whole world is in the grip of the wicked one (I John 5:19). But God's children, blood-ransomed, are no longer in his grip!

Though God's children may indeed fall into sin, theirs is no longer a habitual practice like the children of the devil. This is because God's children have a "new man" living in them, a quickened spirit, made in the

image of Christ (II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24), and this "new man" does all he can to prevent Satan's fiery darts from polluting the mind, for he has replaced the "old man" who has been killed by God (Romans 6:6). The "new man" installed in his place is not a slave of the devil, but rather a slave to the righteousness of God (Romans 6:18). Like Jesus, his only will is to obey his Father (John 4:34). But, as we see from scripture, this "new man" must be systematically fed and strengthened by God's Spirit (Ephesians 3:16), lest a fiery temptation overwhelm us and we succumb to the deceit of sin.

The Holy Spirit gives us a great lesson in spiritual warfare through the account of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness by Satan. Notice that Satan came to Him with these suggestions: "Turn the stones into bread" and "Jump off the temple" and "Worship me for riches and fame".

The first temptation sought to draw out the principle of self, to induce Jesus to use God's power on Himself autonomously. Jesus struck back with the context of the scripture rightfully re-aligned upon God and rebuffed him. The second temptation sought to draw out a carnal assumption - jump and the angels will catch you - based upon spiritual pride. Again Jesus fired back with scripture dispelling the assumption and elevating God back to His place of sovereign reverence. Seeing he could make no headway with the Son of God, Satan then catered directly with raw appeal to the flesh: worship me and the world is yours. He uses the exact same method with us!

If Satan realizes he cannot twist scripture to his advantage, he will seek other ways to win us. Many believers who are well-versed in sound theology are nevertheless in bondage to internet pornography. Others run after money and worldly success and think they can still love and serve God, despite all their knowledge of Greek and Hebrew acquired in seminary. Satan's flaming arrows enter their minds, and there they stick, laying down poisonous roots and blinding their victims with the smoke. In truth, so many scholars and pastors and theologians who can properly dissect God's Word with exegetical precision are yet inwardly defeated and thus totally ignorant of the enemy's devices!

If we are to quench these darts with the shield of faith, we must understand the object in which our faith is invested. In this case, the object of our faith is the blood of Jesus (Romans 3:25). Yes, faith in the power of the blood of Jesus Christ is the shield that quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one. If we can understand the full advantage God has afforded us through the blood of Jesus, we will see the quenching shield come up at once! Every dart can then be quenched, and we will escape each satanic attack of the mind unscathed, just as Daniel escaped the fiery furnace with not a single thread of this garment singed.

As already mentioned, the Christian life is both a battle and a rest. The battle is in keeping our eyes upon Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2), and the rest comes from exercising the faith He authors in the sanctifying work of the blood of His cross. When we understand what "justified by the blood" means, our inner man suddenly finds divine strength to resist the enemy (Romans 5:9). To say we are "justified by the blood of Christ" means that we are made perfect in the sight of God by virtue of our faith in that promise. It's that simple. When you are weak enough, you will come to see this truth, believe it, and then find your rest. Satan will not be able to harm your mind anymore with his darts, for you will have light on the eternal measure of God's unconditional love for you and your position of blessed sonship in the Risen Savior through His holy blood (Romans 5:5; 8:38-39). And if you sin, there is no condemnation when you humble yourself and confess the sin. In that very moment, the blood of Christ cleanses you completely (I John 1:7). Faith in the blood restores you to a state of perfection. It doesn't merely cover your sin, as you cover a stain on a carpet. If it only did this, Satan could pull back the cover anytime and still accuse you. No, the blood cleanses the stain to where it is gone forever, with no trace, as if the stain never

occurred. This is how God can say, "Your sins I will remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12). Do you have faith for this? Be it unto you according to your faith!

As soon as the Holy Spirit alerts our conscience to any kind of invading danger from the enemy, we are required to do three things: Firstly, we must resist the initial impulse. This can be difficult and we will undoubtedly suffer to some extent in the flesh even when our inner men are strong, but by doing this we follow in the example of Christ our Forerunner! (1 Peter 4:1) Secondly, we must quench the impulse with the faith that Satan was defeated on the cross, and that the blood of the Son of God imputes to us a state of impeccability before the Father (2 Corinthians 5:21). As a result, there will be no more satanic condemnation to the conscience (Hebrews 9:14). This is the testimony of the blood we use to overcome the powers of darkness (Revelation 12:11). And finally, we must unsheathe the sword of the Spirit and rebuff Satan's attack just like Jesus our Forerunner did with "It is written." As Jesus was, so are we to be in this world (I John 4:17).

If Satan hurls a fiery dart tempting you to be unforgiving toward someone who has wronged you, after you quench the dart, counter his attack with a scripture like: "Be kind and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32). If you are tempted with a dart to be selfish and greedy, you can counter it with "Let each of you look not only on his own interests, but the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4). If you are tempted to be superficially judgmental in spiritual matters, counter the dart with words of Jesus Himself: "Do not judge by appearances" (John 7:24). If you are tempted with money: "But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction" (I Timothy 6:9). Fear of an uncertain future: "Be anxious for nothing" (Philippians 4:6). If you are tempted to be envious of unbelievers living in the lap of luxury, you can use these verses to swing back: "Do not envy the wicked" (Proverbs 24:1) and "My feet had almost stumbled, for I was envious of the boastful" (Psalms 73:23).

For every dart Satan hurls, you have the shield of faith in the unlimited power of Christ's blood, and the sharp sword of scripture to repel his attack. But, dear soldier, the initial responsibility to resist is always begins with you.

So fight the good fight of faith! Amen.

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