

Know This, That Satan is a Defeated Enemy

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the full counsel of God in the gospel, beyond just forgiveness of sins and going to heaven. It delves into the depth of sin, the definition of sin as falling short of the glory of God seen in Jesus Christ, and the need to strive daily to be more Christ-like. The sermon also highlights the victory over Satan through Jesus' defeat on the cross, urging believers to focus on fighting spiritual battles with the devil rather than engaging in conflicts with human beings.

Scripture: Colossians 2:14, Romans 3:23, John 1:14, Matthew 7:21, Ephesians 6:11, Philippians 4:6

Topics: "Understanding the Full Counsel of God", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

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Transcript

I'm really happy to be here again. I'd like you to turn with me to Colossians in Chapter 2. Paul spent three years in Ephesus. And at the end of those three years, you read in Acts 20 that he said, I did not hesitate to proclaim to you the full counsel of God.

There is such a thing known as the full counsel of God and partial proclamation of that counsel, or what God has given us in the gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not just the forgiveness of sins and going to heaven. Unfortunately, if you ask the vast majority of born-again Christians, and perhaps some of you sitting here as well.

You can think of the gospel as Christ is ready to forgive sins. He died for our sins. He rose again.

And we have a place in heaven. We want even our children here to know the full counsel of God. So here at Colossians Chapter 2, it says here, just two verses.

Verse 14 and 15. He canceled out the certificate of debt, consisting of decrees against us, which is hostile to us, and took it out of the way, nailed it to the cross. That's number one.

The law of God is God's law for man. And what was given in the Old Testament Ten Commandments was in a nutshell. But when Jesus explained it, he went into the depth of it and he said, murder begins with anger.

So get rid of that. Adultery begins with lusting with the eyes. So get rid of that.

So the law of God was pretty deep. And every human being has violated it. What is the definition of sin? Romans 3.23 is a well-known verse.

All have sinned. And then, you know the rest of it? Come short of the glory of God. That is the definition of sin.

You got it now. Sin is to come short of the glory of God. It's in that same verse.

So the next question comes is, what is the glory of God? I know as a young Christian, I always think of it as some bright light in heaven, a blinding light, that's the glory of God. No, it was how it was in the Old Testament. John 1.14 says, the glory of God was seen in Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament, it was a bright light. You know, the fire on top of the tabernacle, blinding light that you could not see. Even on the Mount of Transfiguration, it's such a blinding light that the disciples fell on their faces.

But for us, the glory of God is not a blinding light. It is the life of Jesus Christ, the glory of God was seen in Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth. So now you put that here.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And what is the glory of God? The life of Jesus Christ. All have sinned, and what is the definition of sin? Coming short of the life of Jesus Christ.

I hope you'll never forget the simple lesson you've heard this morning. All you children, anything less than the life of Christ is sin. In your speech, if you don't speak like Christ, it's sin.

You don't behave like Christ towards others, it's sin. Your thoughts, if you're not thinking the thoughts that Jesus thought about it, it's sin. In your actions, if your motives are not the motive that Jesus had in his actions, it's sin.

And when you define sin like that, it's not so easy to say that we are finished with sin. You'll be pressing on every day. Lord, I wanna be more like you.

In other words, I wanna be more free from sin. Because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And I say this to you because I'll tell you this, I've lived for 64 years and been around almost every denomination there is, and the major denominations anyway, and traveled to many countries, and I've discovered that the vast majority of born again believers do not have this understanding of sin.

And because of that, they think I'm free from sin. No, you're not. They don't have a passion every day to become a little more Christ-like.

I'll tell you honestly, I'm discovering things in my life now that are un-Christ-like, which I did not know last year. Don't be surprised at that. If your child says, I'm in the fourth grade now when I was in the third grade last year, are you surprised? No, he was in the third grade last year.

He has to be in the fourth grade this year. It should be. The tragedy with many Christians is they are in the kindergarten forever.

Forever and ever and ever. Their glory is, my sins are forgiven. It's like saying, I joined school.

That's great, brother, sister. You joined school, the school of Christ. But which class are you in? The same class you're forever in.

I sin, and I have the favorite verse. If we confess our sins, 1 John chapter one in verse nine, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. I can live in that verse for the rest of my life, and I'll be in the kindergarten all my life.

Whereas in Hebrews six, verse one, it says, let us leave aside those foundational principles and press on to perfection. In CFC Bangalore, we have that verse on our pulpit. Let us press on to perfection.

A constant challenge to the holiest man on earth and to the new sinner. The one who joins school, kindergarten, let's press on, get to the first grade by next year. The one who's finished high school, press on, go to college.

The one who's graduated, press on, do a post-graduate. The one who's done a post-graduate lesson, press on, do a PhD. The one who's done a PhD, press on and get on to some post-PhD courses.

That is the Christian life. Never satisfied with the level I'm in. So here's one, cancel the certificate of debt.

I have a debt to God because of sin. Some of that I know, some of it I don't know. But the Lord is merciful.

He forgives us all our sins and brings us into fellowship with him and not only forgives us, it says your sins and your iniquities, I will remember no more. That is the spirit of Christ. And when you forgive others, it must be in the same way.

Your sin, which you did against me, I will not remember anymore. Otherwise you're not following in the footsteps of Christ. To forgive is just one part of it.

You can't forget it. Do you know that God has not forgotten our sins? What does he say? Does he say, I have forgotten your sins? No, he says, I choose not to remember. I will not remember.

I mean, if God has forgotten about my sins, then my memory is better than God's because I remember my sins. It's ridiculous to think God has forgotten our sins. You cannot forget the evil people did to you.

That is impossible. Don't pretend that you're forgotten. God doesn't ask you to forget.

God says, say, I will not remember. In other words, when I look at you and when I meet with you, I choose not to remember all that you did. That is the way we forgive others.

We've got to be realistic. We've got to think through the scriptures. We must read scripture and meditate on it.

Then we understand what I've just been telling you. If you've meditated on it, you know that already. And so the debt is canceled out.

So whenever a person sins against God, it's a debt. And Christ canceled that debt on the cross. And he says, I will not remind you of that.

That's finished. Now, when we forgive others, when you sin against somebody, there's a debt you owe him, whether you know it or not. Every sin that you committed against anyone is a debt.

Whether he knew about it or not doesn't matter. I mean, if you stole somebody's money, he didn't know that you stole it, but you have a debt to him. So sometimes we sin against others in a way which the other person doesn't know, but it's still a sin.

It's like stealing his money. It's a debt. And you have to clear that debt.

Jesus canceled out the debt and we got to forgive one another exactly like Jesus forgave us. It will be in your mind because we cannot, we have no control over our memory. But we don't live in our memory.

One of the things we have to learn in our Christian life is we have to live in our will, not in our memory. People get discouraged because they don't live in their will. They are reminded by the devil of so many things.

So what? I've chosen in my will to serve the Lord. So that's where I live all the time. Therefore, I live with no condemnation.

That's what every one of us must live in. You must live without condemnation every moment of your Christian life. Otherwise, you will not progress, my brother and sister.

The debt has been canceled out because that was hostile against us. And he took it out of the way by nailing it to the cross. That's the number one message of the gospel.

There is no debt. It's like if you owed somebody a million dollars, you're scared to meet him. If you see him coming down the road, you go the other way.

And if you're scared to come before the Lord, it's because you feel there's a debt still to be cleared. But if you're absolutely sure the debt was canceled out completely, you got the certificate, the debt is cleared. Then you can look up into your heavenly father's face, straight into the face and rejoice because you know the debt has been cleared.

Like you see that guy whom you owed a million dollars and somebody paid it for you. You can see him face to face. He cannot condemn you anymore.

He can't take you to court anymore. It's been cleared. Are you absolutely sure we got to teach our children that there is no debt when you have confessed something, you don't have to keep on confessing.

I remember in my younger days because somebody never taught me this. I never, you know, in my entire life, I never heard the gospel presented like I'm telling you just now. I never heard it.

I don't know how many of you heard it in some other place where you heard the gospel, that your debt was cleared. And so I would have a hesitation whenever I came before the Lord in prayer. Oh, I've done so many wrong things.

I never knew that the debt was gone. So I want everyone here to be free from condemnation because of the blood of Christ. It's nailed to the cross.

Now, the second part of the gospel, here's what is often left out in the preaching of the gospel. The devil was defeated. How many times have you heard that in the preaching of the gospel? The preaching of the gospel usually sins are forgiven.

In all of Christendom, that the devil was defeated is not considered a part of the gospel. It is. It's the other side of the coin.

If you get a coin and only one side is printed and the other side is not printed, I say it's a fake. It's not worth it. Throw it away.

And if you're here a gospel that only tells you about the forgiveness of sins and the other side, it doesn't say that the devil was defeated and it's got no power over you. It's a fake gospel. You heard only half of it.

Now hear the full gospel. He disarmed the rulers and authorities. There was an armor, there were weapons that Satan had against us because we sinned.

But he took it out of the devil's hand and he made a public display out of it. Everybody here, public display. It's not done in secret.

He has triumphed over all those, all that armor that Satan had with which to attack us. It's all been taken away from him. Do you live in the enjoyment of that freedom, my brother, sister? We need to teach our children that.

Children can be tempted by the devil. You gotta tell them the devil's got no power over you. You can resist him in the name of Jesus Christ.

Turn with me to James in chapter four. Here's a promise that every one of us should know or children should know. James four, verse seven.

It's two simple sentences, but the first sentence is most important. Don't jump to the second sentence because it flows from the first one. Submit therefore to God.

Therefore, whenever you read the word therefore in scripture, you must look and see what is it therefore? Four, what is it therefore? Verse six, God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, if you are proud, whoever you are, even if you've been a wonderful believer for 25 years, I tell you in Jesus' name, God will oppose you. There's no respect of persons.

If I become proud, God will oppose me. Yes, God, it's a law of God. It's like the law of gravity.

It doesn't matter whether it's a believer or an unbeliever falling down, he'll go down. A wholehearted saint falls down from a roof, he'll fall down. The law of gravity operates on everyone, believer and unbeliever alike.

Here is a law we have to teach our children. If you are proud, my little boy, my little girl, God will fight against you because he hates it. It's like a sickness.

Don't your parents fight against sickness in your body? How eager they are, even if you get a cold or a little fever, they are fighting it. Some medicine, they want you to be cured. Pride is worse than a fever or a cold or cancer or anything.

I wish we would understand it, that pride is worse than cancer. Pride is the worst possible sickness because it was the first sin that came up in the universe. The first sin that came in the universe was not adultery or murder or telling lies, it was pride.

And God is against the proud proved right at the beginning that when the best angel in the universe became proud, there was no partiality with God. He pushed him out and he became the devil. That very moment he became the devil.

It's important to understand that. That's why it says God is opposed to every proud person. Look how Jesus rebuked Peter.

There were only two times when Jesus said, get behind me, Satan. One was when he confronted Satan himself, when Satan said, worship me and I'll give you all the world. And Jesus said, get away, Satan.

What was the second time he said it? The second time he said it to a human being, to Peter, his closest disciple. When Peter said, don't go to the cross, I don't want you to suffer. The cross was where Satan was gonna be defeated.

Peter didn't understand that. Jesus said, get behind me, Satan. That's the voice of the devil that says, don't go to the cross.

And how strongly he rebuked his closest disciple. We need to take that seriously. God hates anyone or any voice that turns you away from going to the cross.

We have to take up the cross every day, Jesus said, if we wanna follow him. And when you are tempted, or you've come into a situation in your relationships with people, and you know, Jesus says, go to the cross, but your pride says, no, there's no need for you to go to the cross. Assert yourself.

Tell him what you think of him. Okay. At that moment, Jesus will say to you, get behind me, Satan.

If he said it to Peter, why can't he say to you? I think Peter was more wholehearted than all of us. Jesus did not hesitate to say to him, get away, Satan. The voice that told Jesus to worship Satan was the voice of the devil.

The voice that came through Peter that told Jesus to avoid the cross was also the voice of Satan. Put the two together. To avoid the cross is equal to worshipping Satan.

That's how I take it. You just got to put those two verses together in Matthew four and Matthew 16. The only two times that Jesus said, get behind me, Satan.

If I see this, it'll change my life completely. If you see it, the way of the cross, the way of death to self is the way we worship the Lord. We avoid it, unknowingly, we are worshipping Satan.

That is what I see when I put those two verses together, what the Lord told the devil and what the Lord told Peter. So Satan was defeated on the cross and he doesn't want people to know it. God is opposed to the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.

Grace is God's power that lifts us up over sin. And let every one of us say this to ourselves. Any sin, any sin that you are defeated by in your thought life or in the way you speak or in the things you do or in the way you behave towards your husband or wife at home, any sin is because you are a proud person.

God did not give you grace to overcome it. You may think you're very humble, but the fact that you lost your temper shows you're proud. The way you spoke to your wife or husband shows you're proud that God is your enemy.

Don't fool yourself. You come to this church, you will hear the truth exactly as it is without it being polished or varnished or any such thing. The truth that'll help you to become Christ-like, that'll enable you to not just crawl into heaven, but enter heaven.

Like Peter says, to have an abundant entrance into heaven, to enter heaven with your head lifted high, because you not only accepted Christ as your savior, but you followed him in the way of the cross. That's how we triumph over Satan. So the full gospel is that Jesus forgives you and the enemy has been defeated.

So now we can go to James 4, seven. Submit to God, you understand what that means. Resist the devil.

And the promise is he will not just walk away, he will flee. Flee is a stronger word than run away. Flee is sort of flying away.

I think flee has got something to do with the word fly. He'll fly away from you. Imagine that if you resist the devil in Jesus' name after you have humbled yourself before God, the guarantee is he will not stand anywhere near you.

And if you, I'll tell you another thing. In the early days, I had to do it so frequently, but after a while, the devil knows you found the secret. He won't bother you so much.

I'll tell you, he won't bother you so much. He'll depart pretty quickly because he knows that you will resist him in Jesus' name, that you know the full gospel, not only that your sins can be forgiven, but Satan was defeated. So whenever you preach the gospel, remember there are two sides to it.

The coin must be printed on both sides. One, he took your sins on the cross, and two, he defeated Satan on the cross. So the first part we have heard many times.

Let me share a little bit more about the second part. Turn with me to Hebrews in chapter two. Hebrews chapter two and verse 14.

Since the children share in flesh and blood, that's you and I, Jesus himself partook of the same. Why did he do that? You say to take away our sins on the cross. Yeah, that's one part of it, but here's the second part.

That when he died, he not only took away our sin, here's the second part of it. He made powerless the one who had the power of death, that is the devil. Do you know that Satan had the power of death, spiritual death? He could even kill people.

Do you know he arranged for killing Job's 10 children? Yeah, God allowed him, but he had the power to kill. And it says here, Jesus made him powerless. He doesn't say Jesus killed him.

The snake, the devil's like a snake that's not killed, but it's been made powerless, means it's like it's unconscious. It's there, it's alive, but his power is gone. We need to understand it very clearly.

We're not saying Satan is dead. He's not, he's very much alive, but he has no power over you if you always seek to humble yourself before God because God's grace will protect you. And it says here, the reason Jesus did that, verse 15, was that he might free those who through the fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

We are never to be afraid of death, no matter what situation we face. Now, it's very easy to say that here, the only type of death we fear is maybe an accident on the road or some sickness like COVID going on and we're afraid, we've heard people have died and we can be afraid that we may get it. No, but here, I mean, supposing you are living in a country where there's a lot of persecution of Christians like it was in the early days.

A lot of Christians live in the fear of death every day almost because so many Christians were being killed and persecuted. I mean, if you tried to be a Christian today in Afghanistan or something, you'd have to live in fear of death. But it says here, Jesus has delivered us from the fear of death no matter where you live.

If he calls you to live in a particular place, you can be sure, even if it's a place full of Christians being killed, you can be sure that it will not happen to you till his time. We are free from the fear of death. We must not long for death.

I've seen some old people say, oh, I wish I could leave and go to heaven. I'll tell you, I won't say that even if I'm lived to 100 years old because Jesus has told us to look up for his coming, not look down to the grave. We don't live in the fear of death.

No matter how sick you are, don't ever live in the fear of death. Say, Lord, I'm looking for your coming. The fear of death is something that the devil brings.

It says here that Jesus defeated the devil to free us from the fear of death. There must be zero fear of death in our life, zero, because that brings, it says here, slavery. So this second part that Satan was defeated, you know, in the Old Testament, nobody confronted Satan.

There's not a single example after Genesis chapter three, when Adam and Eve were perfect, God allowed them to confront Satan and they were defeated. But after that, there's not a single instance of anybody confronting Satan in the entire Old Testament. Even Satan is mentioned only one or two places.

Even Job, he didn't confront Satan directly. God allowed Satan to afflict Job in various ways, but there was no personal confrontation with Satan. And we read once in the Chronicles that Satan tempted David to number the people.

And then you read, there are only two or three references, another reference in Zechariah, where he had a vision of Satan accusing Zerubbabel. But Satan is not mentioned in the Old Testament at all, in a sense, never confronting anybody. But as soon as you turn to the pages of the New Testament, immediately, the very first thing in Jesus' ministry is face-to-face confrontation with Satan.

And then throughout the Old Testament, throughout the New Testament, we read a lot about Satan confronting believers in the acts of the apostles, demons being cast out. You never read of a demon being cast out in the Old Testament. Why this change? Because until Jesus came, man had no power over

Satan.

But once Jesus came, even while he was alive, he once sent out 70 disciples. And they came back saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. I want you to just see that passage in Luke chapter 10.

It was a foretaste of the type of victory we have over Satan. Now, these are not the 12. The 12 disciples were the closest to him.

This is another bigger group of 70 disciples, who also Jesus had confidence in them to send them out to preach the gospel. Sent them two by two, Luke 10, verse one. After this, the Lord appointed 70 others and sent them in pairs, two by two, to every city and place where he himself was going to come.

And he said, go, I'm sending you forth, verse three, as lambs in the midst of wolves. And then he, wherever you go, tell them, verse nine, that the kingdom of God has come near to you. They were to proclaim the kingdom of God.

They came back to Jesus, verse 17. They returned with joy and said, Lord, amazing. We never experienced something like this in our life.

Even the demons were subject to us in your name. You never read that in the Old Testament. You never read about Moses or Elijah casting out demons.

They were not permitted. God did not permit demons to come upon, attack people in the Old Testament. But now, these people, I mean, the Satan had not yet been defeated.

The cross was still in the future, but here was a foretaste of it. They could say to a demon-possessed person, in Jesus' name, get out of him. Left.

You meet another demon-possessed woman, in Jesus' name, get out of her. All of these 70 experienced it. And they got so excited about it.

I mean, you get excited if you see a demon going out when you tell that demon to go in Jesus' name, because that person is now free. And they liberated so many people from demon possession, because they believed what Jesus told them. Cast out demons in my name, he told them.

And they did it. And if your life is right with God, you can do it too. But then Jesus told them, yeah, yeah, don't get excited over that.

It's very important for us to remember that even if you do cast out a demon, my brother, sister, don't get excited over that. That's not the greatest thing. It can be exciting in human eyes, oh, this guy cast out a demon.

He's a great man of God, not necessary. Jesus said there'll be people who come to him in the last day, in Matthew 7, who say, Lord, we cast out demons in your name. And Jesus says to them, you are not even born again.

I don't know you. Depart from me, you workers of iniquity, of sin. Can a man who's not born again, cast out a demon? That's what that passage seems to say.

There's such power in the name of Jesus, that when an unconverted man uses it, the demons leave. Amazing. Jesus, I never knew you.

He tells them, but they cast out demons. Jesus doesn't question that. He doesn't say you're telling a lie, that you cast out demons in my name.

Yeah, you cast out demons in my name, but I don't know you. I have no personal relationship with you. So these 70 had to be corrected.

Don't rejoice in the fact that demons tremble it when you cast them out in Jesus' name. Because this, I've seen Satan fall like lightning from heaven, and he said, I've given you power over all these powers of Satan, symbolized by serpents and scorpions, and they cannot hurt you in any way. But now listen to this.

This is a very important verse, verse 20. If God has enabled you to do a miracle, maybe you prayed for someone who was seriously sick in your family or anywhere, and the person was healed overnight in answer to prayer. Listen to this.

Don't rejoice in this. Don't rejoice in the miraculous experience, whether they're casting out of a demon or they're casting out of a sickness in Jesus' name. Don't rejoice that the spirits are subject to you in my name.

Rejoice that your names are written in heaven. There's only one thing that we should rejoice in. Jesus has saved me.

He saved me from sin. My names are written in the book of life. That is a greater thing than casting out a demon.

Now, a lot of Pentecostals won't believe that, and I hope all of you understand that. Rejoice that your names are written in heaven, which is a greater thing than even casting out a demon. Don't rejoice in some exciting, fantastic, supernatural answer to prayer that God gave you.

There's something even more wonderful than that, that you're a child of God. Otherwise, you will exalt yourself over the other brother who has not cast out a demon, or the other brother who did not experience that miraculous answer to prayer. Many times when a person testifies to some miraculous answer to prayer, he's trying to show, I'm God's favorite.

In a way, you guys are not. There's a little subtle pride that comes in in what God did for me in answer to my prayer, and that makes God your enemy at that moment, because God resists the proud, and he gives grace to the humble. It's easy to be humble when God has done nothing for us, but if God has done one thing for you, you can become proud, and you can lose the grace of God.

You can even lose the grace of God by getting a revelation in the word of God which other people did not get, and you share it with others, and people are astounded. Wow, what a revelation. I read that verse, and I never saw it.

Fine, God gave you that grace, brother, but remain humble. Otherwise, God will turn around and oppose you. I've seen that happen.

I've seen that happen to people who come to CFC and discover some great, wonderful truth that's blessed them, and they exalt themselves over other believers who haven't understood it like them. For the new

covenant, for example, many Christians haven't understood the new covenant. If you understood it, you should be more humble than those people.

Otherwise, you've not understood it. The mark of a person who's understood the new covenant is that he's more humble, and I'm not talking about humility before men. That is all for politicians who act.

True humility is before God, and the proof of it is that I get grace, and the proof of it is that I don't lose my temper. The proof of it is that I don't lust with my eyes. The proof of it is that I don't have any bitterness in my heart against anyone.

Only you know that, that you're not a slave to evil thoughts. The proof of it is you overcome sin in your private life, that you can forgive people freely, even the people who did great harm to you. That's the proof of God's grace.

These are hidden areas, not that you can preach powerfully or cast out demons. Please remember this. But I mentioned that in passing, but we must know clearly that Satan was defeated and that he's got no power over us at all.

Now turn to Ephesians chapter six, which is a great passage on Satan. You'll never find a passage like this in the Old Testament, where it says, Ephesians 6, 11, put on the armor of God so that you'll be able to stand against all the schemes of Satan. There was no armor of God for people in the Old Covenant.

Satan could attack them freely, but God withheld Satan from attacking them. Otherwise, Satan would have destroyed all of them, including the great prophets. But God held back Satan because they were not ready.

After Satan was defeated on the cross, now he's free. And he allows Satan to attack us so that we can overcome. I remember somebody asked me once, why does God allow Satan to exist? Why doesn't he just destroy him? And I told him, because, you know how you go into a gym, how do you build your muscles? By subjecting those muscles to resistance, whether it's pulling a spring or peddling, you're subjecting muscles in your body to some resistance.

That's how every muscle in the body is built. If there's no resistance, the muscle remains flabby, weak. So I told him, God is not gonna resist you.

He loves you. Who will resist you? God has allowed Satan to exist to resist believers. That's like going into the gym.

He resists you in this area, and you can develop that area. He resists you in the other area, and you resist him and you develop that area. Your spiritual muscles become strong.

And so the Bible says, resist the devil, he'll flee from you. And that's how we become strong. God could have removed the devil completely, but then we would not have a spiritual gym in which to exercise ourselves.

So here we read in Ephesians 6, put on the full armor of God, verse 11, that you can stand against the schemes of Satan. Satan's the cleverest of all created beings, even today. Recognize the fact that Satan is cleverer than you.

In the book of Ezekiel, there's a verse that God says to Satan, you are wiser than, not Solomon, Daniel. The world considers Solomon the wisest person, but God doesn't say Solomon in Ezekiel 28. He considers Daniel wiser than Solomon, and he tells Satan, you are even wiser than Daniel.

So recognize it, my brother, sister, Satan is much cleverer than you and me. He's got every tactic up his sleeve to knock you down. So he speaks about the schemes of the devil.

But even though he's cleverer than me, wiser than me, he cannot knock me down. Because it says here, I can stand against every one of his schemes. If I put on the full armor of God here.

Okay, now the first step in that, before you put on the armor, which begins in verse 14 onwards. Before we put on the full armor of God, there is a certain condition that the Lord says. Verse 12, you must see it as a condition.

I know this came home to me. Verse 12, our struggle is not against flesh and blood. But against the evil rulers and powers, the world forces of darkness, which are all in the heavenlies.

You know, the Bible speaks about three heavens. The third heaven is where God dwells. The first heaven is this space that we call space, the sun, moon and stars.

And between this first heaven and the third heaven, there is a second heaven. And that's where the devil has got his headquarters. The devil's not in hell, by the way.

He will never go to hell. No time. The Bible says he will finally be put into a bottomless pit and then taken and put into the lake of fire, where hell will also be thrown into the lake of fire.

So we need to understand the devil's not in hell. He's in that second heaven from which he's got access to the earth. Those demons are there.

The Bible says that spirit forces in the heavenlies. That's why we find it resistance when we try to pray to God. There is resistance in the heavenlies.

God has permitted it. Why? It's like going to the gym. My gym is in the second heaven.

I go through that and I get up to God and I become a stronger person when I get through. So we struggle not against flesh and blood, but against rulers and powers and world forces of darkness, spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places in the second heaven. Now, it says here, we do not struggle against human beings.

And the way the Lord spoke that to me many years ago, which I did not know when I was born again. In fact, I did not know until God filled me with spirit about 16 years after I was born again. The Lord said to me from this verse, if you want power over Satan, stop fighting with human beings.

That's the meaning of that verse. We do not fight with human beings, but we fight with the devil. So if you fight with your husband or your wife, that decreases your power against Satan.

And so many Christians, their power to fight Satan is getting weaker and weaker and weaker because they are fighting with human beings. They're fighting with their neighbors, they're fighting with their husband and wife, they're fighting with somebody in the office, getting upset with the boss, they didn't get a promotion. There are all types of people they are fighting with or inwardly fighting with, even if they don't

openly fight with.

There's an inward battle. Sometimes people lie in bed and think and think and think for hours and lose their sleep. What should I do to that fellow who treated me like this? What should I do to that person who treated my children like this? You spend your night tossing around in your sleep like that, I'll tell you, you will have zero power over Satan.

That's for sure. That's why Satan gets power not only over you, but over your children. Because you parents are supposed to be sort of a protection over your children.

And you're spending your time fighting with human beings. You're spending your time at night tossing around thinking how to get your own back on somebody who did some harm to you. My brother, sister, forget it.

Forget it. Ask yourself, why is your sleep being disturbed at night? What do you think about so much before you go to sleep? Be very careful here. Satan's a clever person.

He comes to you with innocence. That person really treated you badly. Maybe he did.

What do you gain by thinking about it? Release him. Forgive him. Let him go.

Sleep peacefully. You know that verse in the Psalms which says he gives his beloved sleep? Sleep is a gift of God. It says that in Psalm 127 or 128 or something.

And it's as much a gift of God as forgiveness. I believe it is God's will for us to have a peaceful sleep at night. And not to be tossed around waking up, waking up, thinking about this and thinking about that.

Forgive people, release them. And if you have a problem, commit it to the Lord. Cast your burden upon the Lord, it says.

Be anxious for nothing. Very good verse for us to remember when we go to sleep. Be anxious for nothing, Philippians 4, 6. But in everything, particularly those things that are disturbing you, make your request known to God.

Say, Lord, this thing is bothering me. My child is terribly sick. Or that person is so evil the way he treats my child in school.

That teacher or that other boy or somebody else. Or that other neighbor or that relative. The way they are treating me is so bad.

They cheated me of my inheritance. Okay, forget it. Forgive him.

Say, Lord, I'm not gonna hold anything against anyone. And he will give his beloved sleep. Please take this seriously.

Don't fight with human beings. Because that way you're decreasing your power to fight against Satan. That's why Satan gets so much power over you.

Do you wonder why you're still defeated by some sins? Do you wonder why you're, okay, let me say it in one more step. Why you're not getting light on new areas of unchristlikeness in your life. Let me put it like that.

Sin is to be unchristlike. And there are areas of unchristlikeness in your life and my life, which we need to discover. There's not a single human being, not no Christian who can say, I've become completely like Christ.

If you have not become completely like Christ, you should have a passion to become completely like Christ. Until he comes again, when we will be like him. And what does that mean? It means discovering, discovering areas of our life where we are unlike Christ.

I'll tell you honestly, I'm not preaching what I don't practice. Every day of my life, I'm seeking to judge myself. God is my witness.

Lord, show me where some area, I need to be a little more Christlike here. Show me. And the Lord shows.

If you're serious about it, he'll show you. Determine that you will never fight with human beings. Decide all of your husbands, decide today and wives that you'll never, never fight with each other because you're weakening your home against Satan.

Satan is the one we got to fight. Concentrate on that. I've sometimes told, you know, Christian husbands who've got unconverted wives and they say, what should I do when my wife is furious and in a temper? I say, don't, you just keep quiet first of all, but don't stand there like a Pharisee and say, I thank God I didn't lose my temper like my wife.

Then you'll be worse off. She may better off, she may repent. So don't take that attitude.

But when you're a little free, go to some corner and say, Satan, I bind your activity here in Jesus' name. You've got no right to touch my wife. She's my wife.

I'm the head of this home. And you'll see God will do something. Don't despise your wife.

Maybe she's unconverted, I say. Okay, that's why she acts like that. But bind Satan who's instigating her, instigating her to bring chaos into your home.

What could be the other way around? Instigating a husband to bring chaos into your home. See the devil behind it. See the devil behind your husband, the devil behind your wife.

You know, it's like, I think of that story often. Do you know that story where David said to Saul, David was giving his testimony to Saul when he went to fight Goliath. There was a time, he says, when a lion came and grabbed a little lamb and took it away.

Imagine that, now picture this in your mind, a lion with a lamb in its mouth. David goes to the lion and what does he do? Does he tell the lamb, why in the world were you so careless? Why didn't you stay with? No, no, no, no, he doesn't say one word to the lamb. He says, I fought the lion and I grabbed him by the chin and killed him and released the lamb.

I've often thought of that picture. David, a man after God's own heart. When he saw a lamb grabbed by a lion, he did not fight with the lamb.

He did not give him sermon to the lamb. Why did you leave the flock? Why didn't you listen to me? No, no, no, no, no, he first dealt with the lion. And when you see a believer grabbed by Satan, fight with Satan first.

If you think your child is gripped by the devil in some way, fight with the devil first. Yeah, by all means, correct and exhort your son and daughter, but don't forget to fight the devil. Don't fight with the lamb and keep on giving a big lecture to the lamb when the lion is still hale and hearty.

Grab the lamb in the mouth is a tremendous lesson to learn from what David did in that situation. It amazes me how as a young man, he could kill a lion. The supernatural power God gave him which enabled him later to kill Goliath.

But the principle is the same. We do not fight with flesh and blood, but with all these evil forces and they have been defeated on the cross. That's why we have boldness in any situation, at least from now on when you face in the future, my dear brother and sister, it may be the devil bringing confusion into your home.

It may be bringing confusion into your place of work. Somewhere he's always out to alter you, but he's been defeated. I know in my life, it took me a long time to this resistance to come to the place of rest.

I'm in a place of rest now. I know the devil can't get a hold on me because I understood his tactics and I refuse to fight with human beings. As soon as possible, I will withdraw.

Somebody wants to fight with me, I withdraw. Be careful, particularly in your place of work. Be careful in dealing with unbelievers who wanna fight with you, neighbors who create problems.

Say a neighbor who dumps garbage over the compound wall into your compound. You may not face it here, but I've seen that in India. It actually happened to one of our brothers.

I said, don't go fighting with him. You know what I told him? Love that neighbor. They're trying to irritate you because non-Christians, no, he was a Christian witness for Christ, actually dumping garbage over the wall into your compound.

Just clean it up and don't say anything. You know how God solved that? I said, pray for that person. You know how God solved that problem there? One day, when the man of the house was away, the woman was seriously sick, and she didn't know what to do.

And this brother sent for the ambulance and took her to the hospital and put her in there and called the husband to come and see. It completely changed the neighbor's attitude. See what God can do? Amazing.

He didn't go fighting with him, he fought the devil. So you can have a testimony like that when you say, Lord, I will not fight with human beings. I'm determined in my life that I will only fight with Satan.

Please decide that today and tell your children also very early if they can learn that lesson. Somebody in school is instigated by the devil, I will not fight with him. But our children need to be more careful.

Don't tell your child to go and tell that boy, the devil's behind you, I'm gonna fight him. And that'd be worse. But be wise in how you instruct your children in these things.

But recognize this is the second part of the gospel. Satan has been defeated, he's got no power over you, and there's no way you must allow him to come into your home. Christ must be always the head in your home.

Okay, there's a lot more to that, it's in the Bible, you can read it.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/URY8qjJ4-m8.mp4>
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