

Christian Warfare

Lesson 6: The Malice and Power of Our Spiritual Enemy

- I. Satan's will is most maliciously bent against us, so that, even if we wanted, there's no hope at all of a truce or reconciliation with him.
 - A. His malice isn't recent and open to placation. It's an inveterate hatred that's as ancient as the world itself, and far more durable, for the world will have an end, but Satan's malice to mankind is endless because God's love toward the faithful shall be endless and eternal.
 1. Indeed, his malice was, even at the first, so strong and full of hatred that no sooner were Adam and Eve placed in the Garden, but he was so jealous of them that he came to tempt them.
 - B. As his malice is inveterate, so it's also mortal and deadly. Satan's not satisfied with afflicting a small injury on us, but seeks the full and final destruction of our bodies and souls. This is seen in the *names* given to him in Scripture.
 1. He's called our *accuser* because he accuses us night and day before God, Rev 12.10. He's called *the evil one* and *an enemy*, because he's so malicious as to pollute Christ's church, Mt 13.37-39. Rather than sow hypocrites in their own fields of ungodliness, he's intent on sowing them in the very house of God, that he might do his utmost to bring dishonor upon God, discredit to the gospel, and reproach upon true believers.
 2. He's called *a murderer* and *the father of lies*, Jn 8.44. And again, he's not a novice in his trade, but has been working at it since the beginning.
 3. He's compared to *a lion roaring after his prey* to show that he desires nothing more than to seize upon us and devour us, 1Pet 5.8.
 4. He's called *the great red dragon* to show that his rage and anger and malice are as great as can be imagined, Rev 12.3, 17.
 5. And if Satan finds us fortified with God's graces and armed with the armor of God, hedged in and fenced on all sides, Job 1.10, then he shows no less malice but more subtlety in his aims for our destruction, alluring us by temptation. He offers us the baits of riches, honor, and pleasure, seeking to overcome us by deception and trickery, Gen 3.1-6. Thus he's called the *tempter* in Scripture, Mt 4.3; 1Th 3.5. He tempts us to entice us into sin and then is the first to accuse us to God once we've sinned, Rev 12.10.
 6. He's not only an accuser, but also a *slanderer*. He'll spy out every appearance of evil and accuse us of the evil itself. He'll misinterpret and misconstrue all our good actions, accusing us of ill motives and desires behind them. He'll put all our offenses in the worst possible light, making a mountain out of every molehill, Job 1.9-11; 1Cor 13.7.
 7. He's a *hangman*, ready to inflict all that chastisement and suffering upon us which, for His holy purposes, God permits, Job 1.12; 2.7.
 - C. What does all this prove but that Satan is not only malicious but *maliciousness itself*? He's the father and author of all malice and cruelty and labors with all his might to dishonor God and work our destruction.
 1. And what does this call us to but to put off all our carnal security and put on the whole armor of God with hesitation or reservation? Let us oppose his malice with our resolution, continuing our fight against him all our lives, even unto death, Rev 12.10-11, no matter how hard or costly. For we can expect no mercy at his hands, but are assured of all barbarous and raging cruelty.
 2. But seeing as we fight the Lord's battles, and have come under His banner and protection, let us neither fear nor be discouraged, because He has gotten the victory and has assured

us that we'll share in it. Though we find ourselves foiled, wounded, and beaten down to our knees, we must never yield but resist to the end. For there's nothing more honorable than to die fighting the Lord's battles, and there's no death more profitable than to die in Christ, because *by it* we overcome and receive the crown of glory and everlasting happiness promised to all those who fight valiantly to the end, 2Tim 4.8.

II. Satan's power is equal to his malice, so that he has all the strength he needs to carry out his will.

- A. With regard to himself, his strength is mighty, so that if the Lord permits him, he's able to harness the wind, stir up storms, bring down fire from heaven, and utterly destroy us in a moment, Job 1-2; Mk 4.37-38; 5.3-5, 12-13; 9.20-25.
 - 1. He's compared to *a roaring lion* and *a great red dragon*, both having incomparable might to destroy. He's compared to *a man so strong* that he's able to fortify a palace all by himself, Lk 11.21. He's called *the ruler of this world*, Jn 12.31, and *the prince of the power of the air* and *the spirit at work in the sons of disobedience*, Eph 2.2, and *the god of this world*, 2Cor 4.4, all to show the might of his power over men and their world, having multitudes at his beck and call. And he's not alone as a devil, but is the chief of a kingdom of darkness, Mt 12.24; 25.41; Mk 5.9; Eph 6.12; 2Cor 11.14-15.
 - 2. As Satan is powerful in strength, so he is numberless in numbers, *able with ease* to beset us on all sides and in all places, at all times, in public, in private, and in worship itself. Paul says they're in high places, Eph 6.12, to show us that they have the advantage of the high ground. This warfare is therefore altogether dangerous and most terrible.
 - 3. Worst still, our enemies are *spirits*, not subject to physical warfare, not able to be seen or heard or wounded or imprisoned. And they use their advantages against us. Possessing and influencing others against us, making suggestions to our minds, and provoking evils in our own hearts. They surprise us in our bedrooms when we're asleep and when we awake. They intrude upon our Bible reading and invade our prayer closets. We have no way of discovering them until we feel their assaults and blows against us.

III. But God...

- A. Satan is malicious, evil, and hateful, but God so loved us that He gave us His Son to redeem us, poured His own love into our hearts to fellowship with us, and raised up His Son to intercede for us so that Satan will *never* sift us as wheat but will only help remove our chaff.
- B. Satan is powerful and mighty, with a great multitude of evil spirits and human slaves, but his power is limited by God's omnipotence and harnessed for good by God's decree.
- C. Though we may be surprised and often overcome, yet if we seek our refuge in Christ and arm ourselves with His provisions, we'll most certainly obtain the victory.
- D. Though Satan is, at times, able—and permitted—to wreak havoc and destruction in our lives, yet he's curbed by God's overruling providence and not able to go any further than God lets out his chain.
- E. If we would resist and overcome such an enemy, we must not go out in our own strength, but must put on the whole armor of God and abide in Him, Ex 14.10-14; Ps 34.4-7.