

## **TAKING THE BITE OUT OF SATAN**

We have been talking about power. First of all we have been talking about the power of God. We have also talked about the fact that God has given us the power to overcome Satan and his demonic horde. For we are often told and it is written in the scriptures that “greater is He that is in us than he who is in the world”.

Our problem does not lie in knowing what this scripture means, as it is in putting this scripture into action. Now why do we have a problem understanding that Satan has no control over our life. I believe that we can trace this problem in our lives.

As Christians we can sometimes be strange and peculiar people. We travel all over the world preaching love and forgiveness for any and all sins. We tell these people in foreign lands that: Christ came to forgive our sins so “come to Christ and be forgiven. He forgave your sins at the cross, so come and receive forgiveness and healing for all your hurts. You can be free of guilt and have peace. As a result, sinners who have been guilty of every conceivable kind of dark and evil deed gladly come to Christ and are instantly forgiven and delivered of their guilt.

The hardest thing in the world for the Christian to do is receive for them self the same kind of love and forgiveness he preaches to sinners. We Christians find it so difficult to allow ourselves the same freedom from guilt we offer, through Christ, to harlots and drunkards. Christians sin against the Lord, when they proceed to carry about an excruciating load of guilt. They want to pay for their failure. They want to be punished. They want to do penance or suffer some kind of hurt before they are forgiven.

The argument always seems to be that as Christians we know better. We are not ignorant of the law or the scriptures, so we must be held more accountable. We are rebellious and insolent to our Master. I didn't listen to the Holy Spirit and committed sin anyway.

Wake up people!!! We are not exceptions. We are subject to temptations. We are subject to fall at any time. We are not perfect beings. Since we are not perfect we have a tendency to fall into traps set by Satan to pull us down. But do you know

that he cannot pull us down. The only thing that can pull us down is our own guilt. Why is this so. It is because guilt destroys faith. The enemy is not interested in making sinners into adulterers, addicts, or prostitutes. He is interested in only one thing, and that is turning Christians into unbelievers.

He uses the lust of the body to bind the mind. Lust here does not necessarily mean sexual desires, but it does mean any desire of the heart that is not there because of the will of the Father. We can lust after food, or wealth or other objects just as much as we can lust after sexual things in our life. Take a look at the book of Job. Job suffered a great deal under the hands of Satan. But Satan did not want Job to become an addict to drugs, or seek solace in a bottle of wine. What Satan wanted was to get Job to curse God. Did Satan succeed in his quest. No, because Job stood up under the testing and his faith grew even stronger in God. Job did not let himself succumb to the burden of guilt everyone tried to place on him. Thus Job triumphed over the evil Satan threw at him. Satan wanted to destroy Job's faith in God. So, the same is true with us.

Satan doesn't care if we get involved in adultery, addictions, sex, or any type of lustful behavior. What Satan wants is our faith. Satan wants you to be so crushed with guilt that you let go of your faith. He wants you to doubt God and God's faithfulness. He wants you to think that no one really cares and that you will always live in misery and heartache. He wants you to believe that you will always be a slave to your lusts and that that your search and quest for holiness and righteousness are unreachable, that you are left alone to work out your own problems, that God no longer cares about your needs and feelings. If Satan can get you to the point of despair, he can flood you with unbelief.

The three simple steps to atheism are guilt, doubt and unbelief. Guilt, like a raging cancer, can eat away at the vitality of a Christian. It causes a person to lose control of life, it leads to a desire to quit or retire from spiritual activity; and it finally brings on physical pain and disease. Guilt feeds upon itself, until all spiritual life is gone. Weakness and a sense of shame and failure are the end result. Unfortunately many pious Christians hide behind puritan masks, just like the Pharisees of old, who boasted, "Thank God I am not like such sinners." To hear these people tell their stories, they are flawless and their morals are saint like. But we know better. We have all sinned. As the scriptures tell us, none of us are righteous unto ourselves. We all have come short of God's holiness. Let us remember that even the most saintly of persons here on earth has suffered temptations and has battled them as much as any other person. I would hazard a

guess that if we all concentrated on the condition of our own souls we would not have time to worry about the condition of some one else's soul.

We need only be concerned if God wants us to be the instrument of helping that person to a closer walk with Him. We can lead a person to the living water but we cannot make him drink of that water even if we know that the water will save his life and soul. Most people who think that they are in communion with God say "just walk away from the sin! Just stop doing what you are doing and do what is right! You know better, so what is so difficult about quitting the sin". But is it really that easy. All Christians in some way or another are troubled by temptation and sin. Or they struggle with loneliness, sorrows, or fears.

Every Christian on earth fights inner battles; not one is immune. The way to get rid of guilt is to get rid of sin. It sounds simple, but it really is not. You don't just walk away from things that bind. The scriptures say "put off the old man... lay aside your sin... flee the appearance of evil... walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." This is exactly what you want; freedom from the sin that so easily grips you, to walk in the Spirit completely, and to live a life totally pleasing to God. But often times you seem helpless in putting off the lustful desires of your heart. Don't feel that God has forsaken you when you fail to accomplish your task of giving up sin. God does not forsake us. It is then that He tries to move closer. When a Christian sins, he feels shut out of God's presence, just as Adam did. God is always there, waiting to talk, but sin causes man to withdraw. God never withdraws; only man withdraws.

Actually the person living in sin is afraid to open up to God. He is afraid to open up to God because he is afraid that he will have to give up his sin, he must surrender himself to God's will. Most Christians are not sure that they are ready to give up the lusts of their heart. And this is what causes our sin; the desire and lusts of our heart.

Most Christians try to justify their wrongdoing. This justification brings on a hardness of heart that makes it even more difficult for the Christian to give in to the will of God. They begin to think that God's forgiveness is not for them because they keep on sinning. This is not really true. It is a lie of Satan that God's forgiveness is limited. God's mercy is unlimited so is his forgiveness. Jesus spoke to us in the scriptures about forgiveness. He did not say forgive your brothers once or twice. What Jesus said was to forgive your brothers seventy times seven. To the Jews of the time this was an unthinkable amount of mercy. It was an amount that to

them meant unlimited. So Jesus says that our mercy and forgiveness should be unlimited. How much more the forgiveness and mercy of God in whose image we are made. It is God's nature to forgive. David said, "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto them that call upon thee" (Psalm 86:5). God is waiting right now to flood your being with the joy of forgiveness. You need only open up all the doors and windows of your soul and allow His Spirit to flood you with forgiveness.

John speaking as a Christian, wrote "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). That means the Christian is not bent towards sin but, instead, leans towards God. But the scriptures tell us in 1 John "...if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: If we confess our sins, he is faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

You don't just lay down your guilt, your sin, your inner struggle. You only lay it down through a supernatural operation of God's Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit responds to the broken heart that reaches out, in faith, to lay hold of God's promises. He then imparts His divine nature to that empty vessel. Suddenly there comes to the saint of God a renewed desire to confess, to yield to God's will, to become more like Jesus, to see things in the light of eternity, to experience a rush of surrender. The Holy Spirit brings the yielded vessel around to God's way of thinking. We go after things we believe are good for us; we covet what is not ours. But God looks down the road, and He knows what is best. Our ways and thoughts are not His ways and thoughts. God will give His surrendered child something even better, if he lays down his own plan.

What is it that stands between you and God? Is it a secret sin? Is it Lust? Or doubt? Or fear? Or anxiety? What is the cause of your guilt? Be willing to lay it down in surrender at the foot of the cross. Have a funeral right there; do your hurting and dying; then rise up in obedience, and walk in the Spirit. God will not let you down. He will replace that empty place with something far better, something pleasing to His own heart, something providing more joy to you than what you gave up. Lay down your guilt. You don't need to carry that load another minute. Open up all the doors and windows of your heart, and let God's love in. He forgives you over and over again. He will give you the power to see your struggle through to victory. If you ask, if you repent...you are forgiven!

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