

Christ's Victory Our Victory (Continued)

by F.J. Huegel

The sermon emphasizes the need for Christians to understand and resist Satan's power, and to live in the light of the Cross, asserting their right to freedom and holiness.

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1, Luke 10:19, John 8:36, Romans 8:37, 2 Corinthians 10:4, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 2:15, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8-9

Topics: "Victory in Christ", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

F.J. Huegel emphasizes the critical need for clarity on spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness, warning against the rise of false doctrines and the subtlety of Satan's influence within the Church. He reflects on his own experiences as a missionary, highlighting the importance of recognizing and claiming the victory of Christ over evil forces. Huegel urges Christians to actively remove any ground given to Satan through doubt or sin, asserting their rights to freedom through Christ's sacrifice. He calls for believers to engage in spiritual battle, using the weapons of faith and the Word of God to maintain their victory. Ultimately, he encourages Christians to live in the fullness of their identity in Christ, resisting the enemy and standing firm in their faith.

Transcript

WE are all very much at sea as touching this dark subject. Among present-day Christian leaders, teachers, and preachers none seem to be willing to risk their reputation by entering into this matter. Yet, there is no greater need in the Church today than that of light on this intricate question. Witness the "isms" springing up, all under the eaves of the Church. Strange doctrines that have to do with the gifts of the Spirit, and that seem sound enough, and sufficiently grounded in the Scriptures, are causing fatal convulsions in the Body of Christ, and plunging earnest Christians, seeking fuller light, into the abyss of fanaticism. "Doctrines of demons" which according to Paul would, in the latter days, come as a flood upon the Church.

I look back over the years of my ministry as a missionary of the Cross, when Satan's dark wing oppressed me, and shudder. A missionary, and oppressed by Satan-the irony of it. Oh! the agony of the prolonged conflict when, assailed by the hosts of hell, they saw me escaping from their hands. Had it not been for the faithful Shepherd, who seeing my plight, came to my rescue; had it not been for the light which He shed upon the subtle workings of the Adversary, and the patient training which He gave me in the use of the weapons which "are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," the outcome of

this warfare with the powers of darkness would have been a very different matter.

However, it is not only in heathen lands where the missionary comes to grips with demon forces for ages entrenched, as it were, in their strongholds. How many Christians there are in so-called Christian lands, who feel the weight of the murky spirit, who have been sidetracked by the great Deceiver, and who secretly groan under the thrall of "the powers of darkness"! How few Christians there are who are enjoying that complete freedom from Satanic oppression which Jesus came to make possible! Little is being said of the "Rulers of the darkness of this world" (it is the fad of the day to pooh-pooh the idea of a personal devil-like Voltaire, who said he did not believe there was such a thing, and who nevertheless lived in mortal terror of this very monster; even the preachers of our day vaunt their scepticism in that which has to do with this Prince of darkness). Little is being said, I repeat, of that which was so real to the Saviour, in His conflict with evil; yet, Satan stalks with his millions of cohorts through the land oppressing, deceiving, murdering, inciting to evil, and plunging souls into the abyss of unutterable estrangement from God.

His chief strategy, at present, seems to be an adulterated Christianity. In a thousand and one ways he is draining out the essence—he is removing the savour from the salt—he is watering down the pure wine of the true Christian life. As has been so often said: he will float any number of truths to get into circulation one lie. He causes all our divisions. He is the father of so many counterfeit "isms." He will even give you a revival if only you keep it all in the realm of the "flesh-life." A revival which does not exalt the Cross, and which brings no soul to co-crucifixion, to a deep realization of an inner oneness with Christ in death and resurrection, simply fails to register in Heaven. What is more, Satan may put across some of his choicest strategy under cover, in the heart of the revival, itself in the form of truth out of relation with other truths, in the stressing of some strictly sectarian view-point, in the injection of passion for the triumph of some system of theology, in an over emphasis of emotionalism, in the setting in motion "the wheel of nature" (stirring up of "flesh-life") through some "counterfeit." He is willing that men shall follow Christ so long as it be in the energy of the "self-life." He is not afraid of religion. In fact, it is absolutely essential that men be religious (i.e. bow in submission to the supernatural), for he can use to so much greater advantage souls that are open to the supernatural. The greatest crimes of history have been committed in the name of religion. Satan only fears one thing—the Cross of Christ. I do not refer to a mere symbol. I refer to all that Calvary signifies: Christ's victory over the powers of darkness—His substitutionary death for the sin of the world—the believer's oneness with Christ in death—in a word, the power inherent in what we have elsewhere, borrowing Dr. Mabie's term, spoken of as the "death-resurrection-mid-process." This is the "Rock cleft for me," in which if I hide, I shall find shelter from the wiles of the wicked one, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail.

For those who feel themselves—and there are millions of professing Christians who in their secret souls know, so far as their life and walk are concerned, that the power of Satan is not yet broken—still victimized, who, in a word, are not wholly free, I would offer the following suggestions.

First: You must "remove all ground." We give "ground" to Satan when we accept any of his lies. He often paints his lies with all the colors of the Christian faith. He quotes the Word. Witness the temptation of Jesus. We give "ground" when we fail to avail ourselves of the power of Christ's Cross for the displacing and removal of "self-life." If the "old life," the "flesh-life," is in the ascendancy, a thousand unconscious lines of communication are all set for Satan's use. We simply have got to burn our bridges behind us and get over into God's camp. We give "ground" when we sin. We give "ground" by the abuse of any organ or faculty. A doubt will give "ground" to the Evil One. That is why Satan tried to get the Master, to doubt. "If

thou art the Son of God." Had Jesus accepted that "if," it would have entitled Satan to a considerable patch of "ground," so to speak, in the Saviour's life. If, under cover, he gets us to accept what looks like an innocent sort of doubt as regards God's perfect faithfulness and goodness, from the vantage point given he soon forges his way into further "ground."

The "ground" is removed by an assertion of our right to a full participation in all the fruits of the victory of Calvary. We must deliberately take our stand with Christ on victory ground; affirm what God says is true as regards our oneness with Christ in death and resurrection; deliberately refuse all "ground" to Satan, and in the Name of the Victor of Calvary take back the "ground" that may have been lost. We must claim in Jesus' name the "ground" which belongs to the rightful King. Satan is a pretender prince. He is the usurper. He can maintain his authority over us only on the basis of lies and half-truths. We must displace these lies with the Word of God. We must take up the shield of faith "wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." It is a fight. Paul says that we wrestle with unseen foes. They are crafty; they are subtle; they are quick to discover the weak spot in our armour; they strike when we are down; they can entrench themselves in a constitutional weakness (witness 2 Cor. xii, Paul's thorn in the flesh which was, the Apostle says, a messenger of Satan to buffet him) ; they oppose and hamper and bind in a thousand ways. Of the woman with an infirmity, whom He healed, the Saviour said: "this woman whom Satan hath bound."

But we have been made the participants of Christ, and we have an invincible claim, a blood-bought right, a glorious right springing from our oneness with the Victor of Calvary a perfect right to freedom. Are not these the good tidings which Jesus came to proclaim in the acceptable year of the Lord? Does He not proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound? Did He not cry out from the Cross "it is finished"? Is it only, if I may so speak, a ten per cent., or a fifty per cent., or a ninety per cent. salvation which He wrought out at so great a cost; or, is it all inclusive, one hundred per cent. Simon-pure salvation? The salvation which so many professed Christians have got is not worth the price the Saviour paid-the trip from glory; the infinite humiliation of the Incarnation; the ignominy of the Cross. It does not represent the victory of Calvary. It leaves Satan, if not in full control, the cruel oppressor and possessor of great fields of the spirit.

Oh! may Christians arise and take their place with Christ in the Heavens "far above principalities and powers." Their right to the air they breathe and the water they drink is no more inalienable. They are members of Christ's body and by the Word of God, the Covenant of Calvary, they are the legal possessors of all that which Christ Himself rose out of the grave to inherit. When God raised His Son from the dead and "set Him at His right hand in the Heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come, and put all things under His feet," you, too, O Christian member of the body of Christ you, who believe in Him and who have been grafted into the Vine, you, of whom Jesus said: "I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in One," you, too, O Christian, were raised to sit at the right hand of God; all things have been placed under your feet. Will you not assert your right to freedom, and throw off the abominable yoke? Will you not remove, on the basis of the Calvary victory, every faculty, every power, every phase of your life whether of the spirit or of the soul, or of the body, from Satan's blighting, stultifying, deadening, damning dominion, so that in the fullest possession of your faculties you may serve God in holy freedom and joy?

Many have unconsciously come under the oppressive thralldom of the Enemy. They have given ear to his lies; they have become passive. Passivity lays us liable to demon intrusion. It is fundamental to Spiritism.

The medium is passive-the "spirit" takes control. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." We are not to let go of a single faculty and expect God to control us as if we were machines. Union with Christ does not signify any such things. After coming into deepest union with Christ, so that like Paul we say: "I am crucified with Christ . . . Christ liveth in me," we do not become passive. We do not give up self-control. As never before we live. Personality is vastly enhanced. The will is greatly fortified. The mind is marvellously illumined. The memory is gloriously strengthened. We are free as never before to choose, to will, to reason, and to act. We are now to act in perfect harmony with God, every faculty energized by the Holy Spirit. No, it does not lead and never should to passivity. If a single faculty has fallen into disuse and through passivity has come under Satan's baneful sway, let us in Christ's Name break the shackle, take back the ground ceded, and in full possession of our God-given faculties be free.

Finally, ground taken must be held. Satan returns in ever more subtle ways, even as he did in the case of the Saviour. And so we must be ever prepared for battle. The victory of today may be the cause of tomorrow's defeat, if it results in any glorying in the "flesh." Uncrucified "flesh-life" gives advantage to the enemy. During the World War, there were a few Germans in the American army secretly in touch with the enemy. At a critical moment these spies were at the point of betraying positions of responsibility. Had they not been discovered and shot down in time, grave consequences might have ensued. That patch of "flesh-life" may seem innocent enough, but in the hour of conflict with the powers of darkness if it is not brought under the Radium of Calvary, it will be the unprotected breach through which the enemy will pour in like a flood.

Our modern theological proprieties may forbid the use of such terms as Peter used when he wrote: "Resist the devil and he will flee"-our superior ecclesiastical airs may make those who believe in standing against the wiles of the devil feel most uncomfortable, but out on the battle-field of life where grim facts are the only things that count, it is the Christian who knows how to buckle on the armour of light and who stands against the forces of darkness that comes forth victorious, crowned with the Crown of Life.

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