

Satan's Attacks Against Christian Assurance

by Tim Conway

Duration: 1:23:23

Transcript

Ephesians 6, verse 10. Now the title of the sermon this morning is Satan Attacks Against Christian Assurance. I want to read these verses.

Verses 10-18 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. And that's what I'm wanting to deal with very particularly today is his scheme of trying to unsettle Christians by challenging their assurance.

Satan's attacks against Christian assurance. That's the scheme. There's numerous schemes.

And last week we dealt with something. This week, we're going to deal with another thing. And in the weeks ahead, various of the schemes.

But this is very particularly a place where he strives to attack Christians right at the point of their assurance. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. So we've got these spiritual beings that we're wrestling against.

He calls them rulers, authorities, cosmic powers over this present darkness against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. That's what we're up against. These spiritual forces will come in and they will try to unsettle and steal away the confidence, the assurance, and the security of Christians.

This is normal in this battle. It's not unusual. Saints through the ages have not found this unusual.

Assurance has been something... You can go back and you can find the Puritans. They wrote on assurance. Because this is an area where Christians are attacked and have been down through the ages.

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God. Verse 13, that you may be able to withstand. That's how you withstand.

You withstand with the armor. God has not left us defenseless. He's given us the tools.

He's given us the means. He's given us the weaponry, the armor to defend ourselves against these attacks. And that's what we're going to look at as well.

That you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm. Stand therefore having fastened on the belt of truth. And that's one of the primary things we're going to look at today.

Is look, you're not going to be able to fight this battle unless you have truth in your brain. And remember, that's where this battle takes place. The battle we fight with the devil is a battle in the mind.

That's where our assurance is assaulted. That's where our confidence is attacked. It's attacked in the mind.

So truth. We need this truth flowing through our thinking. That's the issue.

The belt of truth. Breastplate of righteousness. Shoes for your feet having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

That's one thing too. We need to really remember what the gospel is and who the gospel's for. As the devil comes hissing in our ears with his deceptions.

In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one. And that undoubtedly is one of the flaming darts that we get shot at us and hurled at us is you don't belong to God. You're not a Christian.

Take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God praying at all times in the spirit with all prayer and supplication to that end. Keep alert of all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. Father, I pray that you'd help us just now as we consider these words.

Help your people, Lord. We're weak and we're needy. And before these fallen angels, Lord, what are we? We're nothing.

But Lord, in you and abiding in you and strengthened by you and taking up your armor, Lord, we not only can stand, we can be more than conquerors. We pray, help us to conquer. Equip us, Lord, from your word.

I pray this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. So we're considering the schemes of Satan. He's Satan.

That's an adversary. What's an adversary? An adversary is somebody that withstands us. Somebody that stands against us.

It's somebody that opposes us. What does Paul say here? Paul wants us to be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. Why? Because he's against us, against, against, against.

He comes against us. He's trying to undo us. He wants to harm.

If he can't take away our salvation, which he can't, the next best thing is just to make us miserable and defeated and depressed. He's against us. He's Satan.

Therefore, the desperate need for us to take up the whole armor of God. This is a fundamental tactic of the devil to come to us. Listen, he's watching us.

We know this. When he's scheming against us, his schemes are not just generic. He watches each one of us.

He knows where we tend to be weak. And you know, we're all wired different. I may have strengths you don't have.

You may have strengths I don't have. He knows this. He watches us.

He knows where we're most easily defeated. You have places in your life that, you know what? He can't really touch you. And so he doesn't spend a whole lot of effort right there.

He spends his efforts where he knows you are most vulnerable and where I am most vulnerable. And they're not always in the same place. The devil loves to attack Christian assurance.

And this is something that does tend to be relatively universal, that we are going to get into frames. That's another thing. We're not just static beings either.

There are times we're more vulnerable than at other times to certain attacks. He's very aware of that as well. You know what I'm talking about when I'm talking about assurance? I'm talking about the Christian's confidence that he belongs to God, that he is a Christian.

The sense of security that I am his and he is mine. That's what we're talking about here. And the devil's aim is undoubtedly to shoot fiery darts.

And one of his schemes is to steal this glorious aspect of the Christian salvation away from him. Why? Very obvious. You know what assurance does? Assurance makes men bold.

It makes them confident. It fills them with joy. It makes them brave.

It makes them strong. And he knows it. He's full well aware of that.

Steal away somebody's assurance and what happens? You think they're bold in the expanse of the kingdom and doing mighty works? You know, attempting great things for God like William Carey said? Are people lacking assurance out on the front edges of that? The front lines? Are they the ones devising some new ministry for reaching the needy? No, typically not. Where are they at? You steal away somebody's assurance and what happens? Peace goes out the window and joy goes out the window and boldness and prayer goes out the window. You know what? Those with assurance, they're the ones that turn the world upside down.

Doubters, they don't turn the world upside down. People that doubt, they're miserable and they're powerless. And he knows that.

So before I seek to develop this, I want to first establish this fact that God does indeed desire His people to have assurance. Maybe, again, I'm new here, so I don't know all of you and I don't know what you've all been taught. I don't know what you've been exposed to.

I can tell you this. I came from a part of Michigan where hyper-Calvinism was very prolific and there were especially two branches of this. There was the Pato Baptist version that typically tended to be the Dutch Reformed churches, Christian Reformed, Netherlands Reformed, Dutch Reformed.

These folks, extremely hyper-Calvinistic. And then there was a Baptist version. They were called the Strict Baptist and you have those guys over here.

And you know, in those circles, they put a premium on doubt. They consider assurance to be presumption. And in fact, in those circles, the more you doubt, the more holy you are considered to be.

For somebody to say, I'm saved, they look at those people like they're just so presumptuous. How could you definitely say? You know who else? What other great religious movement in this world puts a premium

on doubt? Anybody know? The Roman Catholic Church. Well, let's not even put church at the end.

But Roman Catholicism puts a premium. In fact, not only did they put a premium on doubt, they put their anathema on assurance. If you say you know.

You see, this feeds into their whole system. As long as people are full of doubt, you need the church. You need the priests.

You need all their hocus-pocus and all the stuff they do. People with assurance don't need the church. People with assurance, they know they're assured of one thing, they need Christ.

They've got Him. So brethren, you have to recognize who we're dealing with. We're dealing with the devil.

The devil at one time undoubtedly had one of the highest places in glory. You can imagine, he has no hope. And you know what his assurance is? His assurance is of the lake of fire, a place that's been prepared for him and his angels.

You gotta know this. He looks at mankind. We think about what God has done.

He's redeemed us. We're in the position where we've been betrothed to Christ, the bride of Christ. Satan looks at us and he envies the Christian's joy, the Christian's comfort, the Christian's assurance.

He didn't want us to have it. The fact is, God does want us to have it. God wants us to know we belong to Him.

God wants us to know that He saved us. God saves us, but He also wants us to know. In fact, one of the operations of the Spirit of God is to bear witness with our spirit that we're children of God.

That is one of the, the love of God shed abroad into our hearts. That is by the Spirit. The Spirit is in the business of, just as He whispers to us, you can't possibly know God, the Spirit of God bears witness.

And He speaks to us and says, no, you indeed are. But you know, we fall into seasons where we don't hear the Spirit's voice so loudly and we become prey to this. But I want you to see, as we need to attack this with truth, I want you to see that the Christian is not meant to live in a state of doubt.

God would have us to know we're saved. And so I want to bring out a few verses here. This truth is everywhere in the New Testament.

Listen, if you just were simply to do an extensive study of how much the New Testament actually is affirming to the Christian over and over and over who they are and what they are, you'll immediately come to recognize that God full well knows our assurance is going to be under attack. You can tell He knows. You can tell He has prepared us for that just based on how much the New Testament deals with this.

I mean, if anything ought to convince you that God Himself knows that the devil is going to take full measures and schemes to go against our assurance, you ought to be able to tell that just from the extensiveness that the New Testament deals with seeking to give us assurance as to who we are and the position we have. Listen to this. You can basically look at 1 John.

1 John, you get all the way to the end of this five chapter epistle, and John says this, I write these things. John, what are you talking about? You write what things? Well, obviously the whole epistle. I write these

things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, here it is, that you may know that you have eternal life.

That's why it's written, so that you can know, so that you can go to Scripture, you can read that, and you can come away, and if you believe in this Christ, you can know you have eternal life. Peter, this is everywhere. I'm just giving you a few samplings.

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election. The New American Standard says this, make certain about God's calling in choosing you. You should be certain, but again, you have to put on the armor.

You need to make certain. Wow, how do you do that? Well, you do that with truth. You do that by applying truth.

You do that by applying truth, resisting the devil, and the devil will flee from you. That's what James teaches us. How about this? You know this verse, but think about it.

Let us then with confidence, or the King James says boldness, boldly approach the throne of grace. That's what Scripture says, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. That's Hebrews 4.16. How are you ever going to boldly approach the throne of grace if you don't have boldness? And you're not going to have boldness if your assurance has been stolen away.

You see, the Scripture is assuming this. The Scripture, God wants this. God wants us to have it.

He wants us to come to Him with boldness, knowing we have access, knowing that in Christ, we have a good standing with Him. We have an accessible standing with Him. He wants us to know that.

You see, as long as you're doubting, you have no idea whether you can boldly approach. You're not bold in fact. People that are full of doubts, they don't boldly pray.

Then there's this. Hebrews 6.11, we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end. Now listen, you can hear these words.

Full assurance of hope to the end. That's what God wants you to have. But did you hear these words? You are to show the same earnestness to have this.

That's interesting. Author of Hebrews, the author, Peter, they're telling us that you need to make this happen. In fact, even John is saying, you really need to be studying my epistle and I've written these things so that when you read the things that I've written, then you who believe, you can know.

There can be certainty here. But again, it takes effort on our part. You read what 1 John says, you apply it to your life.

Or we read something like this in Philipians. Rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I say rejoice.

But you know what? Again, what does that presuppose? Statements like that, statements about boldly praying or statements about rejoicing in the Lord, they presuppose assurance. Because nobody rejoices in the Lord. And again, I say rejoice, let alone do you rejoice the first time without having to say again rejoice if you're full of doubts.

It doesn't happen. Joy and speak full of glory is the way Peter talks. Now listen very carefully.

Listen carefully to this. Because this is key. I had a brother read from Nehemiah on purpose so that one thing would jump out at you and that whole chapter wasn't just to see if he could say all the names properly.

Listen to this. They read from the book, from the law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense. That's what a preacher's responsibility is.

Not to preach his own thoughts, his own ideas. Not to invent things. It's to give a sense of what the Word of God says.

They gave the sense so that the people understood. That's important. That's what preachers are supposed to do.

They're supposed to speak in the common man's language so that people can understand. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe and the Levites who taught the peoples, said to all the people, this day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep.

For the people wept as they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, go your way. Eat the fat, drink sweet wine, and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready.

For this day is holy to our Lord and do not be grieved. Undoubtedly, you've heard what I'm gonna say next. You've heard it before.

The joy of the Lord is your strength. Yeah, see, the devil knows that. You know what? When you are in that secret place and your heart is confident, you've just come out of the Word, you've read something about the glories of Christ, your heart is filled to overflowing, you've got your arms lifted up to God, and there are tears of joy running down your face.

The devil looks at that. Oh, he envies that and he hates it because that is your strength. People who know that, people who feel that, people who sense that.

Brethren, I'll tell you, there are times when I'm studying for sermons. It happens in my devotional reading as well. There are times when I'm just, I'm mulling over, I'm really chewing on a passage and I'm in the glory begins to come out where I can't stay in my seat any longer.

I feel like I need to roll out and be on my face because I'm overwhelmed again and again and again by the glory of the gospel. Does it hit you? Does it capture you? But I'm saved. I mean, out of all the many people in this world, he saved me.

This is glorious. My sins are forgiven. My sins, not in part, but the whole, are nailed to the cross.

And I don't bear them anymore. There's redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. And mine have been forgiven.

And this gospel, God didn't spare his only son. How could that be? How could he give him for such a wretch like me? And yet, I'm overwhelmed by it. And the tears flow and there's a new resolve.

He loved me. I want to love him. I want to live for him.

Oh, the devil hates that. And he sees it. And he's watching.

And he knows that joy. Oh, let that joy permeate a whole church. Brethren, people like that are like when you got 120 people and suddenly the joy of it all overwhelms you and you're filled with the Spirit and you go down from the upper room and what happens? You turn the world upside down.

A new missionary wave is launched forth. People with joy like that, they're trying to invent new ways to serve the Lord, to proclaim Christ, to do what he did and walk like he walked. Brethren, that'll change things.

And the devil, he sees it. And he's going to be right there. He wants to steal that away.

He does not want that. He wants people with long faces. He wants people miserable.

You better believe that's what he wants. He fears our boldness. Why? Because assurance and boldness and joy, it gives men strength.

The joy of the Lord is our strength. And it puts people on such exploits as tear his kingdom, comes crashing down around his ears. And he knows it.

He said he's had thousands of years of seeing what boldness in Christians does to him. They didn't like it. He hates it.

He wants to shake us. He wants us filled with anxieties. He wants to make us miserable.

He wants us troubled, doubting. You know what? You can see it on people's face sometimes in the church. They come in, they're all troubled.

Oh, he loves that. Troubled Christians, doubting. He seeks in despair.

He wants, oh, despair and depression. He can't unsave us. But if he can't unsave us, then he wants to fill us with that miserable despair.

Now remember, remember all the time, this battle is fought in our minds. That's where he comes. And even if it may be sickness, and he does have access as we can see from Job, or you remember Jesus cast out a demon.

The woman was bent over. The devil can be responsible for things, but you know, even when he brings physical things, it's how it affects up here. That's the issue.

So we'd be properly armed. Just remember this again. Stand therefore having fastened on the belt of truth.

Jesus said it. Sanctify them by thy truth. Thy word is truth.

You want to be in the word. So here's the first thing that I would say, because we want to look at his tactics. We want to look at his schemes.

The first thing I would say is this. The devil is a liar. And he loves to work on the extremes.

Always on the extremes. On the one hand, Christian, he wants to destroy your assurance. But you know what? You know what the Lord says? The Lord gives us a parable.

And he shows us a man. And a man spread seed. This man had servants.

The servants are tending these fields. And they come in and they say to the master, master, didn't you sow good seed out there in that field? He said, yes, I did. Why is it that there's weeds out there? You know, when he interprets this to his disciples, he said, you want to know who spread the good seed? It's the son of man.

You want to know who spreads the tears, the bad, the weeds? They're sons of the evil one. It's the devil who's done this. You know where this happens? In the church.

You know what he does in the church? He's got the true Christians. And the devil is trying to take your assurance away. But then he also brings tears into the church.

And you know what? He wants to speak assurance in their ears. My wife can tell you about her lost days. My wife would have cigarette in hand, beer in the other hand.

She'd be in the bar. She'd be trying to convince somebody about how good she was. She said she'd be going down the road and she'd be getting high with all of her friends and just be thinking, wow, if we get in a car wreck right now, I'm going to go to heaven.

All my friends are going to go to hell. And she had that idea about herself. Why? Because the devil had breathed this false assurance.

And you know, the thing is, he loves to plant these tears in the church and fill them with this false assurance. And I'll give you some examples of these people. Now remember, you had people in the church at Laodicea.

You do want to remember that all those churches, whether it's Ephesus, whether it's Sardis and Thyatira, you move through there, there were people in danger in all those churches. And he says to these people in Laodicea, I'm ready to spit you out of my mouth. That is not a good thing.

That is not Christianity. That is people who are in the church and that is people who are playing at Christianity, but something's wrong and they need to repent. And if they don't repent, they're going to get spit out of his mouth.

He says to some of those people in some of those churches, I'm going to come against you with the sword in my mouth. You see, he's warning. He says, yeah, there are some in some of the churches, you're worthy to wear white, but there were others not so much.

You see, he's calling these people to repentance. But remember what he said about the church, the folks in the church at Laodicea. He said this, you say, I am rich, I've prospered and I need nothing, not realizing you're wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked.

You see, this is what the devil loves to do. He loves to spread the tears. And he comes along and he whispers, you're okay.

You're rich, you're good. You don't need anything. My wife can tell you that, that was undoubtedly some of you, you know what? For as ungodly as I was when I was lost, I wasn't in the church.

I never got sown there. I was a nominal Catholic. But if you had asked me, I thought it was good.

Why? I'm not that bad. But here's these people. We're prospered.

We don't need anything. But they didn't realize. They didn't realize what they're... You see, they had a false assurance.

They had a false assurance about who they were. Or you get this in the pastoral epistles. Paul tells Timothy and he tells Titus.

Here's what these people are gonna look like. They have the appearance of godliness, but they deny its power. Or as he says to Titus, they profess to know God, but they deny Him by their works.

You see, you find these people in the church. How does that affect the Christian? Well, namely this way. The devil says to the Christian, look how you struggle.

Look at the battles you go through. You struggle with assurance at times. Look at this.

You have doubts. You're tempted. Look at the evil thoughts that come into your mind.

Look at that fellow over there. He doesn't struggle like you do. He's so confident.

He's so certain. He must be real. You're not real.

And remember, these people are in our churches. They are. That's what Jesus says.

There's an evil one. He sows these seeds. False assurance.

You know what false assurance typically... One of the places it's greatly manufactured is it comes about in the case of conversions that have been rushed. They've been forced. You know what happens? People come unto the preaching, or they get a track, or they begin to get stirred up in their conscience.

They're unsettled. But what happens? They come to a knowledge of the truth, but as Paul tells Timothy, there's an absence of power. You see, they have a form of godliness, but they deny the power.

What happens is people get rushed in. People get brought into the church when there's been no power. Yes, they've come to the truth.

They identify with the message. You know, that's what it says. Remember the parable of the soils? You have those that receive it gladly, but then persecution comes, and what happens? They're nowhere to be found because they have no root in themselves.

See, these are these tears. There's no root. There's something defective, and they can receive it very gladly.

People do this all the time, but they get rushed in. Brethren, there are all sorts of forms of evangelism out there just calculated to make these kinds of false converts. We need to be careful.

We want people to come under the truth, but we don't want to force it. That's one reason why I would never be behind altar calls. That doesn't mean we shouldn't press people to call upon the Lord.

But we want to be careful that we're not trying to exact conversions out of people before God brings the conversion out of people. We want people to be under the truth, but we want to wait for the power. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

But we want to wait until the power demonstrates itself. Otherwise, you know what you end up with? People who come into the church, they've sat under the truth. They say, yes, I identify with that truth.

I assent to that truth. I believe that truth. The devils believe.

But there's no power. Because the power of the truth has never impacted them. There's an appearance.

They appear. But there's an absence at the same time. We're surrounded by this thing.

Truth pressed on people. But no radical change takes place. Remember this, you must be born again.

We have this, that we're new creations in Christ. Old things pass away. All things become new.

But what happens is you get people rushed. And what they simply do is they're not changed. They're not new creations.

They just seek to modify their lives. They carry a Bible now and they come to church and somebody may start calling them brother. But this radical change, this deep change hasn't taken place.

And brethren, this is a question that we have to ask ourselves. The question is this, has something happened to us? Not just simply did we make changes in our life. Change will come.

But are you aware that something has happened to you? God has done something to you. That's what happens. Has something been done? Are you aware in the depth of your own being that God has done something to you? Not just that you're simply trying to modify yourself.

Are you aware being moved upon and even controlled and even mastered by someone, by something outside of yourself? That's what happens. If that's a foreign thought to you, something's wrong. False assurance.

These people tend to be rich. They're like the Laodiceans. They're rich, they're self-satisfied.

They're good. They don't feel they need anything. All is well.

All is fine. Their assurance is unmoved. Notice, they profess to know God.

They profess that, but they deny Him by their works. All antinomianism. Watch for that.

You remember how it is in the last day? Many will say to me, Lord, Lord, where did these people come from? Didn't we do many mighty works in your name? Where'd they come from? Well, they came out of the churches. We cast out demons. We prophesied.

These are religious people. But what happens? Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness or iniquity. You see what the issue always is? They profess to know God, but they deny Him.

These are the kind that the devil sows in the church. They're very confident, but the issue is their life of these people does not correspond to their great claims. You see, they're not shaken.

You can hardly shake. I've seen them in the church before. These people, you can't shake them for anything.

Their lives, they don't reflect the great certainty that the people have. They just don't measure up. You look at their life, it's very sloppy.

Sin is very easily tolerated. They don't have any problem slandering people. Their lust is often unbridled, but they just brim over with confidence.

They know. They said the prayer, they know. They know they're good.

When you look closely, there's these glaring defects in their lives. And you know, you can tell these people too, because they don't like self-examination. No, none of that.

You know what they cry out when you talk self-examination? Legalism. Oh, you get these people in the church. Now, look, true legalism can be in the church, but these folks, it's all legalism.

You start talking anything about holiness, it's all legalism. That's these people. And why am I spending so much time here? Because the true Christian, oh, these people are confident.

The true Christian, well, there's a confidence, but it's not in themselves. Brethren, one of the signs of the true Christian is that there is such an awareness. I mean, we're not afraid of self-examination.

It may make us feel uncomfortable, but when we look at ourselves, we recognize all the time, we need more help. We need more holiness. We need more grace.

We need more growth. We need more. There's a sense of dissatisfaction.

There's that hungering and thirsting after righteousness. And we want more. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.

Prone to leave the... Don't you guys, don't you ladies and gentlemen, don't you feel that? You see that the tares in the church, they don't feel that because the devil, because there's no work of the Spirit there producing that kind of dissatisfaction. There's a work of the devil because these are children of the evil one and he's the one that's sown them. And he's speaking peace, peace, but it's all a false peace.

Go on in your sin, it's okay. You made a decision for Christ. All's going to be well in the end.

One of the things about the true Christian is that they can hardly believe that God would have grace. Have you ever thought about those words, and can it be? Have you ever thought about what you're really singing right there? What's Wesley saying? And can it be? How's it go on? That I should gain. Can it be? You see these tares, none of that.

Of course, they expect it. And you know what? These people, they just cruise along and things seem to be good and they're unshaken. The devil loves to say to God's children, look at them, look how confident they are.

Look at how they don't struggle like you do. They're not tempted like you are. They're good.

Now let's talk about self-examination for a second. Because this is one of the places where you have the devil sowing tares in the church. They don't like self-examination.

Makes them uncomfortable. They cry legalism. But you know what? If you're a child of God, he's all about self-examination.

Remember who he is. He's the devil. He's the accuser of the brethren.

What does he accuse the brethren for? Well, things they do. He wants you to examine yourself. He is the one who likes to come along and examine you to the extreme.

He loves to put the Christian under the microscope. He loves to find every defect and tell you and tell God. He wants you to see it.

He wants you to know it. You know what? His tares, no, they're lawlessness. He doesn't want them to discuss.

No self-examination. He leaves them alone. In fact, the more they stay out of the word, the better.

The more they stay not overly concerned. He likes to speak in their ear when there's a very convicting sermon. That doesn't apply to you.

That applies to somebody else. He just wants to lull them to sleep. But with the Christian, he's right there to say, see, that's you.

That's sin. He's the accuser of the brethren. He's gonna come along and he's gonna put you in the clamps.

The true Christian is gonna be put to it. You don't measure up. Look at the sin in your life.

He's a malevolent accuser of the brethren and he will be right there to say, look at your life. Look at it. Look at the sin.

Look how you fail. You think you're a Christian? Look at what you do. Go look in the mirror.

You are a soul full of defects. You don't measure up. You're not like the rest of the Christians.

And you know what he likes to hide from you? He likes to show you full well, how his own tears don't struggle. But what he tends to hide from you is how other true Christians do struggle. He doesn't want you to see it.

He doesn't want you to see the battle. He's telling you, you're the only one that's like this. You're the only one.

And he seeks to drive you to despair through this. You're not like them. You don't measure up.

He's gonna accuse. Well, I'll tell you this. You know what one of the things you wanna do with the truth that you get out of this book? Talk to him.

Talk to the devil. You tell him these truths. Take them.

When he wants to drive examination to the extreme, try to shake you up, try to drive you into despair, you talk to him. You know what? When I was newly saved, brethren, I was bad. I came out of a bad background.

I was wicked. And when I was newly saved, he would come along to me because look, I had a lot of rough edges. And he'd come along to me and he'd say, look what you just did.

You're no Christian. And I just look him square in the face and I'd say, devil, that doesn't work on me. Look how I was.

And God had mercy upon me then. Are you gonna try to convince me that somehow I'm not his or he's gonna abandon me or he's gonna forsake me now because I did this? I mean, if he had mercy on me back then when I was like that, you can't. Talk to him.

Take it to him. Brethren, listen to this. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.

That's what John said. You say that to the devil. See, what he's doing is he's saying, well, you can't be a Christian.

Why? Well, because you have sin in your life. Well, wait, devil. The Bible actually says that if I say I don't have sin in my life, I'm deceived.

So I hear you. You're deceiving. And then also take this to him.

My God also tells me that if I confess my sins, God is faithful and just to forgive me. God never said that I wouldn't have sin. God actually told me that when I do have it, that if I would bring it to him and ask him to forgive me and help me, that I would find grace.

I would find forgiveness. Oh, by the way, devil, I'm also told that, yes, I should be striving not to sin. And that's what John says.

Little children, I write to you that you not sin. But if you do, you have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ. You see, devil, if I sin, I have an advocate.

You're trying to tell me if I sin, I don't have an advocate. You're trying to tell me if I sin, I can't possibly be a Christian. But I'll tell you this, my hope is in that advocate.

My hope is in Jesus Christ, the righteous. Go away, devil. You try to come here and tell me and try to discourage me and send me to despair, but I have a God who tells me that when I fall flat on my face, I can come to him and I can confess it.

And that I have an advocate, Jesus Christ, the righteous. Yes, he writes to me that I sin not. And you know what? You know what? If the power of God is unleashed in your life, you are a new creation.

And so even though you may have stumbles and falls, and even though you may have bitter fights and temptations, your life is different. You know what? My life is not perfect and I still have failures and falls, but I know this, my life is not like it used to be. My life is not what it was when I was lost.

I was given to sin then. I was dead in trespasses and sins. Devil, go away.

I know my life isn't perfect now and I know I have falls, but my life is not like it used to be. It's been radically transformed and Jesus Christ is the one that did it. Here's another place he likes to test our assurance.

Ah, your experience isn't like somebody else's. Can you imagine the devil coming along to Timothy? Timothy, he looked so up to Paul. Can you imagine him whispering in Timothy's ear? How was Timothy's conversion? Likely, he doesn't know the day he was saved.

You know what? He was reared in a Christian household. He had a godly grandmother, he had a godly mother. Probably he didn't know the day.

Probably it was much like the sun rising. It was dark and little by little the light came up and that's how it is with some of us. My wife can tell you, she doesn't know the day.

I can tell you almost the moment. As you see, the devil could come along and speak to my wife and say, well, you don't know the day, your husband does. Well, you must not be real.

You know, you can get online and you can watch Paul Washers give his testimony and the devil can be right there when you're watching that but you weren't saved that way. No, the truth is Paul Washer wasn't saved the way the Apostle Paul was. You know, Lloyd-Jones didn't even want to have testimonies given in his church because he was afraid that people would be driven to despair because of this very thing.

I'll tell you this. I've been a pastor long enough, two decades. I have seen people with some of the most glowing, amazing conversion experiences imaginable and within months they're gone.

You know, Charles Spurgeon was one to say, he preferred the wounded stag. You know what I mean? The deer that's been wounded, that crawls away in the thicket and licks its wounds. Spurgeon himself with all the experiences he had of conversion said typically the firework display, not the most impressive in the long run.

So listen, you know what you want to say to the devil? You want to say to the devil that you're not saved by your experience. You're saved because of your hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. You can tell him Jesus' blood is no less powerful if there was no firework display at the beginning.

What matters is are you clinging to him now? You tell him that, talk to him. Or how about this? Fluctuations in your experience. Oh, this one, he takes, you know what happens? You're saved, you're full of joy.

I know a pastor friend there in the United States, Don Johnson is his name. He said when he first got saved, he said it was like one baptism of the spirit after another. He said it was glory.

One after another after, he just, this was heaven on earth. And then you know what happened. I'm not going to say reality came because it was no less real what he was experiencing in the beginning.

It's just the full orb hidden. And we can have these fluctuations in our experience. What happens? Well, we don't feel like we once felt.

And the devil can be right there to say, well, you're falling away or you're falling away. That's what it is. I mean, you know what happens? Dryness comes in, coldness comes in.

You get these fluctuations. We don't always live on the mountaintop. And now you find yourself in the valley.

You remember how it was in Pilgrim's Progress? The valley of humiliation, the valley of the shadow of death. There were these ups, there were the delectable mountains, but he also wrote of other places. And see, that's the real Christian life.

That's how it is. We typically don't walk through life, this consistent thing. And the devil be right there to tell you that because this change has taken place in your life, you were never real.

That's what he'll tell. You talk to him. You take, you know what? You know where I'd take him? Take him straight to David.

Listen to David. Why are you cast down? Who's he speaking to? Himself. Why are you cast down, oh my soul? My soul.

Why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him. In other words, I used to praise Him. Now I'm cast down.

I'm not so much praising, but I'm not gonna always be in this condition. I'll be back to the place where I'll praise Him, my salvation. Look, I'll tell you this.

If you know of no variation, I'll tell you this, typically it's the tares that have no variation. Why? Because he doesn't want any variation. The devil just leaves him right there.

No variation. He loves to attack the variation in the life of the true believer. You take him to texts like this.

Variation, no variation in the Christian life is not even consistent with scripture. That ought to make you question if there's never any inconsistency here. The Psalms are some of the most experiential books in our Bibles.

You ever read them? David is up, David is down. David's rejoicing, then he's cast down. And I'll tell you this, there's a physical element.

Our spiritual well-being is so closely tied to our physical condition. Maybe some of you remember that last sermon, maybe you've watched it online, the last sermon that Bob Jennings preached at our church before he went to be with the Lord. And he was suffering with cancer.

And he said to the young people, he said, look, don't think that when you come to your deathbed that you're going to have all this opportune time to be in the Word and be praying. He said, when you're in that kind of pain, you can hardly think, you can hardly go there. Brethren, the thing is, we're getting older, all of us.

And the issue is we're going to run into more and more physical problems that can have direct bearing on how we feel spiritually. And the devil will be right there to say, oh, look how you're feeling. You were never true, you were never real.

Look how dry you are right now. Look how cold things are. Well, brethren, you talk to him.

You talk to the devil. Go to him. Fact is, the devil seeks to persuade us to pay way too much attention to our moods and our feelings rather than paying close attention to our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes we can get up and we can look in the mirror, how am I feeling today? And everything's measured on that. When really we need to pay more attention to our relationship with Christ and who He is. And then there's this, there's misinterpreting God's dealings with us.

Oh, the devil will come here. You know what happens? Job happens. What did God do with Job? He withdrew.

Job could say, I look to the right hand, I look to the left, I can't find my God anymore. I wish his smile was upon my tent like in days past. You know what happens? God's smile can go behind the clouds.

God deals with us. God can go silent on us. And He does that to His children.

Suffering comes in, as it was with Job. Suffering comes and I can't find God. It'd be one thing if suffering came, but I knew where He was, I could find Him.

But you know how often it is? God brings suffering and He withdraws at the same time. That is difficult. That is a difficult trial.

And the devil's right there to say, oh, look at that. He loves, he comes with a smirk on his face. Look at how you're being treated.

It's obvious you don't belong to God. If you belong to God, He would not be treating you this way. Talk to Him.

You know where I'd take Him? Take Him to Job. Job. Look, have you considered God's servant, Job? Oh yeah, the devil's considered him.

The devil full well knows about that situation. Take Him to the Scriptures. Doesn't Scripture say that the Lord disciplines the ones that He loves? Doesn't it say that? That if you're a son and you don't get disciplined, well then you're not real.

Because the reality is, He disciplines. Didn't Paul and Barnabas come along to the churches there on their first missionary journey? Don't we read something about maybe Acts 14 that through much tribulation, we enter the kingdom? Haven't we read that somewhere? Or how about this? I love this. I often think about this.

Going into John 16, the Lord says, they are gonna put you out of the synagogues. He said, if they hated me, they're gonna hate you. He said, they're gonna kill you thinking that they do God's service.

And you know what He said in the midst of saying all those things? He said this, I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. Wow, isn't that amazing? You know what Jesus is saying? That if I didn't tell you these things that I'm telling you right now, you would be prone to fall away. I needed to tell you these things so that you wouldn't fall away.

Well, you know those very things that He needs to tell them that they don't fall away? We need to tell ourselves. We need to hear from Scripture ourselves so that we don't fall away. See, these are the things

that keep us anchored.

What things? Name of this, through much tribulation, you get to the kingdom. Tell the devil that. See, you're gonna go through tribulation.

He's gonna come up. You know what he's gonna do? You're going through tribulation and he's gonna say, behold. See anyone else in the church going through what you're going through? Isn't that too bad? Well, you know why that is, don't you? He doesn't like you.

He likes them. He doesn't like you. He's not for you.

He wants to keep you down. He's against you. And you just take him to Scripture.

No, we have been promised that through not a little tribulation, much tribulation, much tribulation, that's how we enter. You tell the devil this. If we're children, then we're heirs.

Yes, that's true. Heirs of God, fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him. You see, we've been promised this.

And so when it comes, don't listen to him. In fact, you know what the Scripture says, and you can pardon my language, but this is scriptural language. You're a bastard if you don't experience these things.

And it's very interesting. Why does God withhold himself from us? Why does God bring the chastening upon us? The peaceable fruits of righteousness. Isn't it amazing God withholds himself from us so that we might mature? It almost seems like the most contradictory thing that God would withhold himself in order to reveal more of himself, but that's exactly what he does.

And even if you think about Job, think about how it was in the end when the Lord appeared to him, closer than ever. Oh, difficulty. You know why God brings difficulties in our life? Because think about it.

Have your greatest seasons of growth been when you have no difficulties? That's never the case. We tend to grow the more, the more we suffer. That just is true.

The greater the difficulty in our life, it produces more prayer, it produces more strength, more power. It causes us to think. It causes us to examine his promises.

It causes us to think who he is. You know what trials do? At least what they do in my life. They call me to cry out all the more to him.

They kind of invigorate your prayer life. You know when everything's going good, the bank account's full and everything's smooth and all the children are happy and well and the marriage is good and everything's good in the church and you don't need the Lord. You do, but you just don't realize it.

And so what does he do? Oh, he takes your health away. He brings a severe problem in your family. And then what happens? And then you're desperate and you're seeking him.

And brethren, that's so good for us. But the devil would have you believe, no, it's because God doesn't care. No, when scripture says, devil, he's working the peaceable fruits of righteousness in me.

And by the way, our Lord was a man of sorrows and he was acquainted with grief. And we walk in his footsteps. And if they hated him, they'll hate us.

If he was persecuted, he says, rejoice when they persecute you. And here's another thing. Then there's this.

Oh, how often the devil comes to shake our confidence when we fall into sin. There's a brother, he falls into sin. And then what happens? A sister.

And as a result of listening to the devil, suddenly they begin to feel utterly hopeless. Begins to question the whole relationship with God and the devil hisses at him. And he has no right to ask for forgiveness.

Not after what he's done. And you know, well, it was okay back at the beginning. Back at the beginning, it was okay to go to God because remember, you were ignorant then.

You were coming out of the darkness. You didn't know anything, but you've lived under such light now. You've been under such teaching.

You've been reading the word for how many years? You've got no right. You've fallen into sin. You've got no right to go to God.

Begins to question the whole thing. He sinned against such light. Now he's going to try to drive you to despair.

And soon that's where the sinning Christian finds themselves. The sinning Christian. Oh, I write to you that you don't sin, but if you do, and there's seasons.

There's seasons and the devil will try to take you into the depths of despair and make you miserable and unhappy feeling like you've lost everything. But again, what is it? Where do we go for our rescue? Where's the armor? Truth, the belt of truth. Truth, truth, truth.

Talk to the devil. Hit him with truth. Can't we go back again and say, if we confess our sins, some of the ones we've already done.

If we confess our sins, he's fulfilled just to forgive. That's what scripture says. Or how about, you know what? I know we can go wrong in making too much out of Peter's sin and too much out of David's sin, but you do need to remember Psalm 51.

Here is a man who lived under great light, walked with the Lord, wrote the Psalms. King in Israel. A man after God's own heart.

And what happens? He falls into, you see, a lot of people would say, well, I've never murdered anybody. Here, see, he murdered somebody. Committed adultery with his wife and murdered him.

And listen, a Psalm of David. When Nathan the prophet went to him after he had gone into Bathsheba. Isn't this amazing? This is how God speaks to his children after you go in with Bathsheba.

Tell this to the devil. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. According to your steadfast love.

Have I sinned in the midst of great light? I have. But see, this accords with his grace and his love and his kindness. Do you think God's kindness, do you think God's long suffering is so short, so easily will he abandon the work that he started? Brethren, not at all.

He says, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. Tell the devil that. Tell the devil, you're making God to sound like his patience is about this long.

And the abundance of his love and his mercy to blot out transgression is about that big. But that's not what the Bible tells me. The Bible shows me examples.

Can you imagine Peter denied the Lord three times? Peter was not only restored, Peter, feed my lambs. Peter, I'm putting you in the pulpit. That's how our God is.

Tell that to the devil. The devil wants, you know what the devil wants? And the devil wants us to take us back to works. That's what he wants to do.

And forget that where sin increased, that grace all the more increases. That's what it says at the end of Romans five. He wants us to forget truths like that.

Devil wants to send us back to works. But you know, this in recurring fashion shows up in scripture. Do you know what the apostle Paul says? He says to the Galatians, you tell me, did you receive the Spirit in the beginning? Were you saved in the beginning? By works of the flesh or by the hearing of faith? Which is it? Did you as a sinner go to Christ in faith? Or was it based on works? Which was it? Are you so foolish having begun that way? Are you now going to go back to the works? That's how he talks to them.

He says, are you so foolish having begun by the Spirit? Are you now being perfected by the flesh? I'll tell you that. That's exactly what the devil's trying to take us to when he comes in and he says, look at what you've done. You say to him, my faith is in what Christ did on that cross.

And he said, it's finished. And I know I've messed up. I know I'm not perfect.

I know I've fallen on my face and I expect to probably do it tomorrow. I hope not. I want to follow in his path.

I want to follow in his steps. I hunger and thirst after righteousness. I know the imperfections.

I asked the Lord that I might grow because I know these imperfections are still there. But devil, you're trying to take me back to works and I'm not going there. And what Paul tells the Colossians is this, as you receive Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.

I ask you this, how'd you come in the beginning? I'll tell you how I came. I was a drunk. I was a thief.

I was a liar. I was wicked. That's how I came.

And I came looking for mercy. And you know what Paul says to Christians? You need to walk the same way today as you came in the first place. You walk by faith.

You walk with your eyes on Christ. There's a devil, he wants you to take it off of it. He wants you to minusculely examine your life and find every defect and every fault and every imperfection.

And he will just scream in your ear. He will pound that drum. And I would say, devil, I think it's you who doesn't know the Lord because what I find is his long suffering is absolutely tremendous.

You see, you know when he really comes? When you've had repeated falls into sin. That's one thing if you fall once or twice. But as a Christian, you have these repeated.

My wife was just, she was communicating with somebody in the family that was telling her recently, I've walked as a Christian for so long. And she was saying how discouraged she was. But after walking with the Lord so long, she hasn't gotten more victory in some areas.

Listen, when the devil would be right there and he's telling you, sin will not have dominion over Christians. And look at your life. That's true.

If your life is just basically like it always was, and all you've done is tacked on some religion, well, no, that's not good. You see, he so much wants us to forget just how much our life has changed. I'll tell you, you take him, take the devil to scripture again.

Just think about, think, here's what I find. Think with me, brethren. How often did Israel go astray? If you simply read the Old Testament and you look at how often God is coming back to them and saying, come back to me, they would fail again and again and again.

You know what I find absolutely amazing is as far gone as some of the churches were in Asia Minor, Jesus calls every one of them back to him. As far as some of these Corinthians had gone, even the one who they disciplined in 1 Corinthians 5, Paul yet has hope that through the destruction of the flesh they may be saved in the last day, that God's mercy would go that far, even after all that that man who was in the church had done. Think about how far these Corinthians were.

And listen, this wasn't one time or two times. Hebrews would never have been written for one sin. Corinthians would never have been written for one sin.

Galatians would have never been written if it was simply one slight deviation one day. You know why those epistles were written? Because these people were failing day after day after day in certain areas of their life. Now, was there expected that repentance would come? Yes, the second Corinthian letter shows us they repented.

But brethren, I'll tell you this, God is so long suffering. Do you remember the apostles? These guys when they were just, they were the original disciples and they came along. Do you remember how often, get behind me, Satan.

That's today. Tomorrow is another thing. Now he's denying him three times.

They're talking about who's gonna be the greatest. How long am I with this faithless and perverse generation? And he's speaking to his disciples who can't, how long suffering he was. Tell that to the devil.

Remind him of how long suffering our God is. And he comes and he wants to bring all these repeated falls. Oh, and then there's this.

This is classic with the devil. And I experienced this as a young believer, the unpardonable sin. And we probably need a whole message devoted to this.

I have one text for you to take to the devil when it comes. Oh, he loves to do that. You have thought such a thought about the spirit of God.

There's no hope. You've had so much light. You've committed the sin that has no forgiveness.

I'll just, one response. Whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. That's all you need to tell the devil.

Because it doesn't matter what you've done. If you go to Christ, He will not cast you out. That's what he says.

You say, wait a second. What if I've committed the unpardonable sin? Then that can't apply to me. Well, wait.

He says, whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. Brethren, one of the things that you need to recognize, those Jewish leaders who were saying that he casts out demons by Beelzebul, but they were saying he's got an unclean spirit. Those guys, they hated Christ.

They wanted nothing to do with him. They wanted no part. They saw nothing in him.

They easily blasphemed the Holy Spirit because they were intentionally rejecting everything about Christ. Listen, let me tell you something. If even one of those scribes had stepped forth out of the ranks and said, Lord, if you will, you could make me clean.

It healed them like that. Don't you think, don't let the devil tell you. They didn't want to come.

What makes a sin unpardonable when you've got a truth like whoever comes to me, I'll not cast out. Hopefully you can see that it must mean that whatever that sin is, it leaves a man where he finds no hope in coming, where he just won't come, where there's no inclination on his part to come. You see what the devil's constantly trying to do is whisper in people's ears that you can't go, even though you want to, because you've committed this sin.

Don't believe that for a second. Scripture says, whosoever comes, whoever. You say, what if I've committed the unpardonable sin? Go to him, because whoever.

What Scripture says, the Son is bidding you come. The Spirit and the Bride bid you to come, come. And it says, if you want, come.

It says, if you're thirsty, come. That's what I would say. Whoever comes, he'll not cast out.

You say, can I go, even if I've committed the un... Yep, if you go, he's not going to cast you out. Brethren, how can we be certain we're Christians? Paul gives one of the... Let me, I'll give you two statements that I think are so helpful. One is Jesus said this.

Jesus said, those who are well don't need a physician. I came to call sinners. So I just ask you this, are you aware that you're sick? That's the first thing, because that's who he came for.

But here's the second thing. Paul told the Philippians, very helpful statement. It's found in Philippians chapter three, verse three.

And he says this. He says, we are the circumcision. In other words, we, now remember the Philippians, Philippi was a Roman colony.

He's speaking to Gentile Christians. And he says this, we, he includes himself, we are the true circumcision. What does that mean? Just like he tells the Galatians, we're true offspring of Abraham.

If what? True circumcision means a true Jew. You can be a Gentile and still be a true Jew. And here's how you know you are one.

That's what a Christian is. A Christian is a true Jew. How can you know? What do they look like? They worship by the spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

How can a person know whether they're genuine? Well, the answer is this. Do you know that you're a sinner? That you're sick? Do you know that you need help and you can't provide that help? Do you know you need the spiritual doctor? You cease to rely on your own works. That's not putting any confidence in the flesh.

You remember what his confidence, Paul's confidence was in? That physically he was born a tribe of Benjamin. He was circumcised the eighth day. Remember all his credentials? He lays them all out there.

You don't put any hope in that. He used to put hope in that. That's what the world puts hope in.

They put hope in their accomplishments. Well, I'm a pretty good person. If you know you're not a good person, you don't put any hope in that.

You put no confidence in that. You don't put any confidence that you came from a Christian family or you don't put any confidence that you've been baptized, you've taken the Lord's Supper, you attend church meetings. No confidence in that.

No confidence in the flesh. If you're only looking to Jesus Christ and His perfect work on your behalf, His life, His obedience, His death, His resurrection, His ascension. He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, having made purification for sins.

If that's where your hope is, you are a Christian. No matter what the devil tells you, you are a Christian. You will not be put to shame.

You're going to glory. That's what a Christian is. That's it.

Brethren, if I read through the Scriptures, there's a certain type of verse that I have just become very aware of. Every time I see it, and I see it everywhere. Listen to this.

Just take this to heart. As I read through the Bible over and over and over again, I see the same truth. Listen to this.

The wicked, they have no knowledge. All the evil doers who eat up my people as they eat bread, listen to this, and do not call upon the Lord. Do you know what the hallmark of a lost person is? They don't call upon the Lord.

Do you know what the Spirit does to the true child? It's not a spirit of slavery, it's a spirit of adoption. And we cry, Abba, Father. When we're in trouble, we cry.

When we need help, we cry. Did you see the trademark, the hallmark of the lost person? Listen to this. That was Psalm 14, I just read to you.

Psalm 79, pour out your anger on the nations that do not know you, on the kingdoms that do not call upon your name. Again, it's just such a, the people who don't know God, what's that quality about them? They don't call upon your name. Isaiah 50, why when I came was there no man? Why when I called was there no one to answer? Does my hand shorten that it cannot redeem? Did you see no one answered? Nobody's talking to him.

There's a very simplistic reality to saving faith. Faith connects us to, Lord, help me. That's it.

That's crying to him, that's calling upon him. Listen to this. Now you have to hear this for what it's saying, but listen, behold, I'm doing a new thing.

This has to do with us, the Gentiles. Listen to how he says this. I'm doing a new thing.

What's the new thing? He's gonna save the Gentiles. That's what new happened when the spirit was given at Pentecost, the missionary spirit. I'm doing a new thing.

Now it springs forth. Do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness. And you know where this wilderness is? It's in the wilderness of the Gentile nations.

Listen to this. I will make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert. We Gentiles come from the desert regions, the places that were formerly largely ignored by God, largely passed over.

The wild beasts will honor me. That's us, wild beasts. They're gonna honor me.

The jackals, the ostriches. Anybody an ostrich here? Yep, that's us. For I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert to give drink to my chosen people.

See, there's chosen people among the ostriches and the jackals, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise. Yet to Israel, see the Gentiles are coming. Yet physical Israel did not call upon me.

O Jacob, but you have been weary of me, O Israel, weary of me. This is it. Call upon the Lord.

In the pride of his face, the wicked does not seek him. You see, that's it. I will destine you to sword.

All of you shall bow down to the slaughter. Why? Because when I called, you did not answer. Isaiah 66, I also will choose harsh treatment for them, bring their fears upon them, because when I called, no one answered.

Jeremiah, pour out your wrath on the nations that know you not and the peoples that call not on your name. Hosea, all your kings have fallen. None of them calls upon me.

Zephaniah, those who have turned back from following the Lord, who do not seek the Lord or inquire of him. You'd find this everywhere. What is it that marks out the lost man? Isn't he the Lord? He doesn't call upon him.

Yet, listen to this. Psalm 4, three, the Lord hears when I call to him. Or this, Psalm 72, he delivers the needy when he calls the poor and him who has no helper.

I would say this, whatever the devil may speak to you, you remember this truth. It doesn't matter what the devil says to you. It doesn't matter what condition he says you're in.

If you will go to him, he will not cast you out. If you call upon him, the needier you are. He delivers the needy when he calls.

The poor and him who has no helper. Did you get those? Did you love that? Needy, poor, him who has no helper. You know why people don't call upon the Lord? Because they don't have need.

Because they don't need his help. At least they think. They're okay.

You see, those are the fake. Those are the false. If they make their way into the church, they're self-satisfied.

I don't need anything. The Lord is near to all who call on him. All who call on him in truth.

You gotta love this. To the Corinthians. We're just about done.

Just a couple more verses. But listen to this. To the church of God that is in Corinth.

All these people that were, you know, they were suing each other and there was division and they had problems at the Lord's Supper and it wasn't the Lord's Supper. So these people, he says, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know another way to describe a Christian? It's those people in every place who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen, there's no distinction between Jew and Greek. The same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call upon him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

He bestows his riches on all who call upon him. No matter how, like we said, needy, poor, and in need of help. You know, Jesus looked at that woman there at the well.

She's a Samaritan. Samaritans are scum. And he said to her, if you had asked me for water that you'd never be thirsty again, I'd have given it to you.

Isn't that amazing? If you'd asked me, that's how our God is. Go to him. You see, the devil, he wants to keep you away.

He wants to absolutely discourage you and make this thing as hard as imaginable. But brethren, you know what? Sometimes you get people that are struggling with assurance and they don't know if they're in or they're out. But I'll tell you this, it really doesn't matter.

You say, it doesn't matter if I'm a Christian or not? Listen, if you're needy, call upon him. It doesn't matter where you are. It doesn't matter what you can figure out.

Because if you call upon him and you know you're needy and you know you're a sinner and you put no confidence in the flesh and you glory in the Lord Jesus Christ, it's all gonna be well with you. No matter what may be true right at this moment, if you call upon him, everyone who calls upon him will know his riches and they will be saved. You take that to the devil.

When he's trying to stall you, scatter you, depress you, keep you down, make you miserable, put you in depression. You've got a God who says, call. In fact, he faults people.

I cried to them and no one answered. Just say, it's not gonna be me. I'm gonna answer.

Lord, I'm needy. Help me. I need you desperately.

I need you to, says he saves to the uttermost. I need to be saved today just as much as I need to be saved yesterday. Lord, help.

That ought to be the cry on the lips of everyone in here. Lord, help me. Like every day.

You ever notice the Lord doesn't need sophisticated prayers? Peter's sinking. Lord, help! That was it. That's all it took.

He was back on the water again. Doesn't need to be sophisticated, very theological. Father, I pray that you'd help us resist the attacks of the devil on our assurance.

We do pray in Christ's name. It's in him we trust. Amen.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/qQPYwKG_-Pk.mp4

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