

New Hope Sermon 8 19 18 Jesus is head over every power and authority – Col. 2:9-15

The question for today is: How has Christ's victory over evil empowered you this week? That's what I want us to think about throughout the sermon and then discuss together after the sermon. How has Christ's victory over evil empowered you this week?

Let us pray.

Six days out of the week I send out a Bible verse with a song and a prayer for over 50 women around the world. We named this ministry *The Shepherds Daughters* since we are all professional women who love Jesus as our Shepherd and want to live under his shepherding care, protection and power. Several of you in this church are part of that global fellowship. This past week the theme of these meditations has been on the power of hope, coming off of Sam's sermon last week on the difference between hope and optimism.

Last Wednesday this was what went out to everyone: **Bible verses: Isaiah 40:28-31**

Do you not know? Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

²⁹ He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;

*³¹ but those who **hope** in the LORD will renew their strength.*

*They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.*

The Song was Press On

When the valley is deep, when the mountain is steep

When the body is weary, when we stumble and fall,

When the choices are hard, when we're battered and scarred

When we've spent our resources, when we're given our all,

Refrain: In Jesus's name we press on, in Jesus's name we press on

Dear Lord, with the prize clear before our eyes, we find the strength to press on.

Refrain repeat.

Words and music by Dan Burgess

On Tuesday, the day before this meditation many people also got Sam's sermon entitled "Sometimes shipwreck is God's way of saving us." (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1xq-Wxy6EjreHk1cfx16MKegeCPeZTs> or found on the new hope website: newhopebiblefellowship.net).

Wednesday the meditation was on being weary, stumbling, falling and fainting. On Thursday one of the daughters sent in this prayer request:

"I am right in this place of shipwreck today. I am weary with pressing on. I loved the sermon I read last night. It was an encouragement too. Please pray. I am not wanting to press on anymore. It seems it has been so my whole life. I will recover again to go on, but I have lost my joy and seem to be losing my grip on hope. Gail." She voiced a desperate need for prayer and release from the power of the enemy in her mind and emotions.

But on Friday she sent out this praise: "You guys praying for me really helped. When I read Mary Lou's devotion from yesterday it was the song Press On that I love by Selah. It spoke deep into my Spirit. I am still in a hard place, but not like yesterday. Praise, God!"

Gail experienced directly how Christ's victory over evil empowered her this week. Praise God!

Yet, I would submit that this truth Of Jesus' authority and our victory over evil is one cornerstone of the good news that is neglected by Christians in their daily living. Notice v. 10 **Christ is the head**

over every power and authority. And verse 15 – He disarmed the ruler and authorities, having triumphed over them. Today I want us to unpack the significance of these truths in our lives so we can reach the victory we need over evil in everyday life.

Victory over evil is really critical from God's perspective, beloved. Why do I know that? Because In Jesus's high priestly prayer recorded in the gospel of John 17 Christ prayed more than once for believers' protection from the Evil One. *V. 11: "I will remain in the world no longer but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name....While I was with them I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me."* (pp) Verse 15: *I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.*

Christ realized what many of us do not: That Satan is an active force – a principality who controls other principalities and powers and is an enemy of God and God's people – that's you and I. See if you can identify with any of these strategies of Satan. I've included 7 strategies and named them all starting with the letter D to help you remember them:

Satan derides

He deceives

He destroys

He distracts

He distances us from God – in our own minds and emotions

He discourages us

He depresses us.

Jesus called him a *thief who comes only to steal, kill and destroy*. Jn.10:10 and each of these d's work toward his stealing, killing and destroying purpose.

He derides – that means he accuses us of our present or former sins and makes us feel unworthy of God's love or forgiveness. In Rev. 12:10 it says Satan *continually accuses us before God day and night*. Have you experienced this – when negative accusations are like tapes which rerun in your mind?

But Satan is deceiving us if we believe him. God has forgiven when we confess our sins to Him (I Jn.1:9) God does love us. God has chosen to pour His love into us by the Holy Spirit. Rom.5:5 We are highly esteemed and God rejoices over us with loud singing. Zephaniah 3:17. Or, Satan causes us to believe the rationalizations he puts in our mind to persist in a known sin. We are clever in doing that, aren't we? But Jesus has power over every addiction or compulsive behavior and we can be free.

Are there lies from Satan you have believed? In my own life, physical problems have been recurrent. And so when the spirit of infirmity grips me and says "You can't do that. You will faint (which I have done several times in my life!). You don't have the strength. This weakness will never let up." I recognize those thoughts as Satan's lies in my mind. Then I need to refuse and cast them out, literally – not letting those deceptions be my reality. Each time I rebuke those lies and believe God's truth, I am resisting Satan and he flees.

Actually, repeated sicknesses or weaknesses, accidents, or traumatic events all are part of Satan's effort to destroy us. But God is life-giving and we need to use His word as the word of our testimony and fight back against the debilitation and destruction Satan brings.

Some of you remember Sarah who graduated with her masters in Marriage and Family counseling two years ago. She was also my secretary for 2 years and is very dear to me. This past spring she was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. Cancer is scary at any age, but Sarah is still only in her twenties and just getting started on her counseling career and growing in her marriage. She had to fight all the worst case scenarios in her mind once she heard her diagnosis and then prepared for surgery to check

the cancer advance. My dear friend Michiko is in her 60's but facing heart surgery today. Both are committed Christians, but Satan is the author of fear and anxiety and they both have had to battle him as they committed their bodies to God. They each have claimed God's words of wholeness and healing. And believed God's promise of peace and protection. Sarah's cancer surgery was successful, the cancer had not spread to her lymph nodes and she has been given a clean bill of health. Michiko's prayer request for her heart surgery went out to the Shepherds Daughters on Thursday and she wrote "Thank you for Shepard's Daughters message every day. I start every morning activity with your prayer. I need your prayer.

I will get a cardiac operation at mitral valve. I will enter the hospital August 20th, the surgery the next week, and be hospitalized by the end of September.

I had a symptom of mitral regurgitation and have regular medical checks for 10 years.

As the result of cardiac catheterization, I need the operation.

I am depending on Jesus and have no fear. However I want to ask your prayer. With much love, Michiko."(8/15/18). Depending on Jesus and having no fear is God's answer when Satan tries to kill our faith, steal away our health and destroy our witness to God.

More subtle are Satan's efforts to distract us- even with the busyness of your academic year that will distance you from God if you are not very intentional about soul care and commitment to a church community who will love you, support you and hold you accountable. Unresolved conflicts can distract us, or social media can distract us or Netflix movies throughout the week can distract us. Anything that becomes our go-to source of comfort and pleasure that is not from God can distance us from God. Undergrad students have shared this power of Netflix as they live in the dorms on Campus.

Distraction that leads us to feel distant from God can lead to discouragement and ultimately to depression. This clearly marks it as an evil strategy to draw us away from God.

So, we need to clearly affirm that if you are having thoughts of discouragement and depression, those thoughts and chemical reactions and feelings are not coming from God. God is the source of hope and abundant life – not the source of destruction and the half-death of a person through depression.

Therefore, thinking of these strategies of Satan, let's go over again the key truths in our passage today. Victory in Jesus's name is a cornerstone of victory that is available to us in our battle with evil. Verse 10: **Christ is the head over every power and authority. And verse 15 – He disarmed the ruler and authorities, having triumphed over them.**

First, v. 10 – I love the Philipps translation: *Christ is the authority over all authorities and the supreme power over all powers.*" We serve the God of the alls. Over all authorities...over all powers. Jesus shall take the highest honor, just as we sang, because He is Lord of all. Over all powers and authorities that are stronger than we are = but never stronger than our Lord Jesus Christ.

And how did Jesus win that victory for us? Because, quoting the Philipps translation again, *He has utterly wiped out the damning evidence of broken laws and commandments which always hung over our heads....and exposed all the powers ranged against us – exposed them shattered, empty and defeated in his final glorious triumphant act.* This is the truth of the cross, beloved.

So that returns us to our question today: How has Christ's victory over evil empowered you this week?

Our victory in Christ means that He has delivered us from the power of the evil one. He has given us the key to defeat the evil one in His name. We can say, as Jesus did, *'Be gone Satan! For it is written.'* Mt. 4. *When we submit ourselves to God, we can resist the devil and he will flee from us.*

Declaring God's praise and power is one way that happens.

One word of praise I recommend that we can say to Satan is *Our God reigns*. This comes from Isa. 52:7 *How lovely on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion Our God reigns.*" That's truth, beloved. That can be the word of our testimony and our word of praise that we hold onto – no matter what negative thoughts of derision, or deceit or distraction or discouragement or depression we experience. Our God reigns.

Let's repeat it together: Our God reigns. Our God reigns. Our God reigns. Our God reigns. When we falter in our faith; when we feel overwhelmed by stress or anxiety, we have usually lost sight of this reality: Our God reigns. The problems don't rule; our catastrophizing doesn't predict truth; other people don't have final control. Our God reigns.

That's because Jesus **is** head over every power and authority and because he disarmed and destroyed the power of evil on the cross. Through His triumphant act, as Philipps puts it, we can live in victory in His name. He is our mighty fortress. And one little word (like *Our God reigns*), will fell this enemy of our souls.

The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy, but I am come, said Jesus, that they may have life and that they may have it in abundance. So let's sing *A Mighty Fortress is our God* affirming this truth with hearts and our minds. And stand together on the truth God has given us. Amen.

Dr. M.L. Codman-Wilson 8/22/18