

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.”
- 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 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.
 - 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.
- 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

- 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.”
- 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.

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.

b. It Attacks Consistently

- i. 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. Have you ever been in a situation where somebody just caught you off guard?

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 one 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.

3. The Devil

- Though the World & the Flesh are real enemies, the premise behind these messages is for you to understand that we are in a spiritual warfare & Satan uses both the world & the flesh to fight against us.
- Satan was originally one of the angels of God, but b/c of his pride & his desire to occupy God's throne, he & 1/3 of the angels were cast down. And though there is not much information as to his creation, there is certainly no mystery as to where he is today & what he is doing.
 - Today his plan includes anything that will disrupt the work of Christ & the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God.
 - His goal is not just to irritate us or cause us to have a bad day. His desire is to completely destroy our lives.
- Peter goes on to describe our enemy this way:
 - I Peter 5:8 – “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”
 - John 8:44 – “He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.”
 - John 10:10 – “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”
 - Revelation 12:7-11 he is called the great accuser because he accuses God's people day and night before the throne of God.
 - He is an adversary or an enemy of God.
 - He is also called the tempter ([Matt. 4:3](#)).
 - A serpent ([Gen. 3:1](#); [Rev. 12:9](#)), and
 - The god of this age" ([2 Cor. 4:4](#)).
- All of these verses depict a wicked being & each of us face a spiritual battle with the devil quite often in our lives and he will use whatever he can to gain an advantage in our lives.
 - To choose to be loving & considerate when our mates or our children are responding in a different manner.
 - To be honest in ALL of our dealings.
 - To stand up for God & serve Him.
 - To teach our children the truths of God's Word.
 - To live a Christian life EVERYDAY & choose right over wrong.

- To do what is honorable & godly over that which you may desire to do.
 - Go to church instead of stay at home & rest.
 - Choosing to spend time with God over your friends & hobbies.
 - To admit that you were wrong & face the consequences rather than lying your way out of it.
 - These are at times difficult circumstances that we face & the reason is that the nature of the enemy is not to befriend us, but to kill us & destroy us.
 - Ephesians 6:12 – “For 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.”
 - He cannot take away our salvation, but one of his greatest tools is disabling the Christian in their ministry by:
 - Destroying their testimony.
 - Keeping them defeated.
 - Keeping them occupied with life.
 - Getting their eyes off of Jesus.
- **This all may seem overwhelming & you may feel as though there is no use in even trying; I want to tell you the good news now. Jesus Christ has already defeated Satan & we can have victory over him in our lives as well, not through our own strength, but through the power of Christ that is in us.**
 - I John 4:4 – “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”
 - Revelation 12:10 – “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”
 - The devil has absolutely NO power, NO authority and NO influence over Christ.
 - This is why it is so important that our trust, our faith & our hope is in Christ and in Him alone.
 - Romans 8:38-39 – “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- **Each and every one of us will face spiritual battles in our lives and we will all come against the devil’s attacks at some point. But you don’t face them alone! What can you do?**
 - Put your faith & trust in Christ & in the Holy Spirit.
 - Fill your mind with the Word of God. (Discerning)
 - Live in a spirit of prayer.
 - Surround yourself with Godly influences.