

# No Stalemate in the War Against Satan

by Santosh Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of gratitude, hope, and vision for the future, focusing on surrendering all earthly desires and attachments to fully embrace Christ. It challenges listeners to engage in spiritual warfare, ensuring every thought and disobedience is surrendered to Christ for victory. The message encourages a fresh commitment to live in the newness of life in Christ, leaving behind all worldly pursuits and embracing the journey with Jesus without turning back.*

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 10:5, Joshua 1:2, Ephesians 6:13, Philippians 3:7

**Topics:** "Gratitude", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

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## Transcript

We're going to take some time shortly to express gratitude to the Lord for what He's done publicly in the last year and express our hope for what He will do in the year to come. Most of what we've been sharing, I think, is, and what I will share as well, is a little bit of our hope and the vision of hope that the Lord's given us. I thought I would start by just expressing my thanks to the Lord for His goodness to me.

And Jesus deserves all the thanks, but I also, it's good to express thanks to those around us. And I want to begin by thanking Megan and my children, who, as we just heard from Dave, they're the ones that are the real test of whether my spirituality is real or not, more than any of you. And they have challenged me and encouraged me.

So thank you to each of you in my family who put up with me all these years. And they didn't have a choice in having me as a husband and a father, but they have really supported me and encouraged me every day. I also want to take a moment to thank Ajay and Dave and Olu, specifically, for the tremendous blessing they are to me, personally.

I couldn't be the follower of Jesus and the servant of Him if it wasn't for them. You have tremendous elders, church family, you know that already. But I hope you know that, really, that you pause for a

moment to recognize the faithfulness with which they serve.

I've never seen three men like this who really have no desire to promote themselves or to make themselves big through their gift. They just simply start to fit in, even as elders. I was an elder longer than any of them, and I saw them as they came up into positions of leadership.

And I've seen in the workplace, and even in other churches, where that promotion has resulted in people thinking high thoughts about themselves, acting different all of a sudden because they have responsibility or authority or are put in positions of leadership. But their heart to follow Jesus is exactly the same as it was before. That's the mark of good shepherds, that as the responsibility has grown and the tasks have increased, it hasn't all of a sudden made them act in a superior way.

So thank you to the three of you brothers. It's a joy to serve with you in this church, and I believe the Lord has preserved this church and will continue to do so as each of us, beginning with us leaders, seek to go down, go lower, and never seek to push ourselves up, never seek to attach people to ourselves, never seek to make a name for ourselves, but seek to go underneath to bless others. So thank you.

And then lastly, but not least, you all in the church family, I came here 17 years ago, Megan and I came here 16 years ago, almost 17 years ago, looking for this, for the experience in Christ's body that I can honestly say we are experiencing today. None of you were here at that time, but through the ups and downs and through, even though it's taken many years and many different faces, the Lord has brought us to that wonderful oasis that we call home spiritually. This is our home.

I look forward to any opportunity to be with you all, and I hope in that love for the Lord's body, not because it's you all, but because it's the Lord's body, the body that He has called us to walk in fellowship with. I find that you are the people that I most want to spend time with. As far as what the Lord's laid on my heart, I think you'll find in what I shared that some of that, most of that's actually already been touched on, and just maybe a slightly different way.

The thing that the Lord's been impressing on my heart, especially in the last few weeks or months, I would say, is that we're in a battle. We're really in a battle. I love the emphasis on cheerfulness that even Olu just brought out, and faith Ajay was talking about, and remembering to be ready with the armor of God in our battle.

But let's never forget that. We are in a battle, and as we look forward to 2024, if you could turn with me to some of these passages that Dave actually already took us to, 2 Corinthians chapter 10. 2 Corinthians 10, we already read verses 3 through 6, but I want you to see two key words in verses 5 and 6. 2 Corinthians 10 verse 5, he says, we are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience.

Every, every, all. That's a sense of that 100 percent, 99 percent was not acceptable. 100 percent, and that's the mentality that we must have if we are in battle.

It's the enemy that you leave unconquered, left alive, that will come back and haunt you later on. This is the disobedience that, for which God took the kingdom away from Saul. Was it really that big a deal if Saul spared a few of the Amalekites? Yeah, sure he spared Agag the king, but Agag was pretty much useless at that point.

He wasn't going, his army had been destroyed, he had no power. What was so bad about Saul sparing Agag? God took it seriously. There's this mentality of everything.

God is a 100 percent God. He doesn't want you and I to reach the end of 2024 having left unconquered even one area in our lives. I hope you'll remember that.

Let's turn to Joshua chapter 1. The children of Israel are just about to transition into the land of Canaan. Moses had died. Joshua was leading them forward as they were crossing this Jordan.

Think about crossing 2023, going into 2024, like crossing a Jordan as it were. As they were crossing the Jordan, he says in verse 2, you and all these people to the land which I am giving to them, or you let's replace the word land with the word year. You're crossing this Jordan to the year which I'm giving to them, to RLCF, that's the end of verse 2. Verse 3, every day in which you live in this year I have given to you.

It's the word the Lord gave me this week as I was thinking about it. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you. Every day that you're alive this year, God has given it to you.

That means there's not one that's left behind. Guess what, this year we actually get to have 366 days. One extra and normal to leave here.

So 366 of which seven are already gone. Six, yeah, we're on the seventh. So six are already gone halfway through the seventh day.

The reason this is important is because before you know it, you will find yourself again in December 2024 wondering, where did the year go? And now as you look back on 2023, we had a meeting just like this a year ago. In fact, our family went back and listened to some of the recordings of what they shared and we all shared a year ago. It's good, go back and listen.

Don't just move on. If the Lord gave you a spirit of gratitude and a vision of hope for what he was going to do, look back and say, well Lord, did you do it? If you gave me that hope of what you would do in 2023, now that I've gotten to the end of it, do I just move on and say, well, I said it, but no, it didn't really happen like Ajay was saying. We must have faith.

So look forward to 2024 with this mentality. Every day that you give me, Lord, as far as I know, not counting it for taking it for granted, but if you allow me to live to the end of this year, I will have had 366 opportunities for God to destroy the work of Satan through my life. Don't miss one.

God's a hundred percent God. I'd like you to pull up that slide. I have a little picture I want you to see.

This is the phrase I think of when I think about going into 2024. It's no stalemate, no stalemate. I don't know how many of you play chess.

It's a wonderful game to play, but in chess, there is the concept of winning and losing. Yes, as there is with almost all sports, but there's also the concept of a stalemate. A stalemate is when a king who's on the losing side manages to make it for 50 moves without getting killed.

The moment the last other piece has been killed, destroyed, and only the king is left, a counter starts. Let's say you were playing black against white. If your last piece was just destroyed, as is the case there, now a counter starts.

If you can make it 50 moves without losing, without checkmate, it's a stalemate. I got this picture of the devil is out to make 2024 a stalemate for you. See, he's already losing.

He's lost the battle. Jesus defeated him. His end is checkmate, if you have faith, but if he can somehow make it to stalemate, that means just, hey, don't bother me there.

Just make it through this day. Allow me one more move. Allow me one more move.

Allow me one more move to just survive. Yeah, you had a bad mood that day, and the devil really, whenever you have a bad mood and you're grumbling and complaining, that's a day you allowed the devil to make one more move. Jesus should have triumphed.

The spirit of joy and cheerfulness should have been the victory. We should have cornered the devil and said, no, that day is the Lord's, not yours, devil, but we allowed him one more move. And maybe you look back on 2023 and you see there were, out of the 365 days, moves that you made last year and the devil made, how many was he able to just get away? Jesus has overcome.

He's a defeated enemy. The end is checkmate for him. You know that.

But how many times was he able to escape that somehow? Because you didn't have faith. You didn't meditate on God's word. You didn't seek for power of the Holy Spirit.

You didn't know where God wanted you to go and what he wanted you to say so that you could corner the devil that day. There is a daily victory that God wants us to have. Every move.

We have taken every thought captive. We have destroyed all speculation. We have taken all disobedience.

Every day that the Lord has given me in 2024, he has given to me for victory. Let's turn to Ephesians chapter six. We'll keep that slide up there.

Ephesians chapter six, also a passage we heard just now after he talks about, or right before he talks about the armor of God. Ephesians 6 verse 13. Take up the whole armor of God so that you will be able to resist in the evil day.

Take up the whole armor of God. Know what weapons you have. You have a rook, you have a bishop, you have a knight, you have pawns, you have a king, you have queen, you have castle.

You know the weapons you have and take up the whole armor of God. Use every square that you're supposed to take and having done everything. This little phrase, honestly, I don't know if I ever paid attention to it.

I'm pretty sure I read Ephesians 6 verse 13 many times and memorized portions of this chapter, but I don't know that I'd really paid attention to that little phrase in the middle after and having done everything to stand firm. Having done everything. Can you look back on 2023 and you say, Lord, I did everything.

Having done everything. Every single day, 365 was yours. If it wasn't the case in 2023, let it be the case in 2024.

Make it your goal, dear brother and sister. Having done everything. Every day, I gave it to you.

Now, don't look back. Maybe the last six days has already been, Lord, I missed it. Okay, never mind.

Don't wait till 2025. God's not a new year resolutions kind of God. He's a today resolution kind of God.

Today, if you hear his voice today, don't harden your heart. Today is the day of salvation. Today, you can say, Lord, I missed the last six days already.

I wish I could have heard this message, what we heard this morning already on the day one. That doesn't matter. Today, set your eye on Jesus.

Say, Lord, it's not going to end in a stalemate. The devil has been defeated and every day I'm going to destroy a little bit more of the work of Satan. Not a single one of the gates of hell will escape this year.

Not even one. And what does that mean practically? Every day, dear brothers and sisters, today, today, there are opportunities. Today, there are moves.

Today, there are things that God wants you to say and do that will destroy the work of Satan. Don't let it go. Don't let the devil escape somehow.

If you know the devil's around in your home, let's say there's some turmoil came in and somehow he was able to escape without you defeating him. Somehow he's gone and hid in a corner somewhere. Imagine you discovered that there was a rattlesnake in your house.

Somehow it crept in and you're like, oh, there it is. You saw a little bit of it and then it went under the couch somewhere. What would you do? You'd let it sit there? It's under the couch.

I can't see it. It's all right. Let it be there.

None of you would do that. You know if he's under the couch, he's going to come out at some point. Yeah, I haven't heard him rattle in a while.

No. Move the couch. Dig him out.

Get the, if you don't, if you're afraid to take it with your hands, get the snake catcher. Get whatever weapon you must get. Move the couch.

Tear apart everything. Set things right. Move things out of the way to expose him.

Let the light shine where the devil is so that he will be destroyed today. Don't let him go and hide. If there's an, if something in a situation in your home like we heard already manifested a little bit of the spirit of the devil, in the attitude you had towards your wife or your husband, a little bit of sourness or bitterness in the tone in which you spoke, don't just stuff it down and say, oh okay, got over that.

No. Deal with it. Rip open your heart.

Say, Lord, shine your light into that dark corner where I let that little bad attitude or the unkind way I spoke to my spouse sit. Rip it apart. Say, Lord, deal with it.

Don't let the devil go and hide for another day. Today is the day of salvation. Today's the day the devil wants, God wants you to destroy the works of the devil afresh.

I'll close with this. You go on to the next slide. This paraphrase that I just put together is based on the living Bible and the message from Philippians chapter 3. You can read it sometime.

Philippians 3 verses 7 through 14. All the things that I once thought were so important in this world, now I've thrown them all away. Is that really true? This is what Paul wrote.

All the things that I once thought were so important in 2023. All the things in 2023 that I thought were important. Oh, that job situation or that healing or that money that I was going to get or that other gift or I was going to get this little extra thing or some I was going to win that game.

I was going to do this other thing. All the things that I thought were important in 2023, I've thrown them all away compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my bridegroom firsthand. Everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant.

Doggone. Think of all the things that you were looking forward to in 2023. I was going to get that.

Maybe you got it. Can you look at that today and say that's doggone. It's useless, worthless.

I've dumped it all in the trash. Oh, I encourage you to do that today brothers and sisters at the end of this meeting or even now as you've heard the vision that we have for our church, for the Lord's vision for our church. Everything that you put value on in 2023, put it in the trash.

Flush it down the toilet this morning. Don't hold on to it another long. Don't go into 2024 holding on to that thing that's valuable to you on this earth.

I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by him. Let's go on to the next slide. Now I have given up everything else.

I have found it to be the only way to really know Christ and to experience the mighty power that brought him back to life again and to find out what it means to suffer and to die with him. This is the only way to really know Christ. This is eternal life that you might know Christ.

This is the only way to really know Christ. You must put everything else that you put value on in the trash. Don't pick it out of the trash if you put it there.

Okay last slide. So whatever it takes, I will be one who lives in the fresh newness of life of those who are alive from the dead. Make this your motto for the year.

Whatever it takes, whatever the suffering, whatever pain, whatever loss I go through, whatever it takes, I will be one who lives in the fresh newness of life of those who are alive from the dead. I don't mean to say I'm perfect. I haven't learned all I should even yet, but I've got my eye on the goal where God is beckoning us onward to Jesus.

I'm off and running and I'm not turning back. Amen. Let's just pray briefly.

If you're challenged, not by my words, by the words of Paul filled with the Holy Spirit, wrote these words 2,000 years ago, it's just paraphrased in a little bit, words that can challenge us, perhaps words you can relate to. But this is God's goal. This is God's vision for us.

No turning back. Let's pray. And as we pray, before we go into the time of sharing, pray with me if you're online.

We'll keep the broadcast going for this time of sharing as the church family shares. If you'd like to stay, you're welcome to join us those online. But let's pray and consecrate ourselves to the Lord afresh this morning for this year ahead.

Dear Father, thank you for speaking to my heart this morning. Thank you for speaking to our hearts. Lord, I pray that this year will be a year where everything is yours, Lord Jesus.

And we experience this freshness of life and that all those things will count as dung, as dog dung. Lord, we'll put it into the trash and get rid of it. Burn it, Lord Jesus.

We say, I really say, I really mean it, Lord. I don't know what pain it will be for me when you do burn it, but I'm willing, Lord, this morning, I'm willing. Will you help me, Lord Jesus, even as you start to take away those things that have been holding my affection, that have been holding my attachment, something, Lord, maybe even a church experience here or friends or something else, Lord, I've been holding on to it and it's hindered my life.

I look back maybe in 2023, I pray, Lord, for those who are looking back and thinking, I missed out on it. It's been a stalemate. The devil's escaped somehow because I've been holding on to something.

Lord Jesus, come and let this year be different. Let 2024 be the year where every day the devil is defeated and defeated again and defeated again and defeated again. And remind us of the things we've heard this morning, Lord.

Remind us of how we praised you and gave you thanks so that even in those moments when we don't feel like it, we shall lift our hands and lift our voices and say you are worthy to be praised. All glory and honor and praise and strength and wisdom, power belong to you. You are our God.

You are our God. We praise you and step by step you will lead me. We'll learn to follow you in our ways, in your ways.

Thank you. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Thank you.

I pray, Lord, even as we speak now, as we share that the spirit of prophecy will reign in our midst, a reverence for you, Lord. Make us a people who reverence your word, who tremble at your word. And when you speak, even if it's through the little children, we sit there, we pay attention and we're trembling because it's not us that's speaking, but it's you, the Holy God through your Holy Spirit.

You said if anyone speaks, let them speak as the utterances of God. Lord, we dare not speak our own wisdom here in your church. It's your church, Lord Jesus.

And so as we speak, let us speak as the utterances of you. Oh, pour out your spirit within us, Lord, that every word we speak will be done so with a spirit of reverence. And even as we listen, there'll be reverence, Lord Jesus, that we'll pay attention and we'll recognize the Lord is in his holy temple.

Let all the church be silent before him. Thank you, Lord. Give us the spirit.

Give us the spirit. We pray the spirit of Jesus. Thank you.

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