

# Overcoming Satan

by Zac Poonen

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*The New Covenant offers believers the power to overcome Satan through the indwelling Holy Spirit, prayer, and unity with other believers.*

**Duration:** 1:27:14

**Scripture:** Genesis 4:7, Psalm 1:2, Matthew 6:33, Luke 10:18, Hebrews 4:12, 1 John 4:17

**Topics:** "Satan"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the distinctives of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant. He encourages listeners to meditate on God's Word and not just superficially read it. The speaker highlights the need to master sin and have a right attitude towards others. He also discusses the importance of rejoicing when others are blessed and being excited about raising up new leaders in the church. Additionally, the speaker warns about the dangers of money and the need to keep it under control. Finally, he addresses the struggles of overcoming temptation and encourages believers to confess the truth of God's Word and rely on the blood of Jesus for cleansing and justification.

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## Transcript

Some of the distinctives of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant in these last four sessions things that Old Covenant saints could never experience or know in their lives. And it's only as we know the truth, the truth shall set us free. And so it's important that we look carefully into God's word.

The Bible says that the one who meditates on God's law day and night will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, and whatever he does will prosper. I believe that with all my heart. Very often we read the scriptures, but we don't meditate on them, we don't look carefully.

I've often said to people, anything I tell you is not new, it's in your Bible, it's been there all along. And how is it you didn't really see it? It's because you didn't read carefully, you read superficially. God's made even the earth in such a way that all the valuable things are deep in the ground, gold and diamonds and oil and all that's deep down.

What you get on the surface is usually very cheap. There's a verse in the book of Proverbs, chapter 25, verse 1, which says that it's the glory of God to conceal a matter, and it's the Proverbs 25, verse 2, sorry, it's the glory of God to conceal a thing, and the honor of the King to search out that matter. God concealed

many things in scripture.

That's His glory. But that verse says that if we are kings in Christ, our glory is to search it out. God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

He does not reward lazy readers of scripture. So I trust that in all that we hear, we will also be stirred to study the scriptures more deeply, because there's a lot of truth in there. I started studying the scriptures seriously sometime in early 1961.

It's nearly 40 years. And I remember those early years when I wasn't married and I was working, but this book was my constant companion all the time. It was my hobby, my pastime, the game I played, my food, my drink, my everything.

And through these years, it's changed my life. It's strengthened me. It's given me words to bless others with.

And at the end of 40 years of studying it, I even now find things in it I had not noticed earlier. It's a mine. It's a wealth there which I feel many of us have missed, lost, things that could have--our life could have been very different, those of us who are older, if we had studied the scriptures more carefully.

So I say to you young people, I've always urged young people wherever I go, take time to study the scriptures. You won't get as much time once you get married and have children. Take time in your younger days to really get into the word, to know it, to know exactly what scripture says.

So we've looked at repentance, we've looked at grace. These are all deep repentance, like John the Baptist spoke of. It was not known in the Old Testament.

Grace was not known. God was not known as a Father. And as we considered this morning, this ministry of the Holy Spirit flowing from our innermost being was not known in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit clothed people like it says in Judges 6.34. The Spirit of God clothed Gideon. It was external. The Spirit killed a lion on the outside, but he couldn't kill the lion of lust inside his heart.

The Holy Spirit couldn't do a work inside people. But now the Holy Spirit flows from the innermost being, and that's the most important thing about the New Testament. The work begins inside.

It's the lions of lust that are killed inside, and from there flows out a ministry like an overflow. And that's how our ministry should be. A lot of ministry I find is not an overflow.

It's like you take a glass or a cup, fill it up, pour it out. Fill it up, pour it out. Fill it up, pour it out.

That's Old Testament ministry. Moses went into the presence of God, received something, came and poured it out. At least if people went into the presence of God, they would have something to give.

But a lot of today's ministry, they don't even go into the presence of God. They just sit in there, study, and study some books, and I'd say vomit out what they've taken in, and people eat it. It's sad.

That's the condition of ministry today. But New Covenant ministry is not this, filling up, pouring out, filling up, pouring out. Jesus said, I'll put a spring of water inside you, where we have a permanent connection to

the river of God.

It flows from our innermost being. It flows from the throne of God, through our innermost being, and it's overflowing all the time. And that depends on our walking with God all the time, being in touch with Him, keeping a clear conscience, walking in humility, and being sensitive to everything that the Spirit says to us.

And this afternoon I want to speak about another distinctive of the New Covenant, and that is overcoming Satan. Now if you read the Old Testament carefully, they were never overcoming Satan there. They were overcoming the Philistines, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Midianites, and many other ites, but not Satan.

They never confronted Satan. Their enemies were all human. And in the New Testament, as soon as you open the pages of the New Testament, you find Jesus confronting Satan.

As soon as he's anointed with the Holy Spirit, the next thing is confrontation with Satan. And unlike Eve, who was defeated when she confronted Satan, Jesus overcame. And all of us are following either Adam or Jesus.

We either are defeated by Satan, or we overcome Satan. There's no alternative. There's no need for us to be defeated by Satan, now that Jesus has overcome.

That's the message of the New Covenant. But there's one very important requirement for that. And before I come to this verse I have in mind, I want to show you that, this other verse in Ephesians 6 and verse 12, where it says, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness, in high places or in heavenly places.

So there are two things here. One, the ones we do not wrestle with, and the ones we do wrestle with. Now in the Old Testament, we couldn't say this verse.

Every man who lived in the Old Covenant, every Israelite who was a soldier said, we do wrestle with flesh and blood. And we never wrestle with principalities and powers. Nobody ever did that in the Old Covenant.

Even Daniel, when he was praying in Daniel chapter 10, he wasn't wrestling with principalities and powers. Michael was doing that. There's not a single case in the Old Testament where anyone was wrestling with principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

They were always wrestling with people in earthly places. And sometimes they overcame, and sometimes they lost. Then Jesus came.

And his attitude was, I wrestle not with flesh and blood. Towards the end of his life, when he stood before Pilate, he said, my kingdom is not of this world. If it were of this world, my servants would be fighting.

Years later, in 1 Timothy chapter 6, Paul reminded Timothy, and saying, I charge you in the presence of God, and of Jesus Christ, who made that good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the word which I am giving you now. What was that good confession? Paul was speaking there in 1 Timothy 6 about the love of money, and telling him to flee from the love of money. And in that connection, he said to him in 1 Timothy 6, I charge you in the presence of Jesus Christ, who made the good confession before Pontius Pilate, what was that good confession? My kingdom is not of this world.

If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight. When you fight with human beings, do you know what you are testifying thereby? That your kingdom is of this world. When you fight for earthly things with people, you are testifying, my kingdom is of this world.

When you fight for earthly position, and that earthly position may even be to be an elder in a church. That is an earthly position. You are fighting, you are proving that your kingdom is of this world.

If you really want to get into this new covenant battle, you have to make one decision first, that you will never fight for earthly things. That you will not wrestle with flesh and blood, concerning anything. I used to think that in my younger days, that all I needed to get a person to Christ, or to understand victory, was to argue with him from scripture and win the argument, and prove to him from scripture that I was right.

But very often what happened was, I'd win an argument and lose a friend. So I decided that wasn't the way, and they never got Christ, and they never got victory. And I realized that people's problems are not intellectual.

Problems are in the heart. And when I argue with a person, if I win the argument, I haven't proved who's right. I've just proved who's cleverer.

If he wins the argument, he's cleverer than me. If I win the argument, I'm cleverer than him. That's how it is between husband and wife.

Whoever wins the argument is clever. He may not necessarily be right, he may be totally wrong, but he's clever, or she's clever, that's all. So I decided that even in this realm, I am not going to wrestle with flesh and blood.

I'm not going to argue. I want to lead people to see their need in their heart. And if they see their need in their heart, then I can point them to the Savior, to the one who can lead them to an overcoming life.

So there are many, many areas where we have to decide that we will not wrestle with flesh and blood. We're not going to get into conflict with people. We're not going to get into arguments over doctrine.

I want to keep that friendship and help him to come to a place of need in his life, and then he may turn and understand the truth which has gripped me. Because I discovered that many, many truths that I've shared, even in these sessions, came to me not just through, not through arguments. There was study, there was meditation, but I finally responded when I had a sense of need.

I mean, I knew from childhood, in Sunday school that I used to go to, that Jesus Christ died for my sins. But I surrendered my life to him only when I was 19, when I came to a place of need. It's need that drives us.

If any man thirsts, it's not argument. It's not a question of being convinced. And so we're not to wrestle with flesh and blood intellectually, or for money, or property, or position, position in the church, or anything.

Now, those of us who are willing to break free from all these battles on earth, you're ready to fight with Satan, and fight the real battle in the heavenly. And I want to tell you that this is the battle that's ultimately going to determine what's going to happen here in our local church situation. You remember that Old Testament incident in Exodus chapter 17, where Joshua and the army of Israel went to fight the Amalekites.

And that was immediately after the rock was smitten, in the earlier part of Exodus 17. The rock was smitten, the waters began to flow, that's Calvary. The flowing water is the picture of Pentecost.

And what's the very next thing after that in Exodus 17? It's fighting with the Amalekites. It's likewise with Jesus. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit in the river Jordan.

He came out, and what is the very next thing? Fighting the devil. But how was that battle against the Amalekites won? In Exodus 17, Joshua was there with the army, fighting the Amalekites with all his strength. But the victory did not depend on him.

No. The victory depended on three people standing up on the mountain, Moses, Aaron, and Hur. And every time Moses lifted up his hands, it said, Joshua won.

But when Moses got tired of lifting up his hands and put his hands down, Joshua got defeated. And then Moses would lift up his hands again, and Joshua would win again. And when he got tired, and he put his hand down, Joshua got defeated.

And they were watching this from the mountain. And they realized it had nothing to do with the battle strategy of Joshua. It had to do with Moses lifting up his hands in prayer.

And that's what we need to understand today. We've got our strategies to build a church, and our plans, and our schemes, and for outreach, and missionary work, and so many things, mission strategies, and all types of things. I tell you, these apostles did a lot more without all these strategies, because they knew the power of prayer.

You know, the apostles said when they were being asked to serve the widows who were complaining about food. Now, isn't that a very humble thing to do, go and serve the widows? Yes, it is. But the apostle Peter said, well, listen, I know it will increase our reputation for humility if we go around serving the widows, but we can't do that, because we have committed ourselves to give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word so that the church can be built.

Now, we need spiritual people to do that, but we'll get somebody else to do that. They recognize the need to really get into the heavenlies and battle and defeat Satan if something was to be established on earth. Now, I think there are very, very few Christians who have understood that.

Many of the problems your parents have with your children, you're not going to win by arguments with your children, exhorting them, dragging them to church, getting them to speak to this preacher, that preacher, the other thing. It's going to happen when husband and wife kneel down before God and bind the evil spirits and the satanic forces that are influencing your children. And for that, husband and wife have got to be united.

Otherwise, it won't work. So God sometimes brings needs in our families so that husband and wife can come together. God brings need in our churches so that fighting elders can come together.

Otherwise, it won't work. All that the devil needs to do to destroy a family or destroy a church is separate husband and wife. This thing which God has joined together, separate them.

Then he can walk right through and destroy their children or destroy their church. That's why he always attacks the leadership, husband and wife, elders. Then he can get through to the whole thing.

Now, this is one of the things we've realized in our own work in India for 25 years. The work started in Bangalore with two brothers, myself and another. And I want to tell you my testimony before God.

In 25 years, this brother and I are totally different in our personality, in our gift, culture, race. God brought us together. And in 25 years, we have never had one day where we had a quarrel or a fight or where we wouldn't talk to each other.

When we didn't see eye to eye with each other on something, we still loved one another. I don't say we have to agree. The Lord never said, all men will know you are my disciples when you agree with each other.

No. That's a perversion of scripture. All men will know you are my disciples when you love one another, even when you don't agree with each other.

And so I'm not saying we've always agreed, but we've always been united. And if one of us has disagreed on something, we'll say, okay, we'll wait till we're both agreed before we move on. And the other one can be patient.

Sometimes it's him, and sometimes it's me. But there's never been disunity. And that protected our church from the attacks of Satan for 25 years.

And as our children have grown up, we have four boys, and they're all between the ages of 20 and 30 now. And as they've grown up, there have been all kinds of difficulties in school and sickness and so many things that have come. There are two elders at home, my wife and I. We do the same thing.

We kneel down and say, Lord, you said in Matthew 18, 19, if two of you, it has to be two, by the way. One is not enough. If two of you agree, that's the important thing.

Agree. It's so difficult. The Greek word is symphonio, from which we get the musical word symphony.

If two people are a symphony concerning anything, they ask. It will be granted by my Father in Heaven. I cannot think the number of times when my wife and I have knelt down and claimed that promise, because it says, that's not the whole verse.

Let me read you the whole passage, Matthew 18, 18 to 20. Perhaps we should look at that, because we are not, some of us are not familiar with it. Matthew 18, verse 18 to 20.

Speaking about overcoming Satan, by the way, Matthew 18, verse 18 to 20, one of the most misunderstood, misquoted passages of Scripture is verse 20. For the two or three have gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. It doesn't stop there.

It starts there, but it ends up in verse 18, because it says four in verse 20, which takes us back to verse 19. Verse 19 begins again, which takes us back to verse 18. So, verse 20 is like the foundation, on which we have verse 19 and verse 18.

The ultimate purpose is verse 18, that we bind something on earth, which will be bound in Heaven. Which Heaven is that? That's not the presence of God. We're not going to bind anything up there in God's presence.

Everything is free over there, but if there's other heavenlies below God's presence, as spoken of in Ephesians 6, 12, that heavenlies, we've got to bind something, and that can happen, and we've got to lose something on earth. Something that's been bound by those satanic powers, maybe some brother in the church, your child maybe, and we've got to lose that child and bind those satanic powers up there. How are we going to do it? We're going to do it right here on earth.

Bind those satanic forces and lose this person, who's bound. How is it going to be done? Minimum two people. Now, casting out a demon, one person can do.

In Jesus' name, get out of him, get out of her, the demon goes. But where Satan has got a hold of a situation or a person in another way, and got them entrenched in something, it may not be demon possession, but Satan gets into some situations and entrenches himself there, and to get Satan out of that situation in the family or in the church, two people must agree. It's God's word.

Two of you agree on earth concerning anything. Let the problem be anything. It doesn't matter how deeply Satan is entrenched in that situation.

It doesn't matter how many years Satan has been entrenched in that situation. Anything. Isn't that absolute? For 20 centuries, anything, anywhere.

It shall be done. There's no might, maybe, perhaps. No maybe, might or perhaps.

It shall be done by my father in heaven because, now here's the most misquoted version among Christians, because where two or three are gathered together, and I believe it means in this way, that means united, symphonio, symphony, in agreement, without discord, without contention. There I am in the midst. Jesus is there, and Satan is overcome.

So it's very important that we understand these principles before we move into taking a little time to study this matter of overcoming Satan. I believe it's very, very important because, like I said, a lot of believers live as old covenant believers. Take all the areas we mentioned so far.

Repentance, they have not repented deeply enough. Grace, they have not understood grace. They haven't understood grace is sufficient for their needs.

They haven't understood grace to help them to overcome sin. The fatherhood of God, they live with anxiety and tension and unrest because they don't know God is the father. Holy Spirit, they don't even know the Holy Spirit coming upon them.

Leave alone flowing out from their innermost being as rivers of living water. And fifth, what we're talking about now, they don't know anything about overcoming Satan. They just know how to read the Bible, pray, go to meetings and come back.

They don't know how to tackle Satan. And when Satan causes a problem, they need to go to somebody else. Why? We're not in the old covenant.

You can do that yourself. He doesn't say if two apostles come together. Anyone, if two of you, it doesn't matter who you are, it can be two teenagers who love the Lord, who are united, who are determined to pray and bind Satanic forces and activities of Satan, they can do something.

If your parents are not spiritual enough, well, two teenagers in that family can do it. Sure. No respect of persons with God.

No respect of age, no respect of color, no respect of culture, nationality, language, nothing. It just requires two people who love the Lord, who are agreed and who do not wrestle with flesh and blood, who don't have the habit of fighting with human beings, who are not fighting for earthly things, whose kingdom is not of this world, and they come together and they are qualified. They may not know much of the Bible.

It doesn't make a difference. Those early Christians didn't know much of the Bible because they didn't have a Bible to start with. But they knew God.

It's more important to know God than know the Bible. Do you know that Bible knowledge doesn't help us to overcome Satan? Doesn't make us holy? Do you know that in the history of Christianity in two thousand years, there's never been as much Bible knowledge as today? Oh boy, the number of translations, the number of versions of Scripture and the concordances, and we've got it on disc, and we've got it in pocket electronic Bibles, and we've got it everywhere. But the devil is more rampant than ever in Christian churches, in spite of all this.

And people are not holy. Which proves what? You cannot overcome Satan with Bible knowledge. You cannot become holy by Bible knowledge.

You've got to know God. Through the Bible, we've got to get to know God. That's the important thing.

And so we see here, let's turn to Revelation chapter 12. Revelation chapter 12 is speaking about a future day when Satan will be cast down to the earth from the heavenly. Satan is not in hell.

He's in the heavenly. He's going to be cast down to the earth. But there's a principle mentioned here, which applies to us even today.

Here Satan is called in verse 10, the accuser of the brethren. In verse 10, the last part, the accuser of our brethren is cast down. He's also called in verse 9, the middle, the one which deceiveth the whole world.

Notice these two titles of Satan. He's got many other titles there, old serpent, great dragon, devil, Satan. But I want you to think of these two titles.

Deceiver of the whole world, accuser of the brethren. Whenever a salesman who deceives his customers with some product he's selling, is in fellowship with whom? Satan. Right? You agree or not? Anyone who is deceiving the world, somebody in the world, is in fellowship with Satan.

Okay. When you sit, now that's one title, let's go to the second title now. When you sit and accuse another brother, who are you in fellowship with? A little more difficult to answer? The answer is the same.

It may be a little more personal, but the answer is the same. We're in fellowship with Satan. Accuser, deceiver of the world, accuser of the brethren.

The one who accuses the brethren is no better than that salesman who goes around selling a cheap counterfeit product and deceives his customers. Absolutely no difference. You can be horrified with that salesman who does such a thing.

Oh, I'm in a holiness church, I would never do that. And you can do exactly the same thing when you accuse a brother or a sister. Do you gossip? Do you speak evil of others behind their back? Do you run down someone without a purpose? I think the only person to whom you can go and speak about somebody else is to an elder brother in a church, where you can get him to help that person.

Then it's not backbiting. Then it's right. You go to an elder in a church and say, brother, there's a problem with so-and-so, I'm not able to help him, perhaps you can, and don't tell anyone else.

But if you go around speaking about it all over, you are in fellowship with the accuser of the brethren. You're not helping him, you're just tearing him down. That's just in passing.

But he, this accuser of the brethren, he, it says here, the accuser of the brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night. You know that Satan works 24 hours in this business of deceiving? He's a full-time worker, 24 hours accusing the brethren. And it says here about certain people who are the overcomers.

Who are these overcomers? The Bible speaks about the new revelation, particularly the book of Revelation speaks about overcomers. In all the seven churches, the Lord speaks to the overcomer. And in the end of Revelation, it says, he who overcomes shall inherit all things, Revelation 21, 7 and 8. He shall overcome all things, he shall inherit, he who overcomes shall inherit all things.

I'll be his God and he'll be my son. And here it says, the overcomers, they overcame Satan. Now this is what they're thinking of now.

Thing which they couldn't do in the Old Testament. They fought with Philistines, Midianites, otherites, like a lot of believers do today, fight with flesh and blood, but never fight with Satan. Maybe they overcome flesh and blood, they take people to court, they sue them, they win perhaps, but they're defeated by Satan.

Maybe they do succeed with all their manipulation and all that to become elders in some church. But Satan has overcome them because they were fighting flesh and blood. And it says here about this group of overcomers, they're very few, they overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.

You cannot overcome Satan if we don't begin with the blood of Jesus Christ. And a lot of people don't like to talk about that these days. They have a bloodless Christianity.

There is no bloodless Christianity. The blood of Jesus Christ is the first thing we need when we overcome Satan, because when, Satan is called here the accuser of the brethren. When he comes to accuse me, how can I overcome him? Everything he says is right.

I did do those things 25 years ago. I did do that 20 years ago. I did that last year.

I did that other thing he mentioned last month. How do I overcome him? I can't tell him he's a liar. He is a liar, but when he tells these things to me, he's right.

I overcome him by the blood of the Lamb. I tell him, Satan, when you finish making the list, let me tell you the blood of Jesus cleansed me from all my sins. And I'm redeemed.

I've been purchased. I've been cleansed. I've been justified.

And as far as God's concerned, that list doesn't exist. It's only in your mind. It's not in God's mind, and it's not in mine.

It's in yours. You can keep it if you like, but you're not going to harass me with that. The blood of Jesus cleansed me from all sin.

Don't ever try any other method with Satan. Don't say I confessed it 10 times. That's not the way to overcome it.

The blood of Jesus Christ. We'll need it till our dying day, because we can slip up anytime. So that's where we begin.

The blood of the Lamb. And I want to say this. Don't ever join Satan in accusing yourself when he tries to condemn you.

And don't ever join him in accusing others. That's Satan's business, and we should have nothing to do with it. The second thing is the word of our testimony.

What is the word of our testimony? It's not testimony to men. Remember, we're talking here about Satan. We're not talking about getting up in the meeting and giving a testimony how Jesus saved me.

No, that's not the point here. Some people have misunderstood that verse. We're dealing with Satan now.

What? Satan is attacking me, and I'm overcoming him? How? I may not even be in a meeting. I may be just in my room, and he's accusing me. I overcome him by the blood of Jesus, or he's trying to discourage me or depress me.

That often happens, trying to do that. And I overcome him by the word of my testimony. And who am I giving my testimony to? To Satan.

And what am I saying to him? Testimony here does not mean when I was converted and all the sins I did, because he already knows all that. And I don't want to glorify Satan by making a big list of all the things I did in my life. Some people give their testimony like that.

I've heard people give a testimony, and 75% of the time they're glorifying the devil by giving a big list of all the wrong things they did in their life, perhaps to show how humble they are, but they're not really being humble. They're just glorifying the devil. And I say, I don't want to glorify the devil.

Yeah, I was a sinner. I did a lot of rotten things, but Jesus saved me. I want to talk more about Jesus than about what the devil made me do.

And so the word of our testimony to Satan has got nothing to do with all that. It's got to do with what God has said. You know, when Satan came to Jesus, Jesus gave his testimony to Satan.

What was that? Not I was born in Nazareth. No. Born in Bethlehem, I lived in Nazareth.

Not that. It is written. That's all.

One sentence. Man shall not live by that alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Second time, Satan came another time with another temptation.

He gave his testimony again. What God's word said. That's the thing that's absolutely certain.

We can be absolutely sure of. And that's what we have to confess to Satan. And you know, if you do this, confess what the blood of Jesus did for you.

That you've been justified. Confess that God is on the throne. There are times when I am attacked by temptations to be discouraged and depressed.

It can come sometimes, you don't know why. How shall we overcome? Sometimes you kneel down to pray and you don't feel like you're getting through to God. Even after five or ten minutes, your mind is wandering here, there, everywhere.

I'm sure you've had this experience. Because I've had it. And your flesh is the same as mine.

So you must have had it. I kneel down to pray and it's a struggle. And you go on and on and on and on.

And you know you're not getting anywhere. But I'll tell you what I do now. I get up.

And I raise my hands. And I say, well, Lord, I don't know why I'm not able to get through here, but my sins are all forgiven. That's for sure.

The blood of Jesus cleansed me from all my sins. God is still on the throne. And he rules the universe.

And it says in 1 Corinthians 10, 13, that God will never allow me to be tested or tempted beyond my ability. That's a good confession to make. God will never allow me to be tested beyond my ability.

God will never allow me to be tempted beyond my ability. Have you heard believers say, oh, this is getting too much for me. That's a lie.

That means God didn't keep his word. What does it say in 1 Corinthians 10, 13? God is faithful who will never allow you to be tested beyond your ability, but will with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to endure it or bear it, which means I will never face a trial or a temptation in my whole life, which is too much for me. God has got his hand on the knob to make sure that the pressure doesn't get too much.

He releases it so that it never crosses into the red. He always keeps on this side. He allows it to get pretty close to the red sometimes, to the red line, but he always makes sure it's on this side.

It's true. It's always true. And God's got his hand on the knob.

Don't think it's those people who are troubling you. They say when troubles come, they seem to all come together, but that doesn't matter. God's got his hand on the knob still, and he'll make sure it never becomes too much.

I confess that. I confess what it says in Romans 8, 20, that we know that all things work together for good. And in some translations it says God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose.

I confess that. It is written that I am justified by the blood of Jesus. It is written that I shall not be tempted beyond my ability at any time.

It is written that all things work together for good for me. It is written that all authority in heaven and earth is still in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is, that's Matthew 28, 18.

It is written in Hebrews 2, 14 that Jesus destroyed him who had the power of death. That means even though Satan is not eliminated, his power over me is gone. And many wonderful things like that.

And once I start confessing a few things like that to Satan, I find my depression is gone pretty quickly. There are certain things that never change no matter how you feel. Do you think God sitting on the throne depends on whether you feeling happy or you're feeling depressed? No.

Do you think the cleansing of your sin, your justification depends on how you feel? No. Do you think God fulfilling Romans 8, 28 depends on how you feel? No. So let me confess all those things which are eternally true.

Satan was defeated 2,000 years ago. It doesn't depend on how you feel about it today. It makes absolutely no difference.

You may be on top of the world or down in the dumps, but Satan was still defeated 2,000 years ago. That doesn't alter that fact. So when we feel under pressure, this is what we need to get up and confess.

The word of my testimony. It is written. It is written.

It is written. Then what will happen? See what it says in James 4, 7. Resist the devil and he will flee from you when you're in financial need. And the devil says, boy, dark days are coming.

The depression is coming again. Haven't you heard all the preachers speak about it, the great depression that's coming? Like the one that came 70 years ago. And you say, I heard about it.

What are you going to do? Word of my testimony. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. You don't have to worry about what you're going to eat or what you're going to drink.

It's true. If I seek God's kingdom first and his righteousness, I will never have to worry about what I eat or drink or what I'm going to be clothed with because I look at the air and I look at the flowers of the field. And I will tell you, I have proved that in numerous situations with poor believers in a poor country like India, where there's no social security, no food stamps, no medical insurance, no nothing.

And if it works there in the 20th century, it can work anywhere. That those who seek God's kingdom first and his righteousness, they don't become millionaires. Thank God they don't become millionaires.

They'd probably go astray. But all that they need is added to them. All that they need is added to them.

Food, clothing, shelter. And we are content. So we confess.

And then we resist the devil and he flees from us. It says he will flee from you. And supposing I'm being harassed by someone or I'm facing a sickness like a thorn in the flesh that I don't seem to have prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed.

God hasn't been pleased to heal me or someone in my family of that sickness. What do I do then? And God and Satan comes and troubles me then and says, see what happened. God doesn't have any time.

He doesn't care for you. Something's wrong with your life. And you, there must be some secrets in your life.

Remember that thing you did 25 years ago. That's why you're being punished now and all that. That's a lot of rubbish.

What do I say to him then? His grace is sufficient for me. He will make his grace abound towards me. And if it pleases him not to remove the thorn from my flesh, hallelujah, his grace is still sufficient for me and I shall overcome.

Don't let the devil come and tell you that because of what you did 10-15 years ago, now you're being punished. Is that true? Supposing I take my boy, supposing I have a 10-year-old son and one day I take my belt and whack him. And he says, dad, what did I do wrong? And he says, you remember what you did 5 years ago on 6th of July, 1995? 6th of July, 1995 and you're whacking me now for that? Would you do that to your son? Tell me, is God at least as good a father as you are? He's better.

Don't you believe this lie of the devil that what you did on the 6th of all is 1995, God's punishing you today. It's a lot of trash. You say, but don't we reap what we sow? Yeah, there's a sense in which we reap what we sow, but you can get oversensitive on that to the point where you allow the devil to condemn you.

And this other trash that your children are going to suffer because your grandfather worshipped idols or did some rotten thing is absolute nonsense. There are people who are living under that bondage and I don't care what the charismatic great Bible teachers say, I don't believe it. I'll tell you that.

Because I believe what God's word says. Now I want you to turn in the book of Ezekiel and it says here, let me find that chapter. The Lord says, what is this proverb you have among the fathers eat sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.

I just want to find that a minute. 18. Yeah, that's right.

Chapter 18 and verse 2. The Lord says, what meaning that he used this proverb concerning the land of Israel saying the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. In other words, the father did something wrong and the children are being punished for it. As I live, said the God, you know, when the Lord speaks like that, he's saying, do you at least believe that I'm alive? And if I'm alive, as long as I'm alive, that's not going to be true.

That's the meaning of that verse. As long as I'm alive, you shall have no occasion to use that proverb. All souls of mine, the soul that sins, it shall die.

If the father has sinned, he's going to be punished. If the son has sinned, he's going to be punished. But since Jesus has taken our punishment on the cross, if I have repented, that punishment has been taken on the cross.

And I don't have to live under the condemnation that the Lord's punishing me today. I believe that. And I want to tell you that's liberated me, quoting scripture to the devil.

And I would encourage you to quote scripture to Satan. Don't believe that some curse that came on your grandfather or your father descends down and you now have to renounce it. I say, when Jesus died, he became a curse and took every wretched curse away from me.

And even though I was planted, I was part of that tree of Adam through my father and grandfather and ancestor. One day, Jesus cut me off from that and grafted me into himself. And there's no curse here.

So how in the world am I connected to my father and grandfather and ancestor now? I don't understand that. It's totally wrong. And you don't have any New Testament support for it.

It's like this health wealth gospel, which has got no New Testament support. There are a lot of Christians being deceived by this old covenant teaching. That's all before Jesus became a curse on the cross.

That's all before Jesus died and took our sins. That's all before his blood was shed. And don't go back to all those things.

His blood has been shed. If you go back to all those, you better bring a lamb and a goat as well and sacrifice it to the Lord today. Sure.

How do you selectively take something from the old covenant? It's all over. The curse is over. There's no more curse for me.

It's blessing upon blessing upon blessing. It says in John 1, grace upon grace. That's what I'm getting.

And that's what you can have if you believe it. But the devil can harass you sometimes even through Bible teachers. Oh, there's a curse upon you.

Perhaps your grandfather worshiped an idol. Perhaps he brought something in from Africa when he came from there. Some little object or something.

That's why this and people are trying to search their home. What is there over here that's preventing me? That's causing. You think God is a torturer? You think if my little son came to me and said, Dad, tell me, what did I do wrong? And I say, I'm not going to tell you.

Find out. And he struggled for six months. Dad, I can't find out.

I'm not going to tell you. Can you believe that at least God is as good as you? I tell you, so many people have such a wrong concept of God. That's why they live under this harassment of Satan.

Don't listen to him anymore. Give him the word of your testimony and resist him in Jesus name. He will flee.

And like I've often said before, the Bible even tells us at what speed the devil will flee from us. 186,000 miles per second. You read that verse, Luke chapter 10.

It says what speed the devil will flee from us. Luke chapter 10, Jesus said in verse 18, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. If you've studied science, you know the speed of lightning.

186,000 miles a second, seven times around the world in one second. Resist the devil and he will flee from you at 186,000 miles per second. That's what I believe.

I don't believe that I'm running for my life from the devil and he's chasing me and ta-da, I escaped. Thank God. Oh no.

Can you imagine Jesus like that? Running for his life and the devil chasing him? Not at all. Have you ever read this verse? 1 John chapter 4, verse 17, as Jesus is, so are we in this world. Do you believe that? It's, if it were not written in the Bible, I wouldn't believe it.

It's so unbelievable, but it's true because it's written in scripture and I haven't scratched it out of my Bible yet and I don't think you have. If you don't believe it, I do. As Jesus is, so am I in this world.

How did Jesus live in this world? I don't see him running away from the devil. I see the devil was scared whenever he heard Jesus was coming into town. Do you believe that? I hope you believe that.

The devil was scared every time he heard Jesus coming to some town. Do you believe that if you walk with God with a clear conscience and humility and brokenness before God, the devil can be scared when he hears you're coming into some town? Say, oh no, it can't be true about me. Okay.

According to your faith, be it unto you, it won't be true in your case. But I hear somebody else say, yes, I believe that. Praise the Lord, it's according to your faith, be it unto you, it will be true in your case.

It's according to our faith. Our faith based on what? Not what I want to do, not what I feel like. I don't care for my feelings.

Years ago, God taught me to stop relying on feelings. It's according to God's word. Many, many years ago, I read a little tract about fact, faith and feelings.

Maybe you've read it. It's an ancient tract, but it really helped me and I can share with you what I read in that tract because it's helped me through many, many years. See, the Christian life is a very narrow way, the Bible says.

It's like a narrow path with a deep cliff on each side. And here on this narrow path, right in front walks fact. Fact means the things written in scripture.

It is written. The devil was defeated, God is on the throne, he will never allow me to be tempted beyond my ability. All things work together for good to those who love God.

His grace is sufficient for me. If I seek his kingdom first, all things will be added to me and many, many other promises. He loves me as he loved Jesus, John 17, 23.

As Jesus is, so are we in this world. All these facts. The devil was defeated on the cross 2000 years ago.

Those are facts. And fact walks on this narrow wall without any problem. And faith follows fact, looking at fact.

And he walks without any problem. And behind faith comes feeling, following along, slowly but surely. But after a while, faith begins to look around to see if feeling is following.

I don't feel anything. Let me just look around and see. And he tumbles over the wall and falls.

And feeling also tumbles over the wall and falls because he's following faith, you see. But fact, God keeps walking. And I was so helped by that little tract I read, that illustration, that I must never turn around to see how I feel.

It makes no difference to fact. It's not a question of whether I feel the devil was defeated. He has been defeated.

It's a fact. It's written. Never mind if I don't feel it.

Doesn't make any difference. He was still defeated. He's got nothing to do with feeling.

If somebody's put a million dollars into your bank account, you got a statement from your bank. Well, whether I feel good or not, whether I got a headache or not, it's still there. Makes absolutely no difference.

God's word is more reliable than any bank statement. I hope you believe that. The devil was defeated.

His blood has cleansed me from all sin. He'll never in my whole life allow me to be tested beyond my ability. No trial, no temptation in a million years.

Even if I live that long, will ever be too much for me to bear. Impossible. Let the world be full of people who try to harass me.

God's got his hand on the knob. They'll never get too much from me. We must have that faith based on what? Not feelings.

Facts. And faith follows facts. Don't try to claim things which are not true.

Things which are not written in the scriptures that you're going to get a Cadillac car. Where's that? Revelation chapter 23. Turn to Revelation chapter 23, you'll find it there.

Found it? There are many verses in Revelation 23, which you haven't discovered yet. One is you'll get a Cadillac car. Another is I'll get hair on my head before Jesus comes again.

Many things like that. And people are believing it. All these fancy promises, which are not mentioned in scripture.

Fact is based on what's written in scripture up to Revelation 22. Not after that. So don't believe what all these preachers say.

I heard a word from the Lord and I had a vision and this that and the other. A lot of trance. Fact is what God has written.

It's there. I believe it. It's always true.

And I keep my eyes on that. And feeling will follow. They take a little time.

It's a bit slow sometimes. Doesn't walk too fast. But it will follow.

That's for sure. Definitely. Feeling will follow over a period of time.

And sometimes the feeling goes to sleep along the way and I don't feel it. Doesn't make a difference. Fact is still the same.

I just continue walking. And he'll get up after a while and start following. Those are the times when I feel a little down.

Feeling is asleep. But I keep my mind still on fact. Please remember this simple illustration.

It will save you from a lot of problems. Particularly when you're discouraged. When you don't feel like praying.

Just get up. Shout hallelujah. The devil's a liar.

Tell him that to his face. That's another thing I tell people. Tell the devil to his face he's a liar.

Tell him you don't belong to him. Tell him that Jesus defeated him. He doesn't like to hear that.

There was a demon-possessed girl who once came to our house. Another sister from the church brought her. I never knew she was demon possessed.

She just looked all right. But when I asked her to pray the sinner's prayer. And I said now tell the devil you're being defeated on the cross.

She turned around with another voice and said I've not been defeated on the cross. I said yes you were. Now I was not talking to the girl.

I was talking to the demon. You were defeated on the cross. Sure you were.

Get out of her in Jesus name. And once the demon was cast out. I told the girl now say Satan you were defeated on the cross.

She said it. And I learned something that day. The devil does not like to be told to his face.

That you were defeated on the cross by Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago. And I don't belong to you anymore. Tell your children to say that to the devil.

Tell anybody who's being harassed by the devil to tell the devil straight to his face. The devil can hear you. I'll tell you that.

He can hear very very well. I was once in a bible school where I was speaking. And at the end of the meeting we were going to close in prayer.

And that's the time the devil usually begins to act. When you're coming to prayer and people are going to make a decision. And sure enough as soon as we bowed our heads to prayer with all these bible school students sitting in the back.

Way back as far back as this hall maybe 30 feet. There at the back one young man got up and started dancing down the aisle. And I knew that was the devil.

And I knew that if I openly rebuked him everybody sitting here would lift up their heads and turn around. That's exactly what the devil wanted. To distract the attention of people away from what they had heard for the last half an hour.

So I put my head down in a whisper which the person sitting behind me on the platform didn't hear. I said in Jesus name sit down. And he went and sat down immediately.

You see that's the day I heard discovered that the devil's got very good hearing. He hears immediately. And six months later I got a letter from that young man.

I didn't know who he was. I didn't even meet him after the meeting. He said Brother Zach I've never met you.

You don't know who I am. But I am the young man whom you commanded to sit down in the meeting. Six months ago.

How did he hear it? Nobody heard it. The man sitting on the platform didn't hear it. Then I was convinced.

God did that to convince me the devil's got good hearing. You don't have to shout at him and yell at him. There's a dignity the way Jesus cast out demons.

It was just a quiet word and that was it. You remember the time of the Syrophenician woman who came and said my daughter is possessed with a demon. Will you please cast her out? Jesus said I can't give the children's bread to the dogs.

And he said and she said Lord give me a crumb. That's enough for me for the dogs can eat the crumbs. And it says for this saying the demon's gone out of your daughter.

That was long distance. There's a one case of long distance casting out demons. That daughter was probably two or three miles away.

But the devil heard it. Over there. What Jesus said in the room here.

And the demon went out there. I tell you there's such authority in Jesus Christ. As Jesus is.

So are we in this world. If you believe that and you live a clean life. You walk in humility before God.

I tell you the devil will be scared of you. He'll be scared every time you come to town. Sure.

And he'll do everything to harass you and trouble you and attack your family. But you'll overcome. You'll get a few bullets.

Sure. When we are in the battlefield we do get hit now and then. I don't mean sin.

No God won't allow us to sin. But we'll get attacked in other ways. You get a few names called by a few bad names.

Like Beelzebub and things like that. Which they call Jesus. He said that the head of the household has been called Beelzebub.

How much more the members of his household. He won't be able to touch your spirit. But he'll attack you in other ways.

But God will make all of that work together for good. That's why we're not scared. You know what was the word with Jesus.

Some of the most frequent words that Jesus said are I believe the words which we need to remember frequently. One of the words he said frequently was follow me. Follow me.

Follow me. Most Christians don't take that seriously. Did he ever say believe in me once or twice perhaps.

But most of the time follow me. Follow me. Follow me.

Another thing Jesus said very frequently was fear not. Fear not. Fear not.

Fear not. And I've seen through the years how important it is in our battle with Satan that we don't allow him to put fear in our hearts. Sometimes fear may come.

I've seen occasions where I'm suddenly confronted with someone who's deemed possessed and it's scary. And to assure myself I asked myself this question. Was this a demon defeated on Calvary or was this one one of those that somehow managed to escape? No.

Every demon was defeated on Calvary. I said fine then I have no problem with this one. However scary he looks he can't touch me.

He was defeated on Calvary. He's like a king cobra. He's got its poison taken out and it's stunned alive but unconscious.

It can't harm me. I can put my foot on top of his head without a problem. You got to look at the devil like that.

He's not dead but he has absolutely no power over you. Remember this my brothers and sisters. He was defeated on Calvary's cross once and for all.

The Christian church knows that Christ died for our sins. That he took the punishment for all our sins when he hung up on the cross. But unfortunately there are millions of believers who do not know that when he hung on the cross he defeated Satan as well.

Colossians 2.14 says he took away from Satan that armor which he had. Satan doesn't have an armor now. And I've got Jesus and the Holy Spirit with me and I'm confronting a Satan whose armor was taken away from him on the cross.

And that's why Satan always tries to get a foothold in my life to weaken me. Tries to get a foothold in your life to weaken you. That's why he gets you to wrestle with flesh and blood so that you won't be able to wrestle with him.

Go wrestling with your wife and you won't be able to wrestle with Satan. Go into an argument with your husband and you won't be able to fight Satan anymore. Get into an argument with a brother.

Go accusing your brother and that's all. That's the end of your battle with Satan. You got under his side.

And that's why the devil gets so many believers who are so careful about their dress, so careful about modesty and not careful about the way they use their tongue. Gossiping, backbiting, telling tales about other people. But oh they say we are modest.

Absolute rubbish. What's the use of that modesty if the devil's got right onto your tongue and controls your tongue to speak evil about others behind their back. To criticize, to speak evil, to backbite, to gossip, to slander and you glory in the things which you can't overcome Satan with a long dress.

I'll tell you that. It's good. I appreciate it.

Modesty is important in a child of God. But that is not a gentle and a quiet spirit which is of great value in God's eyes. That's only the outward expression of it.

An outward expression is not enough if the inside is hollow. Yeah. You can have a huge garage and keep a little motorcycle inside it.

What's that? People think that three cars inside is only a little motorcycle. That's how it can be. An appearance of modesty and there's no gentle and quiet spirit inside.

And Satan isn't fooled. He's not. Control your tongue if you want to overcome Satan.

Your attitudes, if you got bitterness against someone. How in the world are you going to overcome the devil if you've got bitterness against someone? Impossible. When people are sick and they ask me to pray for them, I ask them one question.

I say, have you got a bitterness against someone? Have you forgiven everybody? Do you know there are new... I'm not saying this is the cure for all sicknesses. There are lots of sicknesses which have got other causes within the body. So I don't want anyone to feel condemned here.

But before you go to the doctor and before you take those thousands of pills and injections, it's good to check up something else for which you don't have to pay anything. Ask yourself if you've got a bitterness against someone. There are people I've heard of who get arthritis, asthma, skin rashes because of wrong attitudes, ulcers because of wrong attitudes, because of tension.

Things which don't have a cause in the body, the cause is in their spirit. And if they get rid of those wrong attitudes, they get healed and they don't have to pay anybody anything for it. It's true.

So you can't overcome satan if you got all these wrong attitudes towards someone. You can't overcome satan if you're accusing the brothers or sisters. You can't overcome satan if you're wrestling with flesh and blood.

Your kingdom is of this world if you're fighting for earthly things. You can't overcome satan if you are just coveting position in the church. You can't overcome satan if you're jealous of somebody else whom God is blessing and particularly if that somebody else is younger than you.

You do that? That is the first sin committed outside the garden of Eden. The first question that God asked the man outside the garden of Eden was this. Why are you angry? Why is your face fallen? I always have a question about somebody who cannot look me straight in the eyes.

Be careful about the people who can't look you straight in the face. Something is wrong. It's the first question God asked man.

Why is your face fallen? You see people like that? Something is wrong. I don't know. Maybe I don't know what's wrong, but something is wrong.

And if you're like that, there's something there. You saw another brother younger than you being blessed, used by God. The fire of God fell on his sacrifice and Cain saw that on Abel.

I think if Abel was older than him, he could have borne it, but this fellow was younger than him. He just couldn't stand it. This young brother who came to the church 20 years after me and he's got an anointed

word.

I'm the senior elder around here. You got the spirit of Cain. You can't bear to see God blessing that person.

How can you overcome satan? You can't. He's got you. And that's the first place in the Bible where God speaks about victory over sin.

You remember what God told satan? Sin is crouching at your door, waiting to enter, but you must master it. Where did this message of victory over sin come? It's not in Romans 6. It's in Genesis 4. You must master sin. That was God's message to man right from the time he went out of Eden.

You must master sin. It's crouching at your door, but you will never be able to master it if you've got a wrong attitude towards your brother. Rejoice that God has blessed him.

Rejoice that the fire of God fell on him. I leap for joy when I see a young brother getting up and sharing a powerful word. I say, praise the Lord.

Wonderful. You get two, three brothers like that in that church and I can move out. Go and build a church somewhere else now.

Because God's raised up two, three brothers who can do the work which I was doing all this time. Praise the Lord. Get excited about it.

That's how it must be. That's God's. You see the church is stunted, not able to grow because a whole lot of jealous older brothers are holding the fort, not allowing younger people to come up.

And I've seen another thing in Christendom these days. People in the ministry, promoting their own children to take over when they retire. I've seen it in Christian organizations around the world.

I've seen it in organizations all over India. I groom my son like Saul groomed Jonathan. Jonathan, you're the one.

You're the one. And I make sure that he gets no competition. Evil.

I'll throw a dagger, a javelin at somebody else like David, who's anointed, who may be a threat to my son. You think this doesn't happen in Christendom? It's happening everywhere. I've seen it.

I'm not grooming my children to take over my ministry. I'll never do it. I've learned what happened to Saul.

The anointing of God does not come through heredity. It comes through God's sovereign choice. I've learned that years ago.

Elisha was not Elijah's son. Joshua was not Moses' son. Moses had his own children, by the way.

I hope you know that. They were circumcised. They were good boys.

But Moses, God said to Moses, not your son, Moses, Joshua. And he had years to hear what a lot of Christian leaders today don't have years to hear. You can't overcome Satan if you've got all these earthly concepts of leadership and position and honor and title.

So many things. My brothers and sisters, beware of these things. Humble yourself.

Recognize the anointing of God where it is on someone. Maybe not the one you expected. But God has ways of surprising us.

And we praise God. If the fire rests upon someone whom I didn't think it would rest upon, well, I must rejoice. I've got to overcome Satan.

And I'm going to make sure that there's no wrong attitude in me when I fight against him. I want to show you something else here. In Luke's Gospel, chapter 4, we know that when the devil came to Eve, he came to her through some desire within her body, desire for food.

And it says that tree, in Genesis 3, was good for food. And when the devil came to Jesus, he also came through a desire in the body, the desire for food. The devil said to Jesus here in Luke 4.3, If you're the son of God, command the stone to be made bread and eat it.

And Jesus replied saying, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. He had fasted for 40 days, and he overcame Satan. We have desires in our body, and Satan comes through those desires.

We read that Jesus gave his disciples authority to cast out demons. But once when a man brought his little boy to the disciples, he said, Can you please cast out this demon? They couldn't do it. They tried, tried, tried.

Maybe they shouted and yelled, and the demon still stood there, lived there. And then Jesus came down from the Mount of Transfiguration and the boy, and the man came to Jesus and said, I brought my son to your disciples. They could do nothing.

Can you please help us? He said, Bring him here. And he cast out the demon. The demon threw the boy on the ground, and he was delivered.

And then the disciples came to Jesus and said, You gave us authority to cast out demons. Why couldn't we cast this one out? And Jesus said, Because you don't have faith. And you don't have faith because you love food too much.

I'm just paraphrasing his words. He said, This kind will not go out without prayer and fasting. You love food too much.

That's why. You got the authority, all right, I gave it to you. But you're too attached to something on earth.

The devil came to Jesus to eat through food. He came to Jesus through food. The Bible speaks in Philippians 3 about the enemies of the cross.

Who are the enemies of the cross? Are they the heathen? No. He says, For many walk, Philippians 3, 18 and 19. And I tell you, weeping, they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose God is their stomach.

Have you read that verse? Whose mind is on earthly things. Okay. From Philippians 3, verse 18 and 19, you can even ask a little child, Tell me who are the enemies of the cross? Just from these two verses.

That little child can answer. What we clever people cannot answer. The enemies of the cross are those whose God is their belly, and whose mind is on earthly things.

Can you be a Christian, and your God be your belly, and your mind be on earthly things? I have met numerous Christians like that. I've seen how I myself was like that. Mind on earthly things, how I can make more money, how I can advance my business is not on the kingdom of God, except occasionally.

And my God, my belly. How do you know whether your God is your belly? You get upset with your wife anytime when the food is not ready on time, or when the food is not as tasty as you expected it? Clear proof, your God is your belly. I don't care how much you shout and sing in the meeting, your God is your belly.

You waste money on unnecessarily luxurious food. You love it. Now I'm not trying to be an ascetic.

I'm not trying to get people to be converted to be hermits. I know that I follow a Jesus who made a third cup of wine in Cana of Galilee, after they had already drunk one or two cups. So I'm not a fanatic on this.

I believe that Jesus demolished that religion of food and drink in Cana. I'm not following John the Baptist who ate wild locusts and honey. No, I'm following Jesus who was called a wine beaver and a gluttonous man.

But I'm also following Jesus who knew how to fast for 40 days. He wasn't a slave to food. But if somebody gave him a good meal, he enjoyed it.

So I'm not saying you can't enjoy a good meal, but are you a slave to it? That's something which we cannot judge another person in. But we can judge ourselves a lot. There are a lot more feasting Christians today than there are fasting ones.

There's no doubt about it. And that's why the Church is so powerless. There are a lot more people today who waste money on so many useless things to feed their bellies.

Unnecessary. Which could have been used for the glory of God. Whose God is their belly, whose mind is set on earthly things.

These are the enemies of the cross. Strong word Paul uses here. Have I ever thought that my making my belly a God could make me an enemy of the cross of Jesus Christ? It weakens me in my battle against Satan.

It's true. You don't have to go and commit sin. Of course that'll weaken you in your battle against Satan too.

But if my mind is set on earthly things, it's just as much. This is the picture the Lord gave me many many years ago. Don't we have to mind earthly things when we are working on this earth, trying to earn our living? How can I set my mind on heavenly things when I'm running a machine in a factory? No, I'm not asking you to set your mind on heavenly things while you're running a machine that could harm you or somebody else in a factory.

What is the meaning of setting our mind on things above? If you be risen with Christ, set your mind on things above in the heavenlies. You cannot overcome Satan if your mind is set on things. God cursed the serpent saying, your food is going to be dust from now on.

My body is made of dust. Gold is made of dust, and that's the food of the devil. And if I get taken up with the dust which is the serpent's food, whether gold dust or any other type of dust, I'm not going to be able to overcome Satan.

That's the devil's food. God cursed the serpent saying dust was going to be his food. And if my mind is set on these things, I cannot overcome Satan.

Money is a good thing. A very good servant, but a terrible master. And if you want to serve God and overcome Satan, you've got to make sure that money doesn't have a hold on you, that money is under your feet.

Have you read in Revelation chapter 21 and 22 what the streets of the New Jerusalem are made of? What's it made of? Gold. So where do they have gold in heaven? Under their feet. Not on their head.

Here on earth, people put it on their head. But in heaven, it's under their feet. And heaven's made for people who've learned to put gold under their feet now.

Have you learned it? I'm not saying don't use it. Keep it under your feet. It's like fire.

Fire is a wonderful servant. We use it in our home all the day. A terrible master.

You know what happens when the whole house is on fire. But when you keep it controlled in the gas stove, it's okay. But when it gets out of control, it destroys your house.

Money is like that. Do you know how to keep it under control? You know how that wee bit of gas comes through? That's all that's lit. And when it gets out of control, it burns up the house.

Money is like that. A wonderful servant, but a terrible master. And there are very few believers who know how to keep it under their feet.

It's on their head. This is the trouble. It's the trouble with Christian work in India.

Oh, I've seen plenty of it. Lots of, 90% of people in Christian work in India are not serving God. They're serving money.

I've seen it crystal clear. And they are supported by sincere, faithful believers in western countries who are sincere and faithful, but unwise and foolish. I've seen that.

I've seen that for years. And it's not built the church in Jesus Christ. It's just lined the pockets of clever preachers.

Money is a terrible master, but a wonderful servant. Jesus knew how to keep it in its proper place. Earthly things.

His mind is set on earthly things. The picture the Lord gave me was this. It's like a rubber band.

You've all seen a rubber band. You can stretch it, and when you release it, it comes back. Or a spring.

You pull it, and when you release it, it comes back. There was a time in my life, in our lives, when we were unconverted. When the rubber band or the spring was fixed here on earthly things, we stretched it occasionally on Sunday mornings to think about God.

When it got released, came back to earthly things. What should have happened when you got converted is that this rubber band should now be fixed up there on heavenly things, where we stretch it down for eight hours for our work here on earth, and when our work is over, when you're finished working with that machine in the factory, or whatever you do, it's released, it goes back to heavenly things. Is it like that? Lots and lots of believers, and perhaps if you examine yourself, you may feel you're in that category too.

Their mind is set on earthly things, but they stretch it on Sunday morning, during family devotion for half an hour perhaps, or less, on heavenly things, and then it gets released back. And it's on earthly things most of the time. It's not the way it's supposed to be.

Then there are other believers whose mind is set on things above. It's the kingdom of God that's uppermost in their life. God's word they meditate on, but they've got to do an earthly job to earn their living, so they stretch it down for eight hours, or whatever they work on earth.

A mother's got sometimes longer than eight hours to stretch to so many things they've got to do with their children. But then when their mind is free from their earthly occupations, it immediately goes back to the heavenly things. What I want to ask you is, where is the rubber band fixed in your life? Or has it lost its elasticity, that when it's stretched down to earthly things, it just gets stuck there? That happens sometimes with rubber bands.

It just loses its elasticity, and it's stuck here. People who once had elasticity in their life, once upon a time, you had just enough of your mindset on earthly things to earn your living, but it's become more and more now. You've lost that elasticity.

God has prospered you, and your prosperity has destroyed you. John Wesley used to say to all those early Methodists, he says, if you want to have a right attitude in money, first of all, earn all that you can. Now that sounds like unspiritual advice, but it isn't.

What he meant was no laziness. Without destroying your soul, and without hindering your seeking God's kingdom first, use all your abilities God's given you to earn all that you can. No laziness.

Once you follow that first rule, he said, there are only three rules. The second one, he said, was save all that you can. In other words, no wasting.

Don't waste your money on unnecessary things, unnecessary luxuries which are not needed. Save all that you can. Learn to live simply.

And then third, give all that you can. He didn't say how much to give, he just said, give all that you can, and that may be different for different people, because the needs are different. And he said, if you only save all that you can, and only earn all that you can, and stop there, you'll destroy yourself.

And he said, that's how a lot of Christians have destroyed themselves. Because they saved all that, they couldn't earn all that, they couldn't give a pittance to God. But he said, if you save all that you can, if you earn all that you can, and save all that you can, and give all that you can, you'll really be a disciple.

And John Wesley said, he said, I preach what I practice, God is my witness. How is it with us, brothers and sisters? You want to fight a heavenly battle with our mindset on earthly things? Impossible. We want to overcome Satan when we love money? Impossible.

We want our kingdom to be of this world, we want position, honor, or perhaps the approval of men. Think of these sad words in John's Gospel, chapter 12. This is also an earthly thing.

It says here, that some of the top religious leaders, John 12, 42 and 43, some of the top religious leaders heard Jesus, and they were convinced, this is the truth. And they believed in Him. But because some of the older, old time leaders were sitting around them, it says, they did not confess Jesus, lest they be put out of the synagogue.

Oh, and that synagogue was their God. And for some Christians, their denomination is their God. Even Jesus Christ cannot get them out of that idol they worship.

Do you know that your denomination can be your idol? I've seen numerous Christians, whose denomination, whose local church is their idol, and they will not confess what they know in their heart is true, because of what the elders will say. And then it says, because, verse 43, they love the praise of men more than the praise of God. They love the approval of men more than the approval of God.

They wanted their elders to speak well of them. They couldn't care less whether God spoke well of them or not. Oh, what regret they'll have in the day of judgment, when they discover what God wanted to do through their life, which was hindered, because they wanted the approval of some elder, in some system, that did not believe what they were convinced in their mind was true.

You remember what happened to the blind man, when his eyes were opened? It says, they put him out of the synagogue. John, chapter 9, they cast him out, verse 34. And that's what can happen when your eyes are opened, to see some truth, which somebody in your church has not seen, which your elders haven't seen.

But the next verse says, Jesus heard that they cast him out and came to him. And that's also what happens, that when we are cast out, Jesus, and Jesus came to him and gave him a further revelation, and opened his spiritual eyes. When I took baptism, I was cast out of a church that had baptized me as an infant.

Well, that wasn't baptism. They just poured some water on my head, and cleaned my head a little, and called it baptism. It wasn't baptism, actually.

I really got baptized only after I was born again. But that church said, no, that's renouncing our baptism, okay. They cast me out, and like it says, Jesus heard about it, and came to me, and gave me a further revelation.

It's exact fulfillment of scripture. And it says, this blind man worshipped him, verse 38, and I worshipped Jesus, and I was free. And I decided that day, that I would never be a prisoner of any system.

If God's word showed me something, I was going to be free, because I wanted to battle Satan. And you cannot battle Satan. If your mind is set on earthly things, the approval of men, money, property, your kingdom is in this world, earthly position, earthly approval, your belly, forget it.

Don't try fighting Satan. Just be a good brother, sister coming to the church, singing the songs, and saying, hallelujah, I'm going home. Your life will never accomplish anything in spiritual warfare.

But if you're serious about spiritual warfare, we can overcome Satan. We can live on this earth, as Jesus lived, where the devil's scared when you come into town. And if you want to live like that, that's the most worthwhile way you can ever live on this earth.

And anybody sitting here can live like that, if you're totally committed to the Lord, and said, Lord, I want to live for you. He was years to hear, let him hear, let's pray. While the head's about in prayer, God's spoken something to your heart.

Maybe he requires a commitment, maybe he requires some area where you need to repent. Maybe he's speaking to you about some area where you need to be a little more disciplined in your bodily passions. Maybe there's somebody you need to stop accusing.

Maybe there's somebody you need to stop fighting with. Somebody you need to apologize to. Maybe somebody whose throat you're catching, you need to release, forgive.

Maybe some earthly thing that you're attached to, that you need to give up your grip on, so that you can engage in spiritual warfare. So that your life can count for God and His kingdom. Make that decision.

You will never regret it at the judgment seat of Christ. Never mind if you get thrown out of somewhere. Never mind if your elders get offended, because you're obeying God's word.

You will not regret it at the judgment seat of Christ. Dare to be different. Dare to follow Jesus.

Heavenly Father, help us, we pray. Help us, families, churches, our personal lives, to be available to you, to have our minds set on heavenly things first, to seek the kingdom of God first. Help us, Lord, we pray, that our life can count for your kingdom, we pray.

I believe there are many people here who have come to the fork in the road this afternoon, where they have to take a decision. Shall I seek the approval of men or the approval of God? Henceforth, shall I set my mind on earthly things or heavenly things? Shall I feed the passions of my body, or shall my life count for God? Lord, help them to take the right decision, to take the right fork in the road this afternoon. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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