

# The Woman, the Dragon, and the Child that Saves

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[ 0 : 00 ] Heavenly Father, you are supremely wonderful and worthy of our worship, God. It is a privilege and a joy to gather with brothers and sisters in Christ, those that are different from us culturally all across the globe, God.

We've come together this morning, and we are unified in this, that we have found our life and our hope and our identity in you, God. For so many of us in this room, Christ, you have changed us and transformed us, and it's an absolute delight to fix our eyes on you, God, and to worship you and to sing your praises.

We love doing that, God, and so thank you, God, for welcoming us into your throne of grace this morning, God. Father, you are God, and there is no one else like you. God, it's a privilege to remind our own souls and our own hearts and one another of your many attributes and to find our hope and our rest in you.

And so we do that this morning, God. Father, thank you for your greatness and your grace. Thank you for your majesty and your mercy, God, your sovereign magnificence and your tender patience with us.

God, we need you and we adore you this morning. You are Lord and King. Father, this morning we want to pray for the youth and the children at Watermark, God.

[ 1 : 17 ] We want to pray for the next generation of our church family. And Father, we bring our youth and our children before you, and we pray, Father, that at a young age their identity and their hope will be found in you, God, not in their school performance, not, God, in what society says about them or impresses upon them.

Father, we pray that the next generation in our church will be so grounded and rooted in you, that their identity and their security will be in you, Father God. Father, we pray as many of them head towards exams in the coming weeks and months and with stress.

Father, help us as parents in a church family to love them through it. And Father, we really do want to ask you, God, that you help us as a church to help the next generation get the gospel deeply, not just in their heads but in their hearts, God, to be formed by the good news of Jesus.

Father, even this morning as our kids go off to kids' church, we pray that your Holy Spirit will be there, drawing them closer to yourself. Make the gospel clear and vivid and beautiful to them, we pray.

Father, this morning we also want to pray for Chris, who's on sabbatical. We pray that you refresh him and encourage his soul, God. We pray that you speak to him wonderfully in this time. God, won't you wash him in your love and your acceptance.

[ 2 : 38 ] We pray that this sabbatical season will be profoundly good for his own soul and also for him and Fiona and little Etienne and their family. God, we pray that you will continue to speak to them, God.

I pray that when he comes back early next year, he'll be so charged and ready, God, having spent amazing time with you. So we pray that this won't just be rest from work, but, God, it'll be deep soul work in his heart.

Even this morning, God, wherever they are as a family, wash over them, God. Pour your love into their hearts, we pray. Father, finally we want to pray for our friends in Bangalore, Rajiv and Sarah and Coram Deo Church.

Thank you, God, for bringing them to Hong Kong last week and the chance to meet them. God, we pray for that church, and we know, as they shared last week, the many challenges they're facing. So many people in this city are victims of abuse.

And, God, we pray that you give them profound wisdom and insight, that they minister to their city. We pray that Coram Deo, God, will be more than just a gathering of saints. It'll be salt and light in the city of Bangalore.

[ 3 : 39 ] God, won't you encourage them and strengthen them as they go about that very important work. God, as they gather this morning for their services, we pray, Holy Spirit, fill them and flood them. Wash them with your gospel, God.

Pray, encourage Rajiv and Sarah as they plant this church, Lord. And we pray for the finances of that church, that you'll bless them, that they'll be able to carry out their mission. We pray for new leaders to be raised up.

God, we bring Coram Deo before you this morning and ask in your amazing grace to strengthen them and be with them. May they know that you, Christ, are head of the church. And so we stand with our brothers across Asia this morning, lift them up before your throne, and say, Father, won't you strengthen them?

We pray these things in your wonderful and your very faithful name. Amen. Amen. Great. We're going to listen to the scripture reading. Annabelle's going to do that.

If you are new to Watermark, we are working our way through the book of Revelation, and we are in Revelation chapter 12. And this passage, sorry, that was my fault. This passage that Annabelle's going to read to us is a really interesting one with lots of strange imagery.

[ 4 : 44 ] We're going to try and make sense of it a little later. So if you're new, just listen up, and let's see if we can make sense of it. But go for it, Annabelle. Thank you. The scripture reading comes from Revelation chapter 12.

Please follow along in your bulletin or on the screen. And a great sign appeared in heaven. A woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. And another sign appeared in heaven. And behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his head seven diadems.

His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child, he might devour it. She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

[ 6 : 03 ] Now war arose in heaven. Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. He was thrown down to the earth.

And his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come. For the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. For they loved not their lives, even unto death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short.

[ 7 : 20 ] And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness to the place where she is to be nourished for a time and times and half a time.

The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman to sweep her away with a flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth.

Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea. This is the word of God. Great. Thank you, Annabelle. You read that so well with such expression. That was fantastic. Okay, just before we dive in, I've actually forgotten to say this the last few weeks.

Revelation obviously is an interesting book with lots of imagery. If you have questions, let's say you think, what on earth is the dragon? Like, what does that mean anyway?

[ 8 : 38 ] Or who's the woman? Or what's up with the numbers? Please come and talk to us. You can come talk to me or any of the leaders. We'd love to answer your questions. Okay, so don't go away confused or even more confused after the sermon than you were before.

Come and ask your questions. You can ask any question you want about anything in the world. And we would love to try our best to answer. Okay, so just know that.

Now, as we have said many times before in the last couple of weeks, the book of Revelation is about showing us what is happening in the story of the world, particularly the story of the church, from the time of Jesus, his death and resurrection, to the time when Jesus comes back.

A short way of saying that is from the cross until the throne, this period of the already, when Christ's kingdom has already come, but it's also not yet fully come. It's the story of the church, and Revelation is showing us the story from many different angles and many different perspectives. It's like in a sports game, something happens, and the referee isn't so sure if that trial was allowed or if that goal should have happened or someone committed a foul, and so he radios the referee upstairs that's watching on the TV, and they look at these different angles, and different angles show a different perspective on the same event.

[ 9 : 58 ] And that really is the book of Revelation. We're looking at it from many different angles that show us the story of the church. Now, in this passage today, we see the story of the church as a great big drama, and there are three acts or scenes in this drama, and there are three characters, and the three characters are this woman, this child that she gives birth to, and a fiery red dragon, okay?

And so let's dive in and see if we can make sense of it. So act one is the coming of Jesus. So the drama starts off like this. It says in verse one, there's a great sign appeared in the heavens, and a woman is clothed with the sun and the moon and her feet and on her head is a crown, and she's pregnant.

And she's crying out in birth pains at the agony of giving birth. Now, John, who wrote the book of Revelation, is drawing on a whole bunch of Old Testament passages, specifically Isaiah 26, Isaiah 66, and a whole lot of others, that picture the nation of Israel, the Old Testament people of God, as this lady who is waiting to bring forth this child, the Messiah.

And for the Jewish people, whenever they heard that or read those passages, they would have thought of an earlier passage, Genesis chapter three, in which what happens is Adam and Eve sin in the Garden of Eden.

They are faced with the consequences of their sin. All humanity is cursed. But in the midst of that curse, God promises them a promise of hope.

[ 11 : 34 ] And this is his promise. He says, Eve, from you are going to come a whole lot of descendants, and one of your descendants is going to be born of a woman, and he will be the savior of the world.

He will crush the head of Satan. And so, for the rest of the Old Testament, the people of God, the nation of Israel, is waiting for the time when someone from the nation of Israel will give birth to this Messiah King that will save not only them, but humanity from the curse of sin.

And so, Israel itself, throughout the Old Testament, is pictured as this lady waiting to give birth to the Messiah King. Okay? Does that make sense? Okay. Well, anyway, moving on.

So, that's the first character. And who is this child that's born? Well, it's Jesus. Remember Matthew chapter 1? There's this long lineage describing Jesus and his ancestry and where he comes from. And all of that is meant to point to the fact that Jesus is the one that God promised to Eve and to the nation of Israel. But then we meet this third character, and that's this evil kind of looking dragon.

[ 12 : 48 ] And he's pictured as having seven heads and crowns and horns on his head. And seven is the number of completeness. And crowns and horns and heads are pictures of sovereignty and authority and power.

In other words, here is this dragon and his false claims to having absolute sovereignty and power in the world. In other words, here is this being that has set himself up as a rival to the one true God. Okay? And what is this dragon doing? Well, look at verse 4. It says, The dragon stood at the woman's feet who's about to give birth so that when she bore her child, he might devour it.

He might destroy this coming child. He's bent on destroying the child that the woman is about to bear. Now, throughout the Old Testament, we see this, that God's people, the one through whom the Messiah from the world is going to come, are constantly being attacked by the forces of evil. I think of Exodus chapter 1 where God's people, the nation of Israel, are in Egypt. They're being oppressed there. And Pharaoh issues this decree saying all male children from Israel are to be drowned in the river.

[14:03] They're getting too strong, too powerful. It's time just to wipe them out. And that parallels what happens later on in the Bible in Matthew chapter 2 where Herod hears that Jesus is the new king of the Jews.

Remember, he hears from the wise men that come. They say, we're looking for the king of the Jews. Herod gets a fright and realizes, oh boy, my throne is being threatened. And he issues this decree. All male children under two years old in Bethlehem get slaughtered.

And so throughout the Bible, God's people are constantly under attack. But what John is telling us is that behind the acts of humanity is another force.

Behind the evil that's going on in the world, there is a demonic force in the spiritual realm as well. Satan is doing his best to destroy God's people and specifically to destroy the Messiah.

And all of this is an attempt to destroy the promised Messiah, the one whom God promised way back in Genesis 3 that this Messiah would bring about the downfall of Satan and the salvation of those who trust in him.

[15:10] And so this continues throughout Jesus' life. Remember, he's tempted in the wilderness. Satan comes and tempts him. And this climaxes in the cross. Jesus is nailed to the cross and finally, forces of evil think we've done away with him.

But verse 5 in our passage today tells us something else. It tells us that all Satan's efforts are in vain. Because just when he thinks he's about to destroy the Messiah, the one who God promised Eve would crush the head of Satan, just as he thinks he's got him, Jesus evades him and he is taken up into the throne of heaven.

It's a reference to his ascension after his resurrection. Look at what it says, verse 5. She gave birth to a male child, the one who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and is now before his throne.

And so Act 1, verses 1 to 6, tells the story of Jesus' first coming. His promise coming, his birth, his death on the cross where Satan thinks he's about to destroy Jesus and his resurrection and his ascension up to heaven.

That's the end of Act 1. Act 2, the defeat of Satan. Now look at what happens in verse 7 here. Verse 7 describes this cosmic battle that takes place in the spiritual realm, in the heavens.

[16:27] Now just by the way, the heavens isn't a physical place up in the sky somewhere. Okay? Someone once said, if you take a space rocket and you go far enough, you'll eventually get to heaven.

I don't know where they got that from. Heaven describes the realm of God's rule and reign. It's where God rules, right? Remember, Jesus says he's going to bring heaven to earth. Jesus brings his kingdom and he's, Jesus is going to rule on earth one day.

The kingdom of heaven will come to earth. And so in the spiritual realm, there's this battle. We shouldn't take it literally. There's not a wrestling ring up in the sky between Michael and Satan. It's this battle that's taking place between the armies of God and Satan.

But verse five told us that Jesus eluded or escaped Satan. Verse eight tells us something else happens. Jesus doesn't just flee from Satan, he actually defeats him.

Look at what verse eight says. It says there's a battle in the sky, in the heavens, but Satan was defeated. Now here's the question. How is Satan defeated? How does Jesus conquer Satan?

[17:32] Well, paradoxically, he does it in the very moment when Satan thinks he's conquering Jesus. He does it on the cross. As Jesus dies on the cross and rises from the cross, the very moment that Satan thought, we've done away with the Messiah, we've got him, that's actually the moment when Jesus conquers Satan.

Look at what happens in verse 10. After this happens, he says, now, now is the salvation. Now has the kingdom of our God come for the accuser of our brothers has been defeated.

In John chapter 12, Jesus, it's, I think it's the night before he is betrayed. Maybe the week before. He's about to go to the cross and he says to his disciples, he says, the hour has come for me to be

glorified, which is a strange thing for Jesus to be glorified when he's put to open shame on the cross.

But actually, the moment of the cross was his moment of glory. And he says to his disciples, now the Son of Man will be lifted up and I will draw all men to myself. And then he says, and the ruler of this world will be cast out.

See, as Jesus is hung on the cross, as he dies and as he rises again, the forces of evil are destroyed, are crushed. Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection from the grave was actually his decisive moment of victory over Satan, sin, and the curse of sin.

[ 18 : 58 ] Remember, Colossians chapter 2 says God disarmed Satan's forces, putting them to open shame by triumphing them, triumphing over them in Christ.

How did he do this? By canceling our record of death that stood against us, setting aside, nailing it to the cross. Okay, so now the question is this, how does Jesus' death on the cross, how is that his victory over forces of evil?

Well, the one way is Jesus defeated death and the grave. Remember, death is the consequence of sin. Romans says that the wages, in other words, the paycheck of investing your life in sin leads to death.

That's the consequences of our sinful nature. But Jesus conquered death. He conquered the grave. That's why in Corinthians, Paul mockingly says, death, where is your victory? Jesus has conquered the grave.

Death, where is your sting? Your trump card that Satan thought he could pull out on followers of Jesus has been rendered powerless.

[ 20 : 03 ] It's been defeated. Jesus conquered death and conquered the grave. But that's actually not what our passage says. Our passage doesn't talk about that at all. Look at what the passage says here.

How does it describe the devil? Look at verse 10, I think it is. It talks about him being the accuser of God's people. The one who accuses them night and day.

Remember in the book of Job in the Old Testament, the devil is allowed to come into God's presence. And what does he say in chapter 1? He says, God, you know that servant of yours, Job.

Well, Job doesn't really love you. He doesn't really serve you. He only serves you because you bless him. Satan comes before God and he brings an accusation against God's people.

Okay? And that's the job of the accuser. That's what Satan does. He accuses you and I day and night. He says, he comes before us and he says, hey, sorry, he comes before God and he says, God, that guy, Jeremy, that guy, he doesn't deserve to be your child.

[ 21 : 08 ] How can you really love him? You know the things he's done this week? Do you know what's in his heart? He doesn't deserve your favor and your acceptance. Satan comes and he brings accusations. And what's God's answer to those accusations?

Silence. The accusation doesn't stick. Now those things may be true. Jeremy may have had a bad week. Jeremy. Those things may be true but the accusation doesn't stick.

And why doesn't it stick? Because God's people are declared righteous through the death and the resurrection of Jesus. The verdict in the courts of heaven has been given. God's people, those that trust in him and come to him in faith and repentance are declared guiltless, righteous, blameless, above reproach because our sin has been put on Jesus and Jesus' righteousness has been put on us.

Our perfect standing before the God is credited to us because of Jesus. And that means that the accusations of the devil have no bearing. Now it doesn't mean they're not true.

Satan comes to me and says, Kevin, you're such a lousy sinner. You're so self-centered. You're so full of pride. It's true. Those things are true of me.

[ 22 : 24 ] I'm far worse than that. Satan, if you only knew how bad I was. But the accusation doesn't stick because my righteousness doesn't depend on how good I am.

It depends on what Jesus says about me. My standing before God depends on one thing only. Am I righteous in Christ? Have I come to Him and put my faith and my hope in Him?

And if the answer is yes, the accusations don't stand. In 1 John chapter 2, Jesus is described as an advocate, a barrister. Right?

We've got a couple of barristers here this morning. And what happens is Satan comes before God and he accuses us. He says, God, have you seen that guy Leo? You know what he's done this

week? And Jesus, our advocate, our barrister, comes before God the Father and he brings the evidence and he says, Father, look at my blood-stained hands.

Look at my nail-scarred hands. The price has been paid. No guilt remains. The penalty has been dealt with. No guilt remains. Jesus, our barrister, comes and he removes the accusation.

[ 23 : 31 ] Remember the great hymn we often sing? When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within, what do we do? I put our look and see him there who made an end to all my sin.

Friends, that's the hope of the Christian because that's the hope of the gospel. And friends, do you know what? If you're here today and you're not a follower of Jesus, you may be here and think, the message of the church is to be kind.

That's not the message of the church. You may think the message of the church is to be good moral people. Now that is a good thing to do, but that's not the message of the church. That's not the message of the Bible. You may be and think, the message of the church is to tell us to love one another, to be nice to people.

Now that's a good thing to do, but that's not the message of the Bible. The message of the Bible is that there is great hope in Jesus because if we come to him in faith and repentance, God has made a way for our sin to be removed from us, for us to be declared righteous in him.

And all that means is that the accusations of Satan, that's how Jesus defeats Satan. He disarms his accusations. He removes his accusations from him.

[ 24 : 41 ] And that brings us to Acts chapter 3, which is Satan's warfare on the church. Look at verse 12 and onwards. In verse 12, we see that Satan has been thrown out of heaven, as it were, and in great rage, knowing not only that Jesus has evaded him, but actually defeated him, he now turns his tyranny and his anger and his rage away from Jesus towards Jesus' people here on earth.

Because while Satan has been defeated, he hasn't yet been destroyed. While the death sentence has been signed, it hasn't yet been carried out. Satan's judgment has been declared, the judgment has been given, but the sentence hasn't been carried out.

And so, in this interim period, Satan now wages war against, not against Jesus, he knows he's defeated him, but against Jesus' people, against the followers of Jesus.

Look at verse 13. It says, When the dragon saw he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had previously been given birth to a male child. That's to God's people. The woman was given two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly away from the serpent into the wilderness to the place where she has been nourished for a time, times, and half the time.

Verse 17. Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

[ 26 : 09 ] So, the image here is, I don't know if you've seen a movie where there's a battle going on. There's two forces, they're fighting each other, and the one team, the one army, is completely demolishing the other army.

They've taken up, so let's say, I was going to say Team England, but let's just say Team A, is holding the fort, right? And they're trying to preserve this stronghold.

And there's this other advancing army that is taking them down, and they're shooting off their defenders, right? Their defense. And so finally, there's one person that is defending this force.

And he's been shot up, and he's bleeding profusely, and he knows that the end is done. He's the only guy left, and there's this whole army that's approaching him. And he knows he's going to die, he knows that their team has lost, the victory for the other team is any minute now, but he's still got a few bullets in his gun.

And so what does he do? The dying, last gasps of a dying man, the final kicks of a dying man, is he's trying his best to shoot off a few of the advancing enemy before they take him out.

[ 27 : 23 ] Does that make sense? You see that image? In other words, the victory is assured. It's already done. There's no way he's going to win. But he decides, just before I die, let me at least see if I can take out some of the enemy forces.

That's exactly what's going on here. Satan has been defeated. It's done. There's no way he can win. Christ has already died and risen. The victory is assured. But just before Satan is utterly destroyed, he's going to try his best to take out a few of Christ's followers and to destroy them and to destroy their faith.

Satan's been defeated, but now he's attacking the church in the final, last kicks of a dying enemy. But look at what happens here. Jesus says in verse 14, I think it is, or 15, that the woman, God's people, are carried away on the great wings of the great eagle into the wilderness. And it's a picture of how the people of God were delivered from Exodus out of the tyranny and the rage of Pharaoh and they were brought by God safely into the wilderness and in the wilderness God looked after them, he protected them, he cared for them, he fed them, their clothes didn't wear out, their shoes didn't wear out. God took care of them out of Egypt into the wilderness until they got to their promised land, until they got to the place of their rest. God brought them out of slavery into the wilderness and finally into freedom.

[ 28 : 57 ] And Jesus is saying the same thing here, that for the people of God, you've been delivered from the tyranny of Pharaoh, you've been delivered from Satan, sure, and now God is delivering you, he's taking you into the promised land for a period of time, not forever, and finally he'll take you into glory, into your place of rest, the promised land, into heaven.

The story of the people of God in the Old Testament is the story of the people of God in the New Testament. And then all this is a reference to Deuteronomy 32 where God says, you saw what I did to the Egyptians, not what you did, we didn't save ourselves, not how you saved yourselves, you saw how I saved you from Egypt and I carried you on the wings of the eagle and I brought you to myself.

Friends, this is what John is showing us, that yes, Satan is alive, yes, Satan is real, and for those of us who are Christians as the children of God, there is a spiritual battle, there is an enemy you need to be aware of.

He won't win in the end, he's been disarmed, he's been defeated, but he is still out there to destroy your life and to destroy your faith in Jesus. And so we shouldn't be apathetic, we shouldn't be naive or indifferent, there is an enemy and in his final few bullets he's trying to take you out.

He does want to destroy you, but at the same time don't be alarmed. You don't need to be given to despair because he's a defeated foe. Those who trust in the blood of Jesus who died on the cross, God is rescuing us, he's preserving us, he will carry you through to glory.

[ 30 : 34 ] C.S. Lewis said, there's two mistakes we can make. The one is we can be overly enamored with the devil and think there's a devil behind every rock, but the other mistake we can make is to completely ignore him and think he doesn't exist.

This is what John is telling us. Now, think about what this would have meant to the Christians in the first century. The Roman Empire is expanding and growing.

The emperor is consolidating more and more power in his hands. Christians are being seen as a threat because they won't acknowledge that Caesar is Lord. Christians won't take on the cultural practices of their day and so they claim allegiance to another authority, a higher authority and all this meant that the Christians were ostracized, they were persecuted, they were cast out, some of them were imprisoned, some of them were even killed.

Remember at the beginning that it says to the church in Smyrna, it says you're slandered by the Israelites because you say Jesus is Lord, but you're also slandered by the Romans because you won't say Caesar is Lord.

And so for the Christians in the small town of Smyrna, from every side, from the religious and the not religious, they are being ostracized. In the church in Smyrna, Jesus says, some of you will be thrown into prison and some of you will even die.

[ 31 : 50 ] Some of you will be thrown to the lions. Or to the church in Pergamon, Jesus says, I know you're situated where Satan's throne is. In other words, you're situated in a town where the cultal temples are so strong, it feels like you're in Satan's very living room.

And so here, John shows these Christians that behind the hostility of Rome on earth is the hostility of Satan. But that's not all he shows them. He shows them that Satan's power has been stripped. That what they're experiencing now is the final kicks of a dying enemy because Satan is a defeated foe. And so what are they to do? How would John's writing, how would Revelation help these Christians in the first century?

What are they to do in light of this when they go to the marketplace or they go to social settings or their family members have turned in on them and are ostracizing them? How is the book of Revelation, how is this man who helped them?

Friends, maybe it's a good question for us. How does this help you and I as you go to work tomorrow, as you go to the marketplace, as you are maybe in social settings, as your family don't understand your Christian faith?

[ 33 : 06 ] How do we live our lives knowing that the spiritual warfare is real but that Satan who is an accuser and a deceiver is out to destroy us but that he's been defeated? Well look at verse 11 because the answer is given to us in verse 11.

And this is the most important verse of the passage. It says this, Friends, to be a Christian at its most basic level is to be someone who lives by simple faith in who Jesus is and what he's done on the cross for you.

Knowing that our lives and our hope are not found in the things of this world but they're found in Jesus and him who conquered the grave. Remember when Jesus writes his letters to the seven churches he ends off each one and he says to those that conquer I promise life and blessing and abundance.

But how do we conquer? How do we conquer when Satan is doing everything he can to conquer you? Friends, how are you this week not going to be conquered but to conquer him?

Well remember when Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within I put a look and see him there who made an end to all my sin. The way that we conquer the work of Satan is not by looking to ourselves but to look to the one who truly did conquer.

[ 34 : 34 ] Friends, when we see that we conquer his accusations by trusting the sufficiency of Jesus on our behalf Satan comes to us and says Kevin you're such a lousy Christian God could never love you you mess up so many times you're so self-centered God could never love you and my answer is it's not true.

The cross of Jesus proves it. Jesus loved me enough to go to the cross for me. I was thinking about it yesterday when I was 16 years old I was a very insecure teenager probably more so than the average teenager and remember I was 16 years old and I was at this youth camp I might have told you this story before and I was just feeling like I am a pile of rubbish.

No one could love me and if there is a God he certainly doesn't love me. As I'm at this like Christian youth camp and there's a service going on inside and I walk outside because I didn't want to even be inside the service I was just feeling so lousy and I thought God you could never love me.

Anyway I'm outside and I pray this prayer I say God if you're real somebody needs to tell me of your love for me. So I'm standing outside and I'm doing my own thing and someone a guy called Steve Wimble he goes to the microphone during worship and he says I just feel there's a young man here and God says he loves you and he wants to be your father and he wants you to be his son.

In that moment I knew that God loved me but you know what in some ways I didn't actually need Steve Wimble to say that. All I needed was somebody to tell me the gospel.

[ 36 : 13 ] All I needed was somebody to say Kevin Jesus loves you enough to die on the cross for you. You see how am I going to defeat the accusations of Satan when Satan comes to me and says Kevin you're a pile of rubbish God could never love you you're such a lousy Christian how am I going to defeat how am I going to conquer over Satan we conquer by faith in the blood of the lamb knowing that Jesus died on the cross for me yes I'm a lousy Christian I know it but Jesus loves me enough to go to the cross for me and you know sometimes Satan will come to me and say the opposite things sometimes you'll say Kevin you're an amazing Christian God is so lucky to have you on his side if only more people could be like you and Satan will come and tell me you're such a moral person oh God must love you so much and you've done so many good things you must really be in his good books and how do I conquer the lies of Satan about what a wonderful incredible person I am I say Satan the cross of Christ proves you wrong I'm such a sinner that Jesus had to die for me

I'm so depraved I couldn't save myself I needed Jesus to die for me how am I going to conquer the lies and the accusations of Satan they're conquered by the blood of the lamb by simple faith in Jesus' death and resurrection and friends that's why we take communion the way Oscar led communion this morning was beautiful the reason we come to communion week in and week out is so that every week we see the body of Christ broken for you the blood of Christ shed for you remember Psalm 103 it says praise the Lord oh my soul and forget not all his benefits forget not he has removed your sin as far as the east is from the west friends when the Bible says forget it's not like we've forgotten where our keys are or our cell phone is when the Bible uses the word forget it talks about not being the truth of the scripture not being vivid in our consciousness the Bible says

remember the gospel it's not because we've forgotten it it's because it's no longer vivid in our consciousness how are we going to conquer Satan it's by having the gospel the fact that Jesus died the blood of the lamb has been shed for us vivid in our consciousness let me see where I am friends this is what the life of faith is all about a Christian is someone not just who knows the gospel in their head it's someone who lives by faith in the goodness and the sufficiency of Jesus and his death on the cross and that's the way we conquer the schemes of the evil one but last thing that's not all because look at what else verse 11 says it says they conquered him by the blood of the lamb by faith in what Jesus did on the cross but also by the word of their testimony even to the point of death now what does that mean it means that the Christians conquered the schemes of the devil by knowing that this world was no longer their home and that the things of this world no longer had a pull on them the desires and the allures of this world no longer seduced them because they've been so captured by the beauty and the wonder of Jesus and the hope of the gospel that's how you conquer the schemes of the evil one and so in this day and age the Romans would come and say hey you want to preserve your life just deny Jesus and the beauty of Jesus was so real to them that the word of the testimony they'd say no Christ is Lord not Caesar even to the point of death the things of this world no longer had a hold on them Christ so long so had a hold on their hearts that they were even in the face of death were able to stand firm and say Christ is Lord that's how they conquered the evil one friends this week you can be sure that the deceiver the accuser is going to try his absolute best to destroy your faith and to rid you of following Jesus he's going to do it through accusation and deceit he's going to do it through lies he's going to do it maybe through tempting you with comfort and ease that you start to love and hope the things of this world how are we going to overcome him friends the way to overcome him is not by looking to ourselves it's by turning our eyes to the wonder of Jesus friends this week you and you at work the way to overcome the evil one is not by going to your boss's door before he arrives at work and anointing it with holy oil from the holy land right that's not how you're going to defeat the evil one the way you're going to do it is by having your eyes of your heart so captured by the beauty of Jesus that even in the face of opposition in your heart of hearts you can say Christ is Lord even to the point of death that's conquering by the word of the testimony to the point of death friends this week Satan is going to try his absolute best to destroy your faith to ruin your life causing people to turn against you causing people to slander you and talk badly about you causing people to stab you in the back are you going to get defensive are you going to fight back are you going to preserve your life by slandering them back or stabbing them in the back is it in a dog eat world dog eat dog world the one who gets the top is that how you're going to win friends the way you're going to conquer the schemes of the evil one it's not looking to yourself not trying to save yourself it's by seeing in your hearts the beauty and the wonder and the faithfulness and the trustworthiness and the majesty of Jesus it's been more enamored and captured by who Christ is in the things of this world and that way that's how we conquer the word of our testimony even to the point of death friends this week the deceiver and the accuser is going to try and destroy your faith by bringing something beautiful in your life maybe some romantic relationship maybe the most beautiful person you've ever seen is going to come waltz into your life and you're going to think my savior has come this person is going to make my life worthwhile and romantic relationships are good but they are not your savior they will not save you friends how you're going to overcome sin this week you won't do it by promising to be a good

[ 42 : 26 ] Christian you won't do it by looking at the Bible and saying how much can I get away with what am I allowed to do and what am I not allowed to do friends the way we're going to conquer the schemes of the devil is by seeing with the eyes of our hearts that Jesus is more satisfying than any sexual experience Jesus is more beautiful and glorious than any intimate relationship that Jesus the one who died on the cross and gave himself for you loves you supremely to the world and back friends that's the way you conquer sin by saying yes to the beauty of Jesus that's conquering with the word of our testimony even to the point of death in other words the way we overcome Satan is being willing to die to ourselves because we've seen how wonderful Christ is how glorious and faithful and majestic and beautiful and reliable he is as we come to a close do you remember John Newton he wrote that famous hymn amazing grace amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me I once was lost but now I'm found was blind but now I see do you remember that hymn the final stanza is amazing it says this through many dangers toils and snares we have already come but it was grace that has brought us safe thus far and it's grace that will lead us home friends many believers think that the way you become a Christian is by trusting

Jesus and then the way you get to glory is by self-effort and determination and just by making sure that you don't mess up but John Newton is right the grace that has saved us thus far is the grace that will get us home the way you become a Christian is fixing your eyes on Jesus and putting your hope in him who died on the cross but the way that you get to glory and the way that you conquer the schemes of the evil one is the exact same way by fixing our eyes on Jesus the one who died on the cross for us friends traditional religion will tell you be more disciplined be more dedicated be more moral go to more church events do more stuff contemporary self-help will say blow that stuff look to yourself just you be free throw for the shackles of other people's expectations do whatever you want friends Jesus says look to me look to me they conquered by the blood of the lamb by faith in Jesus and what he did and by the word of their testimony friends you see what this passage is telling us that followers of Jesus conquer the evil one by simple faith in the one who conquered him on the cross the grace that saved us is the grace that has brought us thus far that same grace will lead us home they conquered him by their faith in the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony let's come to him now maybe I can ask you to stand if you let's stand together and pray oh sovereign God loving father wonderful Christ beautiful spirit Trinitarian God we come before you this morning and God our hope is in you God for those of us this morning that have been overcome by the things of this world either seduced by the pleasure of this world or been overcome by the accusations of Satan those of us God that have believed the lies and the deceit of Satan we pray God that you'll help us to fix our eyes on you God we don't we know these things in our head but Christ we need you to open the eyes of our hearts to see your majesty and your beauty Jesus more than just a sermon and more than just a Bible study Jesus we need you to come by the power of your spirit to come and breathe fresh life into our hearts and souls God and to fix our eyes on you God I pray for each one of us here this morning that really we will be those who live our lives by simple faith in the blood of the lamb that God just as your people were saved from Egypt by the blood of the lamb so we too are saved and redeemed and brought to glory brought to our promised land by our faith in the blood of Jesus Christ we do pray that you will come and apply this message to our hearts God come and lead us I pray this week God that as Satan does try to destroy our faith and take our eyes off of you that God you will by your grace and by your spirit God lead us back to your throne of grace and help us to fix our eyes on you help us be those that conquer by our simple faith in the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony we pray these things in your wonderful and your powerful name amen