

The Enemy of God's Glory

God's Glory
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Preached on: Sunday, July 19, 2020

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As we come to God's word here this morning, we are going to continue one more time on our theme of the glory of God. We have seen last Sunday that all things are for God's glory. Christ himself, the sphere of life, our salvation in Christ, the way that we pray, the way that we suffer, ultimately our destination in heaven, it is all for the glory of God and therefore we have a unifying purpose to our lives and to everything that we see around us, to understand that ultimately all things, all details are directed to God to his glory and to the glory of his grace.

We saw last time on Tuesday, we saw, you could say we saw how to glorify God in our individual lives and what it is that we devote ourselves to. Those of us that are not in Christ, we need to seek salvation in Christ because that is the realm in which his glory is made known. As we come together as believers, we seek the unity of the church. That glorifies God. Our spiritual growth, our spiritual maturity glorifies God. Our personal purity glorifies God. Living with a spirit of forgiveness toward those that have wronged us glorifies God. The practice of corporate worship glorifies God. Cultivating close relationships and honoring God even especially in our family lives, that glorifies God. All of these things coming together, all of these things which are good, all of these things which are in one way or another in the heart of true believers are the things that we are to seek after.

Now one of the things that we said that I always delight in saying is that as you sit here today, you have the life that God has given to you for better or for worse. Providentially God has brought you to this particular day, at this particular time in your life with all of your past, with your aspirations for the future, with the challenges, the opportunities, the blessings, the joys, the sorrows, that entire mixture has been wisely, sovereignly, lovingly designated by God for exactly where you are here today and that is what we said last time, is that we are to view that as understanding that that is the sphere, that is the life in which you are to glorify God. You are to glorify him as you respond to your sorrows and to your griefs. You are to glorify him in your prosperity. You are to glorify him in your worship. It's all about bringing glory to God whether you eat, drink or whatever you do.

Now last time we ended with this question that I want to answer here this morning. You and I know if you've been walking with Christ for any length of time at all, you and I know that it is often a battle to do that. The Christian life is not easy. The Christian life

often encounters obstacles either through the world, through those close to us, through our internal temptations, or through other things that we are going to explore today. The remnants of sin in your heart, you have rebellion in your own heart that has not yet been fully purged out and that fights against you in your effort to glorify God. But beyond that, beyond those external things and in some ways those visible things, Scripture teaches us that we battle against an external, invisible, unseen foe, and it is that foe that is ultimately at the root of all of our troubles, and as we turn to Ephesians 6, we see this hidden realm unveiled for us.

Look at Ephesians 6. We're going to spend a few weeks in this passage but today we're just going to read to set the stage verses 10 through 12. Ephesians 6:10-12 where the Apostle Paul after setting forth the doctrine and the duty of the Christian life in the entirety of the epistle, he says this,

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Why is it such a struggle? It is because there is a spiritual battle going on and in the midst of that spiritual battle, you are going to be tempted to falter, to shrink back, to in some cases to rebel, to be discouraged in the midst of it, and to manifest weakness in the midst of the battle that is going on. That is why, my friends, that is why the command is to us to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. The command must be to be strong because you and I are tempted toward weakness. The battle comes and we're tempted to surrender rather than to fight and to stand firm in the ground. And what this passage is doing in verses 10 down through verse 20 and even to the end of the entire chapter, it is teaching us this, it is teaching us that while there is a supernatural battle at work against your life, against our efforts to glorify God, God has given us all of the resources that we need, all of the equipment for battle that we need in order to stand firm and to advance and to glorify God in the midst of the battle. As I've said in the past, the valor of a soldier is not proven in times of peace, a soldier proves his worth, a soldier gains his medals, so to speak, in conflict, in war, in times of conflict is when the courage of a soldier stands out. And so rather than complaining about the difficulties of life and the difficulties of the Christian walk, rather than complaining about the state of the world in which we live, complaining about the nature of things that we are facing, we are to put on the armor of God and go forward with courage, with valor, with nobility, and engage the battle that God has appointed for you here in this season of life. We're not to shrink back and we are not to be grumbling, complaining soldiers, complaining about, you know, about the daily rations that are given to us. There's a war to fight. There's a war to engage. There is a battle to be won. There is Christian character to be displayed in the midst of adversity. I am admittedly a little concerned lest we falter and stumble along the way in the midst of the days in which we live. Look, God raised you up for such a time as this and God raised you up to be faithful in the midst of times like this, to honor him, to glorify him, and the grumbling complaining spirit is inconsistent with that call. And to strengthen your hand

today, I want to help you see something about the enemy of God's glory. The enemy of God's glory.

What we find as we read Scripture and as we look at this passage is that there is an evil spiritual being variously called in the Bible Satan, the devil, the tempter, and Satan stands at the head of an army of demonic forces. Look at verse 12 with me there. At the end of verse 11 Paul said you need to be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil, and then he goes on to say, he gives us a little bit of insight into the fact that in this invisible realm there are a host of evil beings arrayed against the body of Christ in their effort to bring glory to God. Our struggle, he says in verse 12, not against flesh and blood. We should not be thinking in human terms in this conflict or thinking primarily about a human perspective on it, simply seeing it in horizontal terms about what various government authorities are doing, or what they are requiring from us in this time of life. Those things come against us. It is a fatal mistake to just think about what's happening in life in purely human terms, in purely horizontal terms and not recognize the nature of the battle that we are facing. Satan is at the head of a host of a demonic army that is arrayed against the people of God, designed to discourage and defeat them. That's our battle. That's the ultimate source of our battle and you and I need to understand that and take it seriously. This is where in some ways, this is where reality is, not so much in what we see happening around us and certainly not in the things that outwardly afflict us, there is more to what we are enduring than what we see with our eyes. Until we understand that, we're really still standing at the plate waiting to take our swings to get into the game, so to speak.

Here's what you must understand, beloved: you live for Christ in the midst of supernatural hostility. The forces that are against you are infinitely stronger than you are in your human flesh. You do not have the ability to overcome them. You cannot even see them so how do you think that you can fight them successfully on your own? And the reason that it is a struggle for you is due to the nature of the battle that you engage. You are not free in this world to simply pursue the glory of God without resistance. An army comes against us to hinder our progress in the advance of that goal, and what you and I must do in the language of the second chapter of 2 Corinthians, we must be aware of the schemes of the devil and to realize that no one is exempt from that. Not even the lost are exempt from this. In chapter 4 of 2 Corinthians it says that Satan has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they would not see the glory of Christ as it is revealed in the Gospel. The whole segment of the unbelieving world has fallen on the battlefield. They lay dead and bloodied in the battle, blinded by Satan and unable to see that which would be the rescue of their souls, unable to respond to the Gospel message, dead in trespasses and sins, as it were slain in the battle before they even put on their first piece of armor with the outcome the destruction of their souls unless God intervenes by his grace. Do you see something about this, beloved, that Satan is a vile, wicked, destructive, sadistic enemy? And the best of those in Scripture have been on the receiving end of his assaults and that's what I want to show you. I want to illustrate this for you today with five biblical examples of those in biblical times in biblical literature who were assaulted by Satan, tempted by Satan so that we might see the urgency of the battle that we need to engage as we come to Ephesians 6 in the days to come.

Let's start, first of all, with this person, let's start with innocent Eve. Innocent Eve. Go to Genesis 3 and basically what I'm going to do today is just take you through some narrative portions of Scripture with just a few comments along the way to help us see how pervasive this battle is and to get something of the nature of the conflict that we face. In Genesis 3 as we enter into it, God has created the heavens and the earth. He has made man and he has given man a helpmate, and everything that God had created was very good. The man and his wife were both naked and they were not ashamed, Genesis 2:25. They were literally in paradise. They were in a perfect environment with their original innocence intact, and yet Satan could not leave them alone and their position of innocence and the paradise in which they lived did not last very long. Satan came and tempted them away from their high position.

Look at chapter 3 beginning in verse 1. In this high lofty position, Adam appointed as the representative of the entire human race at this point, what happens? What does Satan do to come in and disrupt the order of things? Chapter 3, verse 1, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" He casts doubt on the word of God with a seemingly innocent question. Verse 2, "The woman said to the serpent, 'From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" The serpent said to the woman, 'You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" And so what Satan has done here is he has cast doubt upon the word of God, he has cast doubt upon the goodness of God, and Eve has followed him in the temptation, so to speak, she has listened to him and the consequences are devastating and have affected every aspect of existence in the universe since that time.

Verse 6, "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings." Scripture tells us that this tempter was Satan. In Revelation 12:9 it says the serpent of old is called the devil and Satan, and all I want you to see, there's obviously a lot that can and should be said about this passage, all I want you to see for today's purposes is this, is that Eve in original innocence was vulnerable to the deception of the devil, she was vulnerable to insinuations that God was not good, she was vulnerable to disobey God and she did, and Adam joined her and the human race fell in its entirety as a result of that.

What does that mean for us in the midst of our struggle? Beloved, think about it this way and I beg you, I beg you to humble yourself before the word of God and before the presence of God and recognize something very significant and strategic. If Adam and Eve were vulnerable to the deceptions of the devil in their original innocence and believed lies and sinned against God from that position, understand that you in your fallenness, you in

your creatureliness, you in your sinfulness and your selfishness, having inherited that corrupt nature that's been passed through every generation since then, you must understand that you are vulnerable to the same kind of deception. Every one of us is vulnerable to an attack in our own strength. Satan is stronger than us. He is more cunning than us. And therefore we must take the position that we need assistance, we need defense or we will stumble along the way and dishonor God and perhaps even destroy our own lives.

Look over at the book of Job for our second illustration of this. We saw innocent Eve, secondly, I want you to see righteous Job, righteous Job in Job 1. Job, of course, being the book in our English Bibles immediately before the Psalms. Righteous Job and it says in Job 1 that he was in some ways the best man on earth in his day. Job 1:1, "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil." Note it there plainly and clearly. Job, although he was now a sinner having lived after the fall of Adam, he was nevertheless a blameless man. He was without moral blemish. He was upright. He was a man who feared God and he turned away from evil, so much so that it says in verse 5 and Job being a man of enormous wealth as we pass over verses 2 through 4, in verse 5, so devoted was Job to the glory of God that he not only confessed his own sins, he confessed the potential sins of his family. It said in verse 5, "When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, 'Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus Job did continually." When you read the account of who Job was, this wealthy godly man, it is stunning to see what happens next. Through no fault of his own, Job was on the receiving end of an attack from Satan himself. Satan saw an opportunity to discredit the glory of God by impugning the motives of Job's worship.

Look at verse 6 with me. It says, "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them." This devilish troublemaker, this sadistic foe of the people of God comes and makes accusation to create havoc in the life of a lofty servant of God.

Verse 7, "The LORD said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' Then Satan answered the LORD and said, 'From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.' The LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.' Then Satan answered the LORD, 'Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.'" Now understand what's going on here. People are conditioned to think about the book of Job as addressing the question why does Job suffer? Why did Job suffer? That's the wrong question. That's not the question that's at stake in the heavenly realms in which this discussion between God and Satan took place. It was not primarily a horizontal issue that was going to be injected. That was simply the means to the greater conflict in the heavenly realm. The greater

conflict was over the glory of God. The glory of God is at stake because Satan's accusation is, "Job serves You simply because You give him so much stuff. If You take away the stuff, Job will curse You to Your face," as Satan speaks to God, and that is a direct assault on the glory of God because it says that the pinnacle of his creation, that men will serve him only if there is something in it for them, and if you take away the blessings, men will turn away from the God and therefore show that God is not intrinsically, inherently worthy of worship. And so Satan in order to attack the glory of God because he is the enemy of the glory of God, takes the loftiest servant of God, accuses him of impure, ungodly motives in his worship, and thereby undermines the glory of God.

So God in order to prove a point, in order to prove the indestructibility of divine faith, in the long term goal of vindicating his own glory because you know how the story goes and how it turns out, God in the interest of vindicating his own glory in the end gives Satan access to Job. Satan could only attack Job with permission. God granted it and Satan attacked him with a vengeance of fury. You know the story, he attacked his wealth, he attacked his children, they died, eventually Job lost his own health in the process in a most painful and gruesome way. And in the midst of all that follows, three friends of Job's come, they accuse him of sinning against God, "You're suffering because you sinned against God." And so Job is not only suffering the attack of Satan, he's suffering the false accusations of his so-called friends through it all. All of this instigated by Satan and what we see for today's purposes only, we'll leave an exposition of Job for another time, all I want you to see is this, is that Job in his blamelessness, in his godliness, was subject to a withering attack from the devil, an attack that came in relentless, quick waves upon him there in chapter 1.

So Eve in her innocence, Satan goes after her and Adam. Job in his righteousness, goes after him. We see it in the New Testament as well as we look, thirdly, at impulsive Peter. We look at impulsive Peter. Look at Luke 22. Chapter 22, beginning in verse 28, let's say. Jesus is speaking to his disciples on the eve of his crucifixion and he says to them this, he says, "You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." They have a glorious future appointed to them by God the Father and yet in the midst of their position, in the midst of that promised future and Peter being the leader of those 12 disciples, Satan had targeted him.

Look at verse 31, Jesus says to Peter, calling him by his former name, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat," and they sifted wheat in those days by shoveling it up and tossing it in the air, the wind would blow away the chaff and the wheat would fall back down, but it was a vigorous energetic process by which wheat was sifted and that's what Satan had demanded and it was granted to him to be able to do that.

Jesus says in verse 32, "but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." But impulsive Peter

overestimated his strength, impulsive Peter after the Lord just saying, "There is supernatural forces arrayed against you. I have provided for you in the midst of it with My prayers." But Peter ignores it all and in a boastful self-confidence says in verse 33, he said to Christ, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!" He boasts about his ability. He boasts in his strength and the intentions and the resolutions of his own heart. And you know what happened, don't you? Jesus told him in advance what would happen that night. Jesus said in verse 34, "'I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me."

Look it's well and good for us to have strong intentions in our hearts and strong commitments and convictions, but what you and I in light of what the foe is that we face, what you and I should have in our minds, what you and I should be consumed with is the fact that you and I, let me make it second person singular direct here, you do not have the strength in yourself to resist this, that when the power of Satan is unleashed, men crumble before him if they are not wearing the armor of God. You are vulnerable and that means that you need to be conscious of your dependence upon Christ, conscious of your need to take up the armor of God that is described in Ephesians 6 because if we don't, the outcome and the stumbles of Peter are easily replicated in our own lives.

Satan succeeded against Peter for a time. Christ had to restore him after his resurrection in John 21, but what I want you to see is this, is that Peter in his impulsive self-confidence was vulnerable to Satan. One of the ways to measure yourself in this and whether you are self-confident and whether you are vulnerable is simply to take stock of the priority that the word of God and prayer has in your daily life. My friends, if you're going through daily life on a consistent basis without reading the word of God, somehow being in the word of God, without somehow being in prayer, mindful of the way that the Lord has commanded us to pray, "Lord, do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil." That can be translated equally well because the Greek article is there, "deliver us from the evil one." And the Lord taught us in Matthew 6 to pray in a way that expressed dependence spiritually, that said, "Lord, I need Your protection from temptation. I need Your protection from the devil and I ask You for it because if You don't protect me, I will fall along the way." And the reason that you pray that way, the reason that that's a priority in prayer for you is this: it's the glory of God. "God, I want my life to glorify You and be a reflection of that earlier petition, 'Hallowed be Your name.' I realize, Father, that I am vulnerable to sin, I am vulnerable to deception, I am vulnerable to a disobedient spirit and I don't want that, God, because it would be contrary to Your glory if I went that route today. So God, I'm pleading with You, I'm pleading with You for Your own name's sake, have mercy on me, forgive my sins, lead me away from temptation and protect me from this evil one who is supernaturally bent on my destruction and marring my testimony that my life would not give You the glory that You so richly deserve."

Peter at this time in his life was too proud to pray that way. He didn't think he needed it and without taking a show of hands, one of the things that a pastor does is he worries about things like this in the lives of a congregation and I worry daily over the fact that some of you are walking in a spirit of self-confidence, a spirit of denial and defiance that

is measured by and obvious by your lack of interest in God's word, your lack of interest in private prayer, your lack of interest in the things of God, and while external prosperity papers over that, you can sweep it under the rug with your personal prosperity and the favorable circumstances of life, you're blind to how vulnerable you are to these kinds of attacks that Satan brings against the people of God. And your self-confidence, my friends, your pride and indifference is an attack in its own right on the glory of God because the glory of God is shown in dependence upon him, seeking him lest Satan tempt you away from the life that God has called you to live. And so I ask you to examine your heart and to consider where your daily priorities are, what role the word of God has in your daily private life. Forget about what we see here, I don't care about that. For the point that I'm making here today, corporate worship's important but that's not what we're talking about right now. We're talking about how you manifest in your own individual private life your concern about being vulnerable to an attack from Satan and the way that you defend yourself against it by going to God dependently in his word and in prayer. If it's not important to you, I don't know what to say to you except to warn you to wake up because you're an easy mark as you sit here.

Let's look at a fourth person, faithful Paul. Faithful Paul. The great apostle, the faithful apostle himself was a target of Satan. Look at 2 Corinthians 12. Paul had been to the third heaven, received great revelations, and in verse 7, 2 Corinthians 12:7 it says, "Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me--to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me." Notice this, beloved, in the privileged position that Paul had, he was still dependent and the vicious attacks of Satan upon him had a purpose in the plan of God to keep Paul humble. He was vulnerable and so in dependence he goes to God and he prays three times that it might leave him. It was a sore and severe affliction that he was under, asking God to relieve him and in prayer he found his sufficiency. God said to him, verse 9, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." As you seek Christ in your vulnerability, your dependence, your weakness, God strengthens you and we see that manifested in the life of Paul, but what we see is that his faithful apostleship still left him in a position where Satan would attack him relentlessly and with great affliction. Well, don't you see that if it's true of Paul, we can expect it of us, and that the response to that must be a conscious dependence upon the Lord and not to go through life with this vain conceit that these things aren't necessary for us? If Peter needed the Lord's intercession, if Paul needed the grace of God and sought it like he did, beloved, where does that leave us?

Now look, one of the reasons that I, it seems to me, I can't discern these, I don't have any special glasses that I can put on to discern the invisible spiritual realm, but it sure seems to me like we're in the midst of the open, the spiritual battle is open with the devil right now. One of the reasons that I think that is because of the unfaithfulness of much of the Christian church to stray away from the biblical Gospel for the sake of a social Gospel. That's the work of the devil. When you see the external afflictions that are coming one right on top of another in our world, it seems like that's reminiscent of the afflictions that came one right on top of another in Job with this coronavirus stuff, with the political

stuff, with the protests and the riots that are going on. Look, God is not a God of disorder. All things are done decently in order because God is a God of peace. Well, what are we to say, then, when we're surrounded by so much conflict and so much unbiblical thinking just being so openly embraced? This is not a political thing to us in the church of God. We recognize that this is a manifestation of an open spiritual battle and that there are multiple fronts in the war that are coming upon us.

Well, look, I say it in love, I say it with a spirit of gentleness even if it comes out with a little bit of a sense of urgency and dogmatism. Look, the thing that should be preoccupying us, then, in those cases, if there's any truth at all to what I've said and Scripture tells us even if I'm wrong about my interpretation of current events, Scripture tells us plainly that Satan is our adversary and our struggle is not against flesh and blood, well, my friends, speaking to those of you watching at home as well as those in the room, my friends, if there's any truth at all to the things that we're saying from God's word here today, I speak as a fool, then it should be obvious that what should be preoccupying our minds is not what the government is telling us to do or not to do, what we can or cannot do, this is a time for us to go urgently, humbly, desperately to our God and say, "Have mercy on us! Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil and the evil one in the midst of this conflict that is all around us." And the preoccupation that so many people have with the government aspect of this is betraying the fact that they don't see the spiritual dimension that is at work in what is happening, and as a result of that, we fight with human weapons in anger against human foes, completely missing the spiritual dimension that Scripture points us to, and when that's our response, I ask you, how are we going to glorify God like that? You tell me, how are we going to glorify God like that when we're all agitated over earthly things and indifferent as shown by our prayerless, wordless approach to life, that we're indifferent to the spiritual battle that's all around us. There is an enemy to God's glory that is at work here and our responsibility as soldiers of Christ is to recognize the battle, to take up the armor of God and to preoccupy ourselves with the things that Scripture calls us to be preoccupied with.

This is urgent. This is urgent and broadly speaking far beyond the walls of Truth Community Church and the Black Lives Matter protests and the preoccupation with the coronavirus restrictions, with the difficulties that we face in our personal lives and the real and genuine sorrows, my great great concern is that in this moment the church is missing its opportunity to rise up to the battle and is setting a very bad trajectory for the church to come. What I ask you, I ask you, I ask you, I ask you, what are future generations going to find in the example of the Christian church in days like this? Are they going to find a church that rose to the battle? That rose to the occasion and sought desperately the armor of God in the midst of it? The revelation of God, the righteousness of Christ? Are they going to see a church that was preoccupied with that in what's happening around us? To ask the question in our day is to answer it.

And so none of us enjoy the affliction. We can all have our opinions about what's happening but at the end of the day what's happening is not what's happening. What's happening is the realm of Ephesians 6 and the question is whether you and I as the people of God will recognize that and respond to it in a biblical godly way, or whether we'll just

go along with the current of the complaints and the current of the false gospel, or whether we'll stand in the midst of a rushing stream coming against us, we'll stand in the stream and we'll walk step by step forward against the current wearing the glorious armor of God. That's the question and each one of us has to answer it for ourselves.

Finally, I would have you see this in our Lord Jesus. Matthew 4. We have seen this in innocent Eve, righteous Job, impulsive Peter, faithful Paul, and now, fifthly, in our Lord Jesus. We see the wickedness of Satan in his temptation of our Lord and I'll just go through this rather quickly. "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.'" We'll see in this passage that Satan is referred to by three different names: the devil, the tempter, and Satan.

Jesus answered, verse 4, responded with the word of God, responded with the revelation of God. "He answered and said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, "He will command His angels concerning You"; and "On their hands they will bear You up, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, 'On the other hand, it is written, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, 'All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him." Our Lord, our righteous, impeccable, glorious Lord was a target of Satan during his Incarnation and he withstood the temptation, in part he withstood it for us, he won the victory for us.

My point for today is embarrassingly simple. Satan severely opposes men and women who seek the glory of God. He stirs up temptation, trickery, and trouble. Friends, he makes it difficult, he makes it painful, he makes it confusing, and he makes it seem so overwhelming in the unleashing of multiple things in a short amount of time, and in our human strength, I'm speaking carefully and precisely there, in our human strength it is too much for us even as Christians to withstand. The point for us is the point that Paul led us to and taught us, that in the midst of these afflictions from Satan and his messengers that we go to God dependently and we learn to be – watch this – we learn to be content with the daily provision of his grace and we walk in light of the sufficiency of that, and what our sovereign God does is that over the course of time, he uses that to advance his glory. There is a sense in which, it's not that I have arrived and stay in this frame of mind permanently but I see glimpses of it from the distance at which I stand from it, there is a sense in which these days are our glory. They are our opportunity as the arrows fly about us, as the bullets fly back and forth, as there is danger in the midst of it, this is the glorious opportunity for true Christians dependent upon the grace of God to display valor in the battle, and part of the valor is surprisingly displaying contentment and doing away

with a grumbling, complaining spirit in the midst of it, displaying courage and contentment that is driven by a humble daily dependence of drawing upon the armor of God revealed to us in Ephesians 6.

My Christian friends, in this room and those who will hear it later, the battle's been engaged. Our weakness in it is a mere platform that God has given us. This weakness in the midst of this season, in the midst of the life, in the midst of the world that he's appointed us to live in in this very day, this is all a platform for us to glorify God against the attacks of the devil and we do that through the dependent appropriation of the armor of God revealed to us in Ephesians 6. And by his grace we will stand. By his grace we will triumph. God appoints these times for a season but you know what he does? In the end he restores his people. He blesses them. We just read how, we just read that after the devil was done with his temptations, angels came and began ministering to Christ. Job after his extended suffering was restored to his fortunes, he was restored in the eyes of men and in the favor of God, having triumphed over the attack of Satan that he didn't even know about. This is the pattern of God. He allows us to be afflicted for a time, sometimes severely with great pain, and gives Satan reign to do that to us with the intention that when we feel the battle, we take up the armor and we stand like a man in the midst of it until the Lord causes the battle to pass.

I want to be that faithful soldier, don't you? Isn't that what you want in your own aspirations of Christian living? Will we be the people who fall into temptation and sin in these times? Will we be those who follow after a false gospel? Will we be those who simply grumble and complain our way through it all and just grit and complain until circumstances turn back to our liking? Or will we take up the armor of God and stand firm in the battle that he's appointed to us, what he's given to us as a platform on which we'll glorify him? Search your hearts, my friends, and answer well. This is our day. This is our battle. Let's run to it in the power of God.

Let's pray together.

Father, help us to take up the armor of God which we will see in Ephesians 6 in our times to come. We humble ourselves. Father, we have so much more than what we deserve. If You gave to us what we would deserve, we would all be suffering eternal judgment as we speak but You've been gracious to us. You've raised us up in Christ. You have given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Him. We have Your indwelling Spirit. We have Your inerrant word. And the glory of God is enough for us. Take away everything else earthly, Father, by Your grace and dependent upon Your sustaining power, we will honor and worship You come whatever may because You're worthy of that, and so we ask You to strengthen us to that end.

Father, there are many soldiers who have been lounging around in tents while the battle has been going on, lazy, indifferent, unconcerned for Your glory, not seeking You on a day by day basis. Father, I pray to God, I pray by the power of Your Holy Spirit that You would give a trumpet blast call that Your people would respond to the battle in the way that Your Scriptures tell us to do. May the trumpet cut through the noise, may our eyes be

opened to see through the smoke of the battle, to see our commanding General, as it were, our Lord Jesus Christ leading us gloriously into battle where we cannot fail in the strength that He supplies. But O God, how we need a work of You among Your people to stir us up to faithfulness, to put aside lesser things, lesser complaints, lesser issues, and devote ourselves afresh to the glory of God and to battle for that with the armor that You have supplied. Help us to that end, Father. It's the only reason worth living. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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