

Enemies of the Cross

- **If you are a Christian, a follower of Christ, you will inevitably have 3 enemies in your life.**
 - These enemies will harass us, create conflict & generate trouble & heartache in each of our lives.
 - We will not be able to escape any of them completely as long as we are here on this earth, but we do have victory over each of them already through Jesus Christ.
 - He is our source of strength, wisdom, protection & our ability to endure over these enemies.

1. The World

- I John 2:15-16 – “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”
- But John warned against a secret spiritual danger that could still threaten them—*loving this evil world*. The term "world" here refers to the realm of Satan's influence in this world. He is speaking of the world system organized by Satan himself which leaves God out & is in opposition to Him.
- What does the scriptures mean by loving the world?
 - The lust of the flesh – This is the sin that pertains directly to our senses, the things we feel, see, hear, smell & touch.
 - The lust that John talks about here is an “unchained” lust where there is no boundaries. It seeks to gain gratification at any costs.
 - Matthew 4:3 – “And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”
 - In today's world we are surrounded by all kinds of allurements that appeal to our sinful nature—and "the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). If a Christian yields to it, he will get involved in the "works of the flesh".
 - The lust of the eyes – Back in the days of the Apostle John, the Greeks and Romans lived for entertainments and activities that excited the eyes. Times have not changed very much! We live for some of the same things today, but it has consequences.
 - Look back at Matthew 4:8 – “Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”
 - To illustrate this sin, Jesus spoke of how adultery begins not with the act, but with the desire—with looking at another person with lust in one's heart. But this doesn't just involve sex, but any area of our life that distracts us from God.
 - The pride of life – This includes
 1. A person who is focused only on himself & desires the attention of others.
 2. A person who feel he is self-sufficient in himself & has no need of God.
 - Look one more time at Matthew 4:5 – “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.”

- Once again Satan hear tempts our Lord with His own promises, even questioning His authority over Heaven & earth.
- Christians don't become worldly all of a sudden. Worldliness creeps up on a believer; it is a gradual process.
 1. First is the *friendship of the world*.
 2. Next, the Christian becomes "*spotted by the world*".
 3. When this begins to happen, the world ceases to hate the Christian and starts to love him! So John warns us, "Love not the world!"
 - God and the sinful world are such opposites that it is impossible to love both at once

2. The Flesh

- This is something that hasn't changed since Adam & Eve. The Bible even goes on to tell us how wicked our heart really is.
 - Jeremiah 17:9 – “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”
- Our human nature is bent toward sin, darkness & desires which are not pleasing unto God.
 - John 3:19 – “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”
- God has a pattern for our life, desires He wants to fulfill through us & a goal for our life. But there is always a temptation that we battle to do the right thing & choose that which is godly over that which is ungodly.
- We might be saved from our sins, but our temptations & our sinful flesh still remain.
 - Read Galatians 5:16-26
- As Paul writes this letter to the Galatian church, he charges them to refrain from the sins of the flesh & he goes on to do this in 3 different categories.
 1. Sexual Sins - "*adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness*"
 2. Spiritual Sins - "*idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies*"
 3. Social Sins - "*envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings*"
- These are sins that every person faces & as Christians, and in order to have victory in our lives, we have to learn how to gain victory over the flesh.
 - Temptations are a constant struggle.
 - Choosing to do right when the flesh desires to do wrong.
 - Battling our thoughts & gaining victory in our thought life.
 - All of these are areas that we have to be on guard about if we are going to live a victorious Christian life. God has a plan for us, He desires His best for us, but the flesh is at work against us.
 - Exodus 17:8-16
 - The children of Israel represent the Christian. When they were in the land of bondage, the land of Egypt, they represent the man who's yet to be saved. He is under the bondage of Pharaoh, who represents the devil.
 - He took that land of slavery, and darkness, and idolatry, and is a picture of the unsaved man in captivity of the devil. When they came out of Egypt, they came out under the blood of the Passover lamb through the Red Sea. That's the picture of our salvation—our deliverance.

- But, they went out of Egypt and into the wilderness. Now, if Egypt is a picture of the lost man, the wilderness is a picture of the carnal man. But, they were headed right on into Canaan, which is a picture of the Spirit-filled life.
 - Now, there was an enemy that came to withstand them. They have come out of Egypt, but they've not yet entered into Canaan, there was an enemy who came to stop them from going into Canaan, and the name of that enemy was Amalek. Now, listen to me. If Egypt represents the world, and Pharaoh represents the devil, what or whom does Amalek represent? The flesh!
 - You take your Bible and study; then, you'll find out that Amalek was the grandson of a man named Esau. Who was Esau? Esau was a man who was completely given over to the flesh.
 - The Bible speaks of him as a profane person ([Hebrews 12:16](#)).
 - He had no appetite for spiritual things. He was carnal; he was fleshly; and he sold his birthright for a bowl of soup.
 - The flesh, as represented in Esau, was interested in the present, not the future. He wanted that stew, rather than having the birthright and the spiritual blessings of God. The flesh was interested in the present, not the future. The flesh is interested in the material and not the eternal. Esau was interested in the things of the flesh, not the things of the Spirit. And, God said, "Jacob have I loved; Esau have I hated" ([Romans 9:13](#)).
 - The flesh is "enmity," which means "warfare with God." There is an enemy of God that the Bible calls *the flesh*. There is a perpetual war between the things of the Spirit and the things of the flesh. And, that's the reason the Apostle Paul says, "The flesh lusts against the Spirit and the spirit against the flesh".
- Lets look at this enemy in detail tonight.

I. This Enemy Is Real

a. It Attacks Daily

- i. The Bible tells us that Moses hands became weary got to the point where they had to come & hold up his hands for the fight was long & drug at all day & he became weary in this battle.
- ii. There are moments of temptation that we have to overcome, but most days it seems as though the enemy fights us all day long doesn't it?
- iii. And if we are not careful , in our moment of weakness we will become weary & we will become susceptible to the enemy. That is why it is so important to have those around you who act as spiritual warriors in this fight, you can help you & keep you accountable in this fight.

b. It Attacks Consistently

- i. Though they successfully defeated Amalek that day, they would be another time that they must defeat this enemy.
- ii. We ought to thank the Lord in our times of victory, but may we always be alert enough to realize that we need to be prepared to fight again.

II. The Enemy Is Strategic

a. He Attacks Unexpectedly

- i. One of the things that I have found in my Christian life to be true is that after some of my most sweetest victories & spiritual highs, that is when the enemy of the flesh comes on the attack.
 1. You think of Elijah there, that called down fire from Heaven, in [1 Kings 18](#), and had a wonderful victory on the mountaintop. The next chapter—you find him down in the valley with his head between his knees, wishing to die, under attack from the world, the flesh, and the devil.
 2. Jesus, after His baptism, and when He was anointed with the Holy Spirit of God—when the Spirit like a dove descended upon Him—the Bible says, *"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil"*.

b. He Attacks Indirectly

- i. Deuteronomy 25:17-19
- ii. Amalek came with a sneak attack, from behind.
- iii. Have you ever been in a situation where somebody just caught you off guard? Maybe you were tired, irritable, a little confused—and you opened your mouth, and said something terrible? And then, after you said it, or after you did it, you were as surprised as the person. And, you said to yourself, "You know, I'm really surprised at myself." Or, you said, "Hey, what made me do that?" What the devil did was a sneak attack on you; he used the flesh, but he came from behind when you were weak.

c. He Attacks Viciously

- i. Now, when God tests us, God tests us in our strongest place. God tested Abraham's faith, because that was his strongest place.
- ii. But, the devil attacks us in the weakest place. Now, these people were wounded; they were weak; they were weary; and the flesh took advantage.
- iii. Church, we are not above these attacks. The church can be attacked even in the midst of God's moving if we are not careful.
 1. While we are working, and praying, and fasting, and organizing, and God is blessing, we can get tired & weary from all of the church stuff. Don't you think the enemy knows that? You see, he's very vicious; he comes unexpectedly with a sneak attack; and he comes, dear friend, indirectly—from behind. He comes viciously to take advantage of the fact that, many times, we're tired and disoriented, as we are trying to live for God.

III. The Victory Over Flesh

- So as strong as this enemy is, how in the world can we ever hope to have victory over the flesh?
 - Exodus 4, when God asked Moses to cast down his rod, it turned into a snake, remember that.
 - And then He turned right around & asked Moses to pick it up by the tail right? And when he did, God turned it back into a stick.
- And, what God was showing Moses was this: "Moses, there is a flesh principle in you; there's a serpent in your so-called ability—and you need to throw them on the ground."

And, every musician needs to do that; every preacher needs to do that; and every deacon needs to do that. And, everybody needs to take their so-called *gift* and *ability*, cast them at God's feet, and let Him take a serpent out of it and then give it back to you. No longer is it your ability; no longer is it your strength, it needs to be given to God.

- Moses didn't know there was a serpent in that rod; but God knew there was in there. And, He took the serpent out, gave it back to Moses; and, no longer, now, is it the rod of Moses—now, it is the rod of God.
- And if you skip ahead to our passage tonight, when Moses holds his hands up there on the mountain, what does he have in his hands? God's rod.
- What is it going to take to gain victory over the flesh? It takes the power of God—that's the rod. But, how is the power of God applied? Through prayer and purity.