

Call to Obedience #386
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The Devil Is a Defeated Foe

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This is a popular doctrine. Indeed it gives cause for much celebration. But what is disturbing is when we let it carry us to the wrong conclusions such as: “Because the devil is defeated, he cannot touch me,” or “Since the devil is defeated, I don't have to fight him.”

Such thinking leads to a false sense of security and a neglect of prayer. It effectively shuts down prayer meetings, so the devil loves it. Let us see what it really means to say the devil is a defeated foe. We must make a clear distinction between Christ's and our relationship with the devil. They are not the same. Jesus' fight with the devil is over; ours is not.

Jesus was met by the devil early in His ministry. The devil knew that God required a perfect Lamb to atone for man's sin. If he could have gotten Jesus to sin just once, he would have disqualified Him. But Jesus lived a sinless life and He defeated the devil. Now there are those who contend that the devil was a pushover for Jesus. They say that Jesus against the devil is like an elephant against a mosquito. Indeed, when the Lord cast the devil out of heaven, it was over like lightning (Luke 10:18). However, when Jesus came to earth and took on our humanity, He went into the fight *in the likeness of sinful flesh*. He refused to use His divinity to make things easy for Himself. That is why He collapsed under the weight of the cross and needed to pray much. In that condition, He was tempted in all things as we are. In fact, His battle was greater because if the devil had won, all men would go to hell.

In fact, Jesus' warfare was so severe that it caused Him to sweat blood. He needed an angel to make it through and He cried out on the cross: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Then Jesus said: *It is finished*, and He became victor over sin and death. Jesus fought the greatest, most powerful enemy there ever was, the prince of this world (Eph. 2:2), every day. He made it. And because He made it, you can make it. But my friend, you will not make it unless you also get into the fight. And at the core of this fight is prayer. Just as Jesus could not make it without prayer, neither can you.

Although Jesus sentenced the devil to hell, the execution of his sentence is pending. And that is the problem. Satan is not on death row yet. He is not even behind bars yet. He is a criminal, but free. Peter put out this warning: *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour* (1 Pet. 5:8).

Why be sober and vigilant? Why can the devil still devour people if he is defeated? Wake up! Just because Jesus defeated him does not mean that you have defeated him. If you have disobeyed or lusted or told a lie, he has defeated you. Again, the fight is over for Jesus, but not for you. How many new converts do not last over a week before they turn back to the world? One of the devil's delicacies is to feast on new lambs. How many never make it to their first prayer meeting? How many never witness or win a soul to Christ? How many pastors have fallen into adultery, money scandals and pride?

"The devil cannot hurt me anymore because he is a defeated foe." Wrong! Some of you will not see the picture that he is *not* defeated until your child is pregnant or addicted to drugs. And here is a good test for you: if the devil does not fight you, it means you are already in his camp. A general will not shoot at his own soldiers.

Once more, if you have joyful noises in your sanctuary on Sundays because the devil is defeated but people don't show up for prayer during the week, your house of God is nothing but a place of sounding brass and tinkling symbols. Jesus' fight is over, yours is not.

"Because the devil is defeated, he cannot touch me." Wrong! The devil touched Jesus; he pursued Him. He took Him to a high mountain and to the pinnacle of the temple to try to trip Him up. Yes, who took whom? Satan entered into Judas at the communion table and he put doubts into Thomas's mind. What makes you think that the devil is not after you and others of God's people? Has our Lord not told us *to always pray* without ceasing and that His house is to be a house of prayer? Oh, how the devil likes this doctrine, because it is his tool to defeat the church. If he can get people together for praise gatherings at the cost of shutting down prayer meetings, he will do it.

If you still have doubts that the battle is still on, that you need to get into the fight and that you are a soldier rather than a sunbather, read on:

Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down

unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time (Rev. 12:12).

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock (Acts 20:29).

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day... (Eph. 6:12-13).

This is your warfare! Observe what will help us to defeat the devil:

1. *Christ is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Heb 7:25).* Although Jesus has won His crown, He is now helping us to win ours. He will ever, continuously, help you. What a morale booster!

2. *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7).* This is both a command and a promise: obey the command and receive the promise. Jesus said to Satan who got hold of Peter: *Get thee behind me, Satan (Matt.16:23).* Use these very words and yell if you can. The devil *did* depart from Peter; Peter did not give up. He followed Jesus to the Mount of Transfiguration! That is where you will end up if you resist the devil.

3. Jesus prayed often. Do not say, it is the quality of prayer that matters, not quantity. You do not get this from Jesus, nor from His disciples, nor any saint of God. “Rising early in the morning to pray,” and “praying all night” are common descriptions of victorious saints.

4. *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:2).* The less space you leave in your brain for the things of the world, and the more you give yourselves to the things of God, the more living water will flow out of you.

5. *Rejoice evermore... In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (1 Thes. 5:16, 18).* The first step towards a reprobate mind and towards a backslidden heart is ingratitude: *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened (Rom. 1:21).*

My friend, Christ is in the safety of heaven. He is out of the reach of the devil. You are not, not yet. Fight!