

Personal, Spiritual Victory

Ephesians 6:10-13

East Berlin Community Church

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Introductions

- Many unanswered questions regarding the present COVID pandemic.
- BIG question: *How will we know when we have "won the war" against this virus?*
- What is the best we can hope for as a Church in this war with COVID-19?
- We are involved in a spiritual battle with an invisible foe. Because of spiritual intelligence we know...
 - The identity of our enemy and how he works
 - Ephesians 6:12-- *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."*
 - The ultimate Outcome
 - Jesus Christ, by His death and resurrection, defeated Satan and his cohorts.
 - Hebrews 2:14-- *"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."*
 - Colossians 2:15-- *"Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."*
 - Satan's final doom is secured.
 - Revelation 20:10-- *"The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."*
- But what about personal victory over Satan and his cohorts? What can we hope to attain? What will personal victory look like for you and I?

Personal, Spiritual Victory

A. Not SINLESS PERFECTION

1. **Some believe that it is possible to reach a state of sinless perfection whereby we cannot sin and Satan cannot tempt us.** In this state we are above the fray, no longer subject to enemy fire. Possible Scriptural support for "sinless perfection"
 - 1 John 3:5-6-- *"And you know that He was manifested to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him."*
 - 1 John 3:8-9 -- *"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God."*
 - Matthew 5:48-- *"Therefore, you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."*
2. **Evaluation of "sinless perfection"**
 - a. John is speaking of "habitual sin", not acts of sin.
 - b. One of the signs of being a genuine child of God is that habitual sins are broken.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17-- *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new."*
 - c. We are constantly "putting off—being renewed—putting on".
 - Ephesians 4:17-24-- *"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows*

corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man, which is created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."

3. **All of us do acts of sin.**

- 1 John 1:8-- *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*
- 1 John 1:10-- *"If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."*

4. **When we sin and confess it, God forgives.**

- 1 John 1:9-- *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

5. **Sinless perfection is not achieved until we get to glory.** So the spiritual battle continues until the day we die!

B. But STANDING PROTECTED—Ephesians 6:10-14a

- Ephesians 6:10-14a-- *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of god, that you may be able to withstand in the day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore.."*

1. **The best we can hope to achieve is to be STANDING or WITHSTANDING.**

2. **Satan seeks to knock us down, to take us out.** He does so by...

- a. Impugning God's character and credibility so that we doubt God's word, will, and motives.
- b. Undermining present victory by generating trouble that makes our lives difficult, and thereby tempting us to forsake obedience to God. He uses peer pressure.--Galatians 2
- c. Attacks through doctrinal confusion and falsehoods.
 - Ephesians 4:14 -- *"children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting."*
 - 2 Timothy 2:15-18-- *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth,. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some."*
- d. Persuades us to trust our own resources rather than trust God.
 - 1 Chronicles 21:1 --*"Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel."*
 - 1 Chronicles 21:7-8-- *"God was displeased with this thing; therefore He struck Israel. So David said to God, 'I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing; but now, I pray, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly.'"*
- e. Entices us with all that the world has to offer.
 - 2 Timothy 4:10-- *"Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica"*
 - 1 John 2:15-17-- *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away and the lusts of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."*

3. **Satan cannot affect our eternal destiny, for as believers in Christ, we are kept by the power of God.**

- John 10:27-29-- *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."*
- Romans 8:35-39-- *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, of sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we are killed all the day long; We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors*

through Him who loved us. 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 created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

4. **Satan can affect our temporal well-being:** shipwreck our faith, rob us of joy, peace, hope, ruin our personal lives, families, marriages. He can so discourage us that we quit. He can destroy our effectiveness in ministry, ruin our testimony, render us useless in God's service.
 - a. Paul's concern about being "disqualified"
 - 1 Corinthians 9:26-27-- *"runs thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight, not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."*
 - b. Our need to be on guard against spiritual pride
 - 1 Corinthians 10:12-13-- *"Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."*

C. HOW can we STAND PROTECTED?

1. **If knocked down, we need to be back on our spiritual feet. Need to stand again!**
 - a. Peter's experience—Luke 22
 - 1) **Knocked down by Satan**
 - a) Satan's request to *"sift him as wheat"*
 - Luke 22:31-- *"And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat."*
 - b) Peter's boast!
 - Luke 22:23-- *"he said to Him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."*
 - c) The Lord's prediction
 - Luke 22:34-- *"I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."*
 - d) Peter's downfall—denied the Lord three times
 - 2) **Peter reinstated, on his spiritual feet again!**
 - a) The Lord's prayer for Peter
 - Luke 22:32-- *"But I have prayed for you that your faith should not fail: and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."*
 - b) Begins with repentance. Don't let past failures keep you down.
 - Philippians 3:13-14-- *"But one thing I do: forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead. I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*
 - c) Recommissioned for service
 - John 21:15-17-- *"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord: You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs!' He said to him the second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?'. And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep.'"*
 - b. Our experience
2. **We need to put on the "whole armor of God".**
 - Ephesians 6:13-- *"Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."*

3. **We must be willing to give maximum effort, give it our ALL.**

- Ephesians 6:13--*“Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”*
- 2 Timothy 2:3-4 -- *“You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.”*
- 2 Timothy 4:7-8-- *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who loved His appearing.”*