
Satan is Out to Destroy You

By Gary Wilkerson

Dear Friends,

Jesus is moving in America in this generation. There is a great hunger for a serious, sober, radical word from the Lord. I am finding churches across our nation who are discovering a new vigor, vitality and freshness in the Lord. They are weary of the excessive hype and entertainment. They are recognizing the emptiness and futility of religious frenzy. This is a God-centered, Jesus-exalting, Holy Spirit-dependent move from the Lord, not man. As a pastor, I pray daily not only for the church I oversee but for Christ's church, that we would recognize our need for more of him and less of ourselves.

Pray with me for your church, for mine and for the church in America. Pray we will once again see the vastness, glory, splendor and majesty of our King Jesus. Feel free to write me about your church, and I will be honored to join with my elders in prayer for your faith family.

With you in Christ,
Gary Wilkerson

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Newsletter: Satan is Out to Destroy You

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward” (Hebrews 10:35). If you are a Christian, you are in a fierce war. In fact, you’re in a life and death battle for your faith. Satan is determined to shipwreck and destroy the faith of all of God’s elect. And the stronger your faith, the greater will be his attack against it.

Unshakable faith in the Lord causes hell to rage. Nothing poses a greater threat to Satan’s kingdom than a Christian who is unmovable in faith. Why? It is by faith and its released power that Satan’s kingdom is subdued. By faith, righteousness is born and demonic fires are quenched. God’s promises are obtained and the mouths of lions are shut. By faith, God’s faithful escape the edge of the sword. They become brave in battle, turning the devil’s army to flight. They endure mockery, beatings, stonings, and if they are locked in jail they sing. Simply put, faith sustains those who possess it!

Paul warned Timothy that in times of trial some would cast aside their faith: “Some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck” (1 Timothy 1:19). He added that Satan would attempt to “overthrow the faith of some” (2 Timothy 2:18). Therefore Paul charged Timothy to fight a determined warfare, “holding faith, and a good conscience” (1 Timothy 1:19).

The apostle Peter came under a ferocious attack against his faith. His trust in Jesus so enraged hell that Satan asked permission to sift him to see if he would stand. “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:31-32).

Maybe right now you are facing a terrible storm in life. Your troubles seem only to accelerate: money problems, marriage problems, job troubles, enemies coming at you like pounding waves to sink you. Tell me, has your faith been sapped? Do you say in your heart, “God, don’t you care? Will you let me go down in this storm?”

It is for just such a time that Jesus spoke these awesome words: “Shall not God avenge [protect] his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:7-8). I ask you: Will Jesus find faithfulness in your troubling hour?

God has given us a powerful weapon to use against Satan’s attacks on our faith. It is the testimony of a “great cloud of witnesses” already in glory who have made it through with their faith intact. “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1).

What a picture. This verse depicts an army of victorious saints from every era, beholding us watchfully like a crowd in the bleachers. They’re wearing crowns of righteousness and waving palms as they cheer us on in our race: “Run with patience! We fought to the death and didn’t fall. God kept us and

our faith prevailed. So you keep on, too. You can overcome.”

To hold onto faith in these present times, I believe we must be alert to three lies the enemy brings against us.

1. Satan misrepresents the Lord’s refining process. All the prophets foretold of God’s people going into the refiner’s fire. “I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried” (Zechariah 13:9). When silver or gold is refined by fire, all dross comes to the surface. This includes all impurities, alloys, lesser metals, dirt, little spots and speckles of waste.

As we sit under God’s Word and let its light shine on our hearts, all impurities are brought to the surface. Unbelief is being separated from us by the Lord’s refining fire. Yet during such times, when God is purifying us, Satan brings his worst lies to accuse us. He tries to place our focus on our impurities rather than the Lord’s unconditional love.

2. Satan tries to shipwreck our faith by distorting these loving chastenings of the Lord. The devil will try to convince you that your chastening is from God’s displeasure at you. But the New Testament speaks of chastisement as a kind of “educational correction.” Jesus spoke of chastisement when he declared to the apostle John, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Revelation 3:19).

Right now, what you are going through as a child of God is no accident, no isolated trial or calamity. Every test and fiery trial is under your Father’s careful scrutiny. And there is a purpose in it all, “for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.”

3. Satan will lie to you when chastening includes suffering that continues with seemingly no answer. Your ongoing trial may involve physical suffering, unemployment, children who rebel, faithless friends, mental distress, turmoil or pain. As you endure day after day, Satan will whisper to you as he did to Job: “The righteous don’t suffer. If God’s promises are true, you should have been rescued by now. Where is your God? Is this what faith gets you?”

Beloved, do not cast your faith aside! Satan is a liar. You are suffering because God loves you, because he cares. He knows your suffering, and he won’t let you be destroyed by it. He knows just when to make a way of escape for you, and he won’t act until that appointed time: “(He) will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). Through it all, the great cloud of witnesses urges you, “Continue fighting the battle with faith. Your hands hang down, but he will provide the faith to lift them up. Your knees are feeble, but he will strengthen them. Don’t turn aside. Stay in the race!”

Multitudes fall for the devil’s lies when they are chastened. They allow a root of bitterness to enter their heart and soon are nurturing an anger toward God: “Why did the Lord allow this? I tried so hard

to please him, trusting him so much. Why is he letting me down?" God has warned us about such times: "Don't let this happen. Instead, be diligent, be careful, holding onto your confidence. It has great recompense of reward."

The Lord desires a people who will hold onto faith even if they suffer the loss of all things. Consider this powerful word from the author of Hebrews: "Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:32-39).

Here is a description of a people greatly afflicted after they were born again. They lost all their goods and possessions because of their testimony. Yet their faith kept them joyful. Sometimes I wonder if the days of our American lifestyle are numbered. If that day comes, all of us will be affected, all of us feeling pain. And such a day will reveal much about God's people. It's easy to talk about faith when all is well. It's a different matter when we feel prolonged pain. That is when we are called to take the spoiling of our goods joyfully.

Paul kept the faith through good times and bad. In his final days the apostle could boast, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). Think about Paul's testimony at that point. He could say, "Satan sent messengers to fight me in Jerusalem, Damascus, Asia, Ephesus, Antioch, Corinth. But I kept the faith.

"He tried to sink me in the storm-tossed Mediterranean. Three times I was shipwrecked, bobbing in the deep night and day. But I kept the faith. Four times the Jews beat me with thirty-nine stripes. I have been cast into prison, three times beaten with rods, stoned and left for dead. But I kept the faith.

"I've faced peril in the country and the city, in the wilderness and the sea. I've been robbed by my own countrymen. I've been placed in peril by false brethren. But I kept the faith. I've been so weary at times, full of bodily pains, enduring sleepless nights. I've been hungry and thirsty, cold and naked, heavily laden with cares of all kinds. Yet I kept the faith.

"I've been troubled, perplexed on every side, distressed and persecuted, but never cast down. I've never been shaken in my faith. Through it all, my trust in the Lord has never been destroyed."

I leave you with words spoken to sustain us in the days ahead. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous... Surely he shall not be moved forever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.

"He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth forever; his horn shall be exalted with honor. The wicked shall see it, and be grieved" (Psalm 112:4, 6-10).

"The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore" (121:7-8).

"In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock" (27:5).

The Lord says to all his children: "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (50:15). May you remain faithful to call on him in your trial. Cast your cares on him always!

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