

Hindered By Satan

by Keith Malcomson

In this sermon, the speaker delves into the reality of Satan hindering believers in their spiritual journey, emphasizing the importance of not underestimating the enemy. The Apostle Paul's experience of being hindered by Satan in his ministry is highlighted, showcasing the honesty of saints in facing obstacles. The sermon explores the hindrance itself, revealing how God's greater purpose can be manifested even when Satan obstructs believers, leading to unexpected blessings and divine plans unfolding.

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 2:18, 2 Corinthians 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 3:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:24

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Overcoming Obstacles"

Description

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Transcript

I want you to turn in your Bibles here this morning to 1 Thessalonians chapter 2. 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, that's how you find it, just to help some of you. But turn into 1 Thessalonians chapter 2. And my title for the message this morning is actually taken from a scriptural statement. And let me say something before I give you the title.

Because I don't want to give glory to Satan, and in my title I'm not giving glory to Satan. And I want you to know that before I tell you what it is. And I'm not exalting his power, and I want you to know that before I tell you what I'm preaching on.

So I don't make much of the devil, and I don't make much of his power. But we as Christians would be very wrong if we ignored him, if we mocked him, if we laughed at him, if we reviled him. Those are all things the Bible warns you against.

To have an enemy is a serious thing. To underestimate your enemy, you're making a great mistake. To ignore your enemy or be ignorant of him, it could be deadly to you.

And so I want you to be conscious of that as we read from 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 17. And this is my message here this morning. And this message, this title, this subject came with power to me a

week ago.

I mean power, because this wasn't on my mind. And one thing I've learned is when the word of God comes like a barb and sticks in you. And when the word of God comes with power, like an arrow hitting a target.

It's very hard to shake off. You know that God is bringing something to you. And so I want you to understand that I believe, I could have gone in a hundred different directions.

I believe God has given me a very specific word for this morning. And I believe it's very important. I dare not ignore it when it comes like that.

I dare not. My message this morning. Hindered by Satan.

Reading from 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 17. But we brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again.

But Satan hindered us. That's the statement. My message, hindered by Satan.

Satan hindered us. Verse 19. For what is our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.

Let's bow together. Let's pray. Saints of God, let's pray.

This is important. We are coming to the word of God. We need to hear from heaven.

This could be life and death for someone sitting in this room. This could be vital in your family, your home, your circumstance. With some person next to you, this could be vital.

Let's pray. Father, we call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We're not ignorant of our adversary as you command us.

My God, I pray. Let the word of the Lord come to our hearts this morning. Make it thus, saith the Lord.

Let your Holy Spirit, Lord God, direct it to the right hearts to say the right thing. Lord God, we want to stand in your will. We know that we're here in your presence.

My God, I pray that you minister unto this people individually and specifically in a powerful way to break the hold of Satan, to break the power of his lies. Even the fear of him, my God. I pray that we wouldn't be in fear of the attacks of Satan.

But, oh God, that we would walk in all of the wisdom of God. Lord God, I pray that your truth would set us at liberty, wash our minds, redeem us, make us to trust in you, and have confidence that all things, that all things, all things work together for good. To them that are called according to your purpose, who love you, who desire you, who walk with you.

In Jesus' mighty name. Amen. My scripture text again, 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 18.

Listen carefully. Wherefore, we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again, but, but, Satan hindered us. I would have come unto you, but Satan hindered us.

This is the confession of the greatest of apostles. A spiritual man. A man welcomed with God.

A man in the spirit. A man who's open hearted. A man who's fervent in prayer.

A man filled with the Holy Spirit of God. What does he say? But Satan hindered us. I want you to take a note this word, hindered, this morning.

As we deal with this title, hindered by Satan. I'm not giving room to Satan. I'm not giving glory to Satan.

This is the word of an apostle, of the apostle Paul. Satan hindered us. It's a fact of reality.

He is being open hearted, honest and real. Satan hindered us. There's no unbelief in this.

There's no confused doctrine in this. There's no obscurity. This is a clear statement, inspired of the Holy Ghost.

This is the Holy Ghost putting it in scripture, that you could hear this. It is for you, the church. For you, a Christian.

You need to hear this morning, there is a thing. A real thing, where Satan hinders us, a Christian. The best of Christians, can have an experience of being hindered by Satan.

Is it any wonder, if you could experience this, if the apostle Paul experienced it. This word, hindered. When you begin to look at it, at it's meaning.

To be hindered, means to be impeded in moving forward. It means to be detained where you are. Where you cannot move in the direction you want to go in.

Five times this Greek word is used in the New Testament. So you can begin to understand, how the Holy Spirit uses it. It actually means, when you study this Greek word, hindered.

It means for someone to come along, and to chop right down in front of you. To strike violently. To smite right across in front of your path.

It means, the context is Satan. Satan is the context. And so when Paul says, Satan has hindered us.

It means Satan has stepped into the way of Paul. He has opposed the plans of Paul. He stands in the pathway of Paul, and his fellow labours.

And he is cutting off his forward movement. He brings Paul to a standstill. Can you imagine Satan bringing Paul, the Apostle, to an utter, immediate standstill.

That he cannot do what he wants to do. Stopping him in his tracks. Stopping him in his way.

Cutting off the entire ability to advance on the pathway that he was walking on. That's what the Greek word means. And this Greek word was actually used in the first century.

It was a military term used by soldiers, and those on the battlefield. And what it meant was, that against your enemy, you throw up obstacles in the way. Utterly stopping the entire path.

It becomes impassable. You don't have a choice in this. And so the military used this to raise up a great barrier.

Or it meant to utterly break up the pathway. To destroy the roadway. To make it impossible to keep moving forward.

It is a military term. It is a war term. It is a fighting term.

It is an aggressive term of an enemy. And so to be hindered, there's nothing nice about it, or occasional, or accidental. This is a deliberate act of the enemy to stop you in your tracks.

To stop your advanced movement. To stop you going somewhere. To hinder you.

To impede you. To restrict you. To stop you.

With all that is in your heart. To bring you to an utter and an absolute standstill in your tracks. So that you have no option but to stop where you are.

This is Satan bringing something in the way, in the face, in the forward movement of Paul. To stop him. That it's not an option anymore.

This is a very determined thing by Satan. It's a determined action. I'm not talking about temptation this morning.

Oh no. See Satan is the tempter. He does come to tempt us.

But I'm not talking about that this morning. This is something very, very different. This is Satan hindering the saints.

It's a real thing. It's not temptation to sin. It is stopping you moving forward in the will of God.

To do the will of God. To obey God. And to fulfill the desires of your heart.

That's what it means to be hindered by Satan. What did Paul write to the Galatians in Galatians 5 and 7? Ye did run well. In other words they were running in the will of God.

They were obeying God's word. Ye did run well. Who did hinder you? That ye should not obey the truth.

Who brought you to a standstill? That you're not even obeying God anymore. Because to tell you what, that's not natural. Something happened.

If you were running well. Were serving well. Were running after God.

And now you're not. Who hindered you? What went wrong with you? What stopped you? You used to read your Bible. You don't anymore.

What happened? Who hindered you? Do you think that's natural? You used to pray. You used to serve Him. You used to evangelize.

You used to do many things. And if that comes to a standstill. What stopped you? Who hindered you? What came up in front of you? That didn't just happen.

Saints of God, you need to begin to understand. There is a thing called hindered by Satan. And I've got five points for you.

My first point from this verse. Paul's desire in ministry hindered. Paul's desire in ministry hindered.

Look again at this verse 18. He said, wherefore we would have. Notice that carefully.

He says, we would have come unto you. What's he being hindered in? He is being hindered in coming to the church of Thessalonica. This church of the Thessalonians.

What is he being hindered in? He is being hindered in coming to them. But he says, we were hindered. Then he goes further.

And he says, even I Paul. So he talks about we were hindered. Then I Paul was hindered.

You know all these scholars and crackpot theologians. They say, well, one Thessalonians may not have been written by Paul the Apostle. How stupid can you get? Paul even writes in the letter, I Paul, do you need any more clarity? You know, I've often said there's people who are so intelligent, they don't know how to tie their laces.

I'm so stupid, I do know how to tie my laces. Some of these people, they get so profound in their thinking, they can't even read the text of the Bible anymore. They have written the Holy Ghost out of the Bible.

How dangerous. How dangerous. Well, some manuscripts don't say that.

And well, we don't really know. Well, you may not know, but this simple preacher knows. Paul the Apostle wrote this letter.

And he says, we were hindered. Who is he talking about? Well, it says right in the first verse of this letter, 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 and 1, Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus, under the church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ, grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a letter from three men.

Paul, Silvanus, or he was also called Silas, and Timotheus, or Timothy. Three men. So Paul's saying, we three wanted to come unto you.

Timothy, Silvanus, and I, we wanted to come and minister unto you. We wanted to come there to the church. We wanted to be with you.

We wanted to see your faces. But do you know what happened? Satan hindered us. See those three men.

Satan was so aggressive. He says, I've got to stop these three men from getting to this church. I must not.

See the priority of Satan. I want you to begin to understand this verse. I want you to begin to understand your enemy.

I want you to understand how he thinks. I must stop them getting to that church gathering. I must not let them get there.

And so Paul says, wherefore we would have come, we would have, all three of us together, even I, Paul, once and again, not just one time, but at various times, but Satan hindered us. This is my first point here. Paul's desire in ministry hindered.

Paul had a desire. Why did Satan hinder Paul? Because Paul's desire was very dangerous. Paul had a desire to go to the believers, encourage the preachers, fellowship with the believers, preach to the believers, encourage the believers, strengthen the believers, rejoice in the faith of the believers.

And you know what? That's very dangerous. It was so dangerous. You may not think that it's dangerous to go and encourage your brother.

I want to tell you, the devil goes, that's dangerous. I'm against that. You want to go and preach and encourage your brothers and sisters? I'm against that.

You want to go and evangelize? I am against that. You want to go and fellowship? I don't mean foolish chatter or filling in time. I mean you want to fellowship, you want to commune, you want to build each other up.

You know what the devil says? I am against that. I want to hinder that. I want to stop it.

I want to impede it. Do you know why the devil hindered them? Because it was very dangerous. Here's three simple poor preachers who work with their hands and preach at night.

This tent maker called Paul, who's afflicted, who's been whipped, who goes through trials, and the devil says, you're so dangerous, I need to stop you from going to that church to communicate what you desire to communicate. The desires of Paul's heart were so dangerous. I wonder if the desires in your heart are dangerous to the devil.

I want to know, does the devil look at you and the desires of your heart and the things that you say, I want to do this, and I want to do this, and I want to go here. Are the things you're setting yourself towards, are they dangerous to Satan? You see, we're all caught up in many things. Well, I want to do this, and I want to do that.

The devil won't pay a bit of notice. He'll help you in many things. He'll encourage you.

He'll pay your way to many events. But see, this sort of thing, we want to go to the church at Thessalonica. We want to go to the Christians.

Why do you want to go? It's that desire that's so dangerous to Satan that he says, I have to raise up an impassable barrier. I have to break up all the roads. I have to hinder you by every means.

That desire in your heart is so dangerous to my kingdom, so dangerous, is it, to the darkness of this world that I'm going to break up everything. I'm going to come to hinder you three men from moving forward. You see, the desire in Paul's heart was dangerous, and he sets himself against the activities of these three men.

You can be sure if you have God-given desires, God-given plans, God-given purposes, there is an adversary who wants to hinder you in the way. Don't be ignorant of that. Don't be surprised.

When your desires are spiritual, when your actions are spiritual, don't be surprised. What were they going to do? What are these activities? I believe one of the great activities Satan was hindering was fellowship. Fellowship.

It says in Acts 2, verse 42, concerning the early church, and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and in fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers. We live in a church age where the church doesn't even know how to fellowship together anymore. We think fellowship is having a cup of tea after a meeting.

We think fellowship is just catching up on family issues. How have you been this week? And I know it's not true of this church. It's not true of this people.

I know that. But I'm talking about the church generally. From good experience, they can't even fellowship anymore.

It's silly banter. It's foolish talk. It's wasted information.

But I want to tell you, the early church, one of the four primary things that they continued steadfastly in. I mean, they set themselves towards the apostles' doctrine, prayer, breaking of bread, and fellowship. You think this was casual conversation, casual chit-chat, casual communication.

You think that's what fellowship is. Absolutely not. You know one of the four primary things the local church, not only prayer, not only the preaching of the word, not only the breaking of bread together, but of fellowship.

The church has lost fellowship. There's no communion of hearts anymore. This word fellowship is very, very important.

It's integral. Listen to what it means. Partnership.

Participation. Intercourse. To associate or to share spiritual things together.

That's fellowship. That's not the job of the preacher. That is you as a body of Christians.

You are to fellowship. It is so vital. The early church had to steadfastly continue in this.

In other words, it's going to get opposed. Do you realize the devil will hinder fellowship? I mean godly, good, spiritual fellowship in the local body. I know that.

That's why I've fought all hell to have good fellowship here. Not chitchat, but I have spiritual communion, participation. We are sharing our lives.

We are communing. We care about one another. We love each other.

We carry one another's burdens. That is fellowship. And that's not the job of the preacher.

That is the job of the members of the body of Christ. We do that. But you're going to have to fight for that.

You're going to have to be steadfast in that. You know why? The devil will hinder it. The devil will... You know some Christians, all it takes is a thought.

Drop a thought in the mind and you'll spend the next two years going in the wrong direction. It doesn't take much of a fight. But look at Paul.

These three preachers are going to the church. They're going to look for sweet fellowship and communion. They're going to cultivate this steadfast fellowship.

And you know what Satan said? I need to hinder it. I need to stop it. I need to break up the road.

I must not let them get there. I must not let them get to a church because when you bring these three preachers into the middle of this church, I know what happens. I know how dangerous that is.

But also the preaching of the word, the ministry of God's word. Do you wonder that the devil would stand opposed? That's why you need to pray for the preacher and the preaching of God's word. You need to be watchful and careful and not take it for granted because these three preachers are coming with the word of God and Satan says it's very dangerous because of the desire in the heart.

It says in verse 17 just before our text, look at the context of this. Satan hindered us. Let's look at the context.

Verse 17. But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence but not in heart. Oh, I'm not with you at the present time, but my heart is with you.

I don't need you to be here. You that have been here at School of Christ for three weeks, we're going to be taken from you in presence for a time, but not in heart, be assured of. There is a bond of fellowship here that has been created by the Spirit of God.

Then listen to what Paul says. Not in heart, but we endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. Look at this desire, Paul's heart.

He said we endeavored. That's activity. Some people don't even endeavor to get to church in the morning.

Anything can hinder them. Well, I'm tired. Well, you know, I've been doing this.

Well, sure, there's plenty other Sundays. Sure, it doesn't matter. You know what Paul was saying? I endeavored.

I used energy. I used power. I used planning.

But not only endeavored, abundantly. That means extremely. Paul is saying, I've done everything in planning to get to you.

I wanted to see your face. I desired to be with you. I wanted fellowship with you.

I wanted the strength in your hands. And it says, verse 19, for what is our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of the Lord Jesus that is coming? For ye are our glory and joy. You, the church, do you realize, LCC, you're my glory, you're my crown at the coming of Jesus? You go, it's not much of a crown.

Oh, yes, it is. Oh, yes, it is. Do you realize, I know at the coming of the Lord, LCC will be a crown to me.

It'll be a joy to me. Can you imagine at the coming of the Lord, as I look at faces and go, I remember when they heard the gospel. I remember when they trusted Christ.

I remember when they got baptized in water. I remember them wrestling over their drugs or their drink or their sexual immorality. And yet here they are in the presence of the Lord at the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Can you imagine what that's gonna be to me? Can you imagine as I'm there at the coming of the Lord going, not only did I get here, not only did Candace get here, but here are believers. And we've been caught up in this. You see, if you're Satan, you wanna hinder these deep desires, these deep longings that are real, taken from you.

Paul says, I've been taken from you for a time. Do you know what that means in the Greek? Taken from you. It's a violent term, a violent term.

He says, I've been trying to get back to see you. Because remember when I was with you, I got taken from you violently. Do you know what the word means to be bereaved of your children? I've lost my children.

The word is orphan, but it's reverse. It's the parents being orphaned of their children. And here's Paul saying, I've been ripped away from you.

Remember he only spent a few weeks with this church. And then he had to flee for his life because of persecution. But look at his heart.

His heart is overflowing. I desire to be with you. I desire to see you.

The desires of Paul's heart are good desires, aren't they? They're good desires. They are godly desires, aren't they? They are spiritual desires. They are biblical desires.

I'm leading you somewhere. They are God desires. But they're hindered.

Who hindered them? Satan. Do you think Paul's in the will of God? I do. Do you think these are good desires? I do.

All of them got hindered. He can't fulfill it. He doesn't get to do it.

Satan hindered him. Oh God, I know this is of you. How can I possibly be hindered? Oh God, I just know I'm in the will of God.

What's going on? Why isn't it happening? Why is it that I've served God and I'm being hindered by Satan? How is that possible? I just want to do what's right. Why is Satan being allowed to hinder me? Have I got your ears this morning? Number one, Paul's desire in ministry hindered. I want you to see this.

You've got to learn from this text. I'm taking you step by step. These desires are birthed of God.

They're godly desires, mature desires. They're birthed out of the word of God and yet they're hindered. They're frustrated.

They're stopped. They don't get fulfilled. What are you going to do at that point? Is Satan sovereign? Does Satan have all the power? Is God's plan destroyed? Is there something wrong with me? Paul says we would.

This term can only be explained, this hindrance by a supernatural, invisible force. It's not logical. It's not physical.

This hindrance is not natural. We would, but we're hindered. What stops you? Number two, the reality of Satan.

First, Paul's godly desires hindered. But number two, the reality of Satan. The word Satan used here is the Greek word Satanos.

It comes out of the Old Testament. It means one who opposes you. Your adversary.

Your enemy. You do have an enemy. I'm tired of these Christians who claim to be Christians who say once saved, always saved.

And I believe in eternal security. I believe there's security in Christ. But I'm against this casual once saved, always saved.

I'm fine. I'm okay. I'm not scared of the devil.

Nothing can shake me. The scriptures you quote to me, I'm all right. Nothing can happen to me.

I'm way beyond being touched. Those people have already fallen foul of Satan. They're on dangerous ground.

They don't even know their enemy. Do you see, Paul's saying, Satan hindered us. Beware, lest Satan gets advantage of you.

Oh no, I'm okay. The devil wouldn't touch me. Oh, I know, I'm aware.

I'm in control. You're so ignorant of Satan's devices. Do you know the amount of times Paul warns of a real devil? You see, this verse shows us the reality of Satan.

And yet we've got a type of Christian who's casual, carnal, lukewarm, backslidden, disobedient. And say, once saved, always saved. I'm fine.

I'll be okay. Nothing can affect my salvation. Do you know what? You don't even realize the reality of Satan.

Paul warns and takes Satan seriously. I want you to see this, the reality of Satan. He is a person.

And what Satan does is organized. Hindered. That didn't just happen.

That wasn't circumstance. That wasn't just something happening with no person involved. It was organized.

It has a mind behind it. It's got strategy behind it. It's got planning behind it.

Satan looks at Paul and says, I'm not going to let you get to Thessalonica. I'm going to stop you in your tracks because your desire is good. And I know what you'll do in that church.

And I'm going to stop you in your tracks. You know, things have happened in your life. And you go, God, why has this happened to me? Who said it was God? There's a real devil.

There's a real devil. I spoke to one man once. I was out preaching the gospel many years ago.

And he was a man rescued from Dunkirk. An old soldier. Elegant.

A man of valor. And I began, I stopped him. And he got so angry with me.

He says, I don't believe in God. Look what God done to my men. I says, you don't know this gospel.

Jesus came to give life abundantly. But don't confuse that with the devil. Do you know how I know the devil? Satan has come to kill, steal, and destroy.

You better not get that confused. You see, the devil is real. He has intellect.

He organizes opposition. He understands your desires, your plans. He knows about this church.

He knows about our desires. He knows about the things we want to do. And the things we're praying for.

Do you think he just ignores that? Absolutely no way. He designs. He is cunning.

He knows what strategically could hinder us from doing the will of God. He knows that. Do you honestly think he won't try to hinder us in doing the will of God? Do you honestly think he won't try to hinder you doing the will of God? He hindered Paul.

If you sit here and say, he won't hinder me. Who do you think you are? Who do you think this church is? Oh, he can't hinder us. We're in God's will.

God's will always works out. So don't worry about it. Just leave it with the Lord.

Paul was in the will of God. Satan is real. Very, very real.

How do you know it is Satan that's hindering you? After all, the Holy Ghost could hinder you. God could hinder you from doing what you want to do. Listen to Acts chapter 16.

Paul goes into Asia Minor. And it says he begins to travel. It says this, Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.

Oh, God would never hinder us from preaching the gospel. Really? God wouldn't stop us from going into Asia to preach the gospel, would he? He did here. And Paul says it was the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God.

He actually forbid us. How did he know? Do you know there's a real work in the Holy Spirit where he could forbid you from going and doing something that's spiritual? He could say, no. Doesn't give you a reason.

Doesn't give you all the details. He just says, no. You're forbidden.

That's a strong word. But I want to do this. This could be a blessing to God's people.

No. No. And then he goes further.

See, Paul's trying to find the will of God. And after they had come to Mycenae, they had said to go into Bithynia. But the Spirit suffered them not.

He wouldn't allow them. I just can't get freedom to go into Bithynia. Can't go into Asia.

Can't go into Bithynia. Have to keep walking. You know these people who just say, I know the will of God all the time, every day.

God just tells me. The Holy Spirit just revealed. I don't wrestle over the will of God.

You're either a liar or you're deceived. And you don't know anything about finding the will of God. I want to tell you that.

Because Paul the Apostle wrestled. The Holy Spirit hindered him. Stopped him from doing such things.

Do you think just as long as it's spiritual, it's okay to do it? Do you think that? As long as it's spiritual and it's good, I can just do it. And the Lord would never stop me in that direction. After all, she's a spiritual girl.

Or he's a spiritual guy. They're born again after all. So it couldn't be wrong.

Really? Really? So the reality of Satan. How do you know it's not the Holy Ghost? How do you know it's Satan hindering you? I mean, you could think, is this Satan hindering me? Or the Holy Ghost forbidding me? But the Apostle Paul knew. There's something about the hindering of Satan.

When it's the person of Satan. The mind of Satan. The strategy of Satan.

There's something about that that's dark. Demonic. Have you ever been on a phone call with someone? And you come away and go, that's dark and demonic.

I couldn't mistake it for the Holy Spirit. No way. But there's confusion right across the body of Christ.

Do you remember Job? Satan come to hinder Job. To stop him in his tracks. Do you remember that conversation with his wife? Chapter 1 of Job.

You've got the devil speaking to God in heaven. Saying, if you allow me to do this to Job. He's going to curse you and die.

Move to chapter 2. Suddenly on earth. In the home. Mrs. Job is speaking to Job.

Saying, why don't you curse God and die? Where did she get that thought? That sentence? Where did it originate? It originated from Satan. This is the thought of Satan. The plan of Satan.

Curse God and die. Where do you think such a sentence comes from? Do you think the Holy Spirit could say that? Absolutely not. That's not the Holy Ghost forbidden.

That is Satan hindering. My 10 children have died. I've lost all my possessions.

Everything has fallen apart around me. I mean, fire is coming from heaven. Job knew that Satan is a real person.

Lady, wife. You sound like one of the foolish ladies. I'll worship God.

Doesn't God give? Doesn't God take away? Blessed be the name of the Lord. You're telling me to curse God? I'm not confused. That's Satan.

You know these people in the church who come to you. With arguments and debates and questions. And you go, you better be able to discern.

That's from the pit of hell. Because you know what? If it doesn't speak according to this book. It is of the devil.

You have a real enemy and adversary. Well, I think you should do this. Hey, relax.

We don't need to do that. You don't need to believe this. Do you honestly think that could be the Holy Spirit? Whenever this book is so, so absolutely clear.

And so Satan uses people. He can use people to hinder you. He stirs up emotions.

Plans. Thoughts. He suggests opposition.

When a Christian is on his way to do things that are good. Good desires. Good things in the church.

It is Satan who opposes that. You need to be able to discern the fingerprints of Satan. You need to understand.

That's Satan. That's the Holy Spirit. And you can discern.

But if you're not in the word of God, you can't. These Christians who don't read the Bible. They don't pray.

They don't walk with God. They can't even discern the devil coming to their own mind. They don't test their own thoughts.

They don't even stop their own tongue. They don't even test the words or the suggestions they make to others. Whatever comes to their mind.

Whatever springs up in their heart. They just pour out. Do you realize you're an open sewer for Satan? The Christian has to be on his guard.

Not only what he speaks. What he says to others. But what he hears from others.

There's got to be a guard. I want to tell you the reality of Satan. This verse shows Satan is real.

He hinders those that desire to walk in spiritual things. When someone is hindering me in the church. I begin to ask questions.

I begin to note their comments. Is it of the Holy Spirit? Is it in line with the word of God? They're not even trying to appeal to the word of God. They're not even in the word of God.

But they're attacking the full frontal. They're hindering. Why are you getting discouraged? Why are you depressed? Why do you feel downcast? Yesterday after three weeks of school of Christ.

The blessing. The word of God praying. I get in my car to drive home.

I've got all my bags there. I go pick my dog up. I'm five minutes from my house.

This alarm goes off in the car. I've never heard before. These lights start going off.

Stop immediately. Your engine. There's no oil.

I pull over. It's got plenty of oil. There's no problem there.

I'm five minutes from home. I go, God, I do not need this. I do not need this.

Not now. This is the wrong time. I'm going through three days of going, what is going on here? I got home.

Got in the door. Trying to call people. What should I do? I barely got through the gate.

The car's slowing down. I'm praying the whole way those last five minutes. Please, Lord, not on these roads.

I'm telling you, those bends. Not on these roads. I'm praying and I'm praying.

Lord, please, have mercy on me. I get into the house. My spirit is drooping.

Then suddenly with power comes to me. Don't forget what you're preaching tomorrow. What does Satan oppose? What does he oppose? Well, it says, for instance, in 2 Corinthians 4-3, but if our gospel be hid, oh, I'm not called to evangelism.

We don't evangelize as a church. I never share the gospel. Your gospel's hid.

Oh, that's my personality. Really? Oh, I'm too busy. Really? If our gospel be hid, it is hid from them that are lost.

In whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine onto them. Do you realize the devil is blinding the minds of your family members, of those around you, in case, in fear of, the gospel shining to them? Do you realize he actively works to blind the minds of unbelievers? He is active. You know why? Because you can share the gospel with them.

Do you not know that Satan knows your workplace, your address, your family members? Don't you realize that you're a dangerous person if you have the gospel and you desire to share the gospel and you're praying for them? Don't you realize Satan has you in his targets? Don't you realize what he opposes? You've got the gospel. If you ever get liberty, if you ever break through, if your heart ever burns and flames and says, I want to tell you about Jesus, you're dangerous. You're very dangerous.

Satan is not hindering. Listen to this very carefully. In the first century, at the time of Paul, when this is written, Satan is not hindering Nero.

Nero is the most important, powerful man in the world. He's got all the riches. He's got all the armies.

He's got all the influence, the politics, the military power, economic power in his hands. Satan could care less about him. Where's his eyes? On this simple, poor, rugged preacher walking down the road.

That's where the devil has his eyes. He doesn't have his eyes on Tiberius Caesar. All these great world leaders, sure they're in my power anyway.

They're doing my will. But it's that little, ignorant preacher who everyone despises, just clothed, walking down. He's dangerous.

You don't even realize how dangerous you are. You don't realize it. Did you think he's got his eyes on Klaus Schwab? And all the politics of our day? And all the great leaders? And all the important people in this city? Do you honestly think his eyes are on the council chambers of Ireland this morning? Do you

honestly think that? If I was him, I know where my eyes would be.

I'd be watching very carefully. Point three. Next two points very quickly.

Number three, the honesty of the saints. I like honest saints. Brother Keith, I think you're too honest.

Maybe I am sometimes. Maybe I am. I try to balance it.

But I like to be honest and real. We can be that in this church. We can be that.

We're open hearted. You can't be that in most places, but you can. We've created such an atmosphere of reality, honesty.

I hate the churches where they go in and go, well, I'm sick. No, you're not. No, I am.

No, you're not. That's unbelief. Speak a blessing.

Can you imagine the Christians of today? They meet Paul. Satan hindered us. No, he didn't.

We have authority. You have power. You need to proclaim your power, oh, Satan.

Paul, you're in unbelief. Paul, be very careful. What? I'm just telling you.

No, no, no, no. Don't utter that. What will the young Christians think? We are overcomers.

We're the head, not the tail. They can quote all the scriptures. Do you realize this is Paul the Apostle writing to young Christians in a young church? He is writing it.

Satan hindered us. You can't write that to the young Christians. What will they think? If Satan can hinder you, what are they going to think? So I think I'll just drop that out of my letter to the Thessalonians.

After all, I mean, me being hindered by Satan sounds like failure. Do you see the honesty of the saints? Spirituality isn't to deny reality. There's some questions you don't have an answer to.

There's some things happen in your life. They're sore. There's some things that you can't paint a nice picture about.

But you do love God. You do desire Him. You do want to serve Him.

I'm talking about the honesty of the saints. Do you realize this is the most honest book you're ever going to read? It shows the failure of Peter denying his Christ three times. I don't know him.

I wouldn't put that in my Bible. Several weeks later, Pentecost. Yeah, keep that in.

Take that out. Drop that sentence out. This isn't a man-made book.

This is an honest book. This is the Holy Spirit of God giving us His word. I'm going to tell you we need a good dose of honesty in the body of Christ.

See, we're not living in a dream world, a nice painted picture. We're on a battlefield. We're facing an enemy.

We're having to encounter Satan and the powers of darkness. Real things happen to us. We get tired.

We get weary. We get discouraged at times. But I'll tell you, I do know who my Redeemer is.

And I want to tell you, there's coming a day when His feet stands on the ground, my Redeemer liveth. I'm going to see Him in my physical body one of these days. I'm going to see Him.

You see, Job is on the ash heap. He's lost everything. He's even complaining about God, doubting God.

But he is honest. God, I wish I'd never been born. What about Jeremiah? He said it as well.

I wish I'd died in my mother's womb and hadn't been born. What a preacher Jeremiah is, eh? He's got fire burning in his bones. But he says, it's got so bad, I wish I'd died before I was born.

This Bible's filled with honest people, real people, people who at times hurt badly. Their hearts break. They cry tears.

They don't know what's going on. They can't explain it. They don't understand it.

But I'll tell you what, they do trust God. I trust God. Number four, the hindrance itself.

See, this hindrance was an obstacle, something specific. It was a roadblock in the path of doing God's will. But the hindrance is not explained here.

We just know there's a hindrance stopping Him. But I want to tell you, that hindrance or obstacle it was physical. It was real.

It was visible. It was literal. It was experienced.

You could touch it. You could feel it. You encountered it.

It was a set of circumstance. It involved people. It involved feelings.

It was real. Satan is invisible. You can't see him.

You don't hear his voice. Satan was hindering. But what is the hindrance? It is physical.

It's real. You actually know the people who are hindering you. You know the situations.

You know the words. You know the things going on. You know what the roadblock is.

But do you see it's Satan behind us? They're mere tools of the trade. And it's not just one thing. He raises up to hinder you, to stop you doing the will of God.

Does this thing hinder you doing the will of God? Is it standing between you fulfilling the will of God? Is it there causing you to go, I might as well just give in? Be very careful. Whose fingerprints are on the hindrance? Do you remember in 2 Corinthians 12, verse 7, Paul talking about a thorn in the flesh? Lest I be exalted above measure, that was given unto me, in case, or because of an abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh. What was the thorn in the flesh? I think it was sickness.

And I'm not saying this. I'm just saying what people say. I think it was his eyes.

He had droopy eyes. He got stoned and he couldn't quite see anymore. And he had to write his letters big after that.

I don't believe it was sickness at all. It was no physical injury. Look what it says.

Paul's thorn in the flesh. The messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. And I preached a whole sermon on this before you can look it up.

But listen, what was the messenger of Satan? Punching him. Constantly. Constantly.

It was a messenger. Lord, deliver me. All those in the demonology camp, God help you when you come to this verse.

Paul the apostle, a spiritual giant. Lord, deliver me from them, am I? No. This is one demon you are getting deliverance from.

You can't bind. You can't rebuke. You can't send them to hell.

You know why? God says, I gave him. It's for your good. It's for your blessing.

No, that doesn't fit with my theology. That isn't what the demonology books say. The deliverance course.

Pigs in the parlor. You name it. Are you telling me there's a demon given by God to Paul, to a spiritual man, and God denies the removal? Yes, that's exactly what I said.

Because the Bible teaches it. Do you know what the messenger of Satan was? There was a demon from hell. An emissary.

Who follows Paul about. Just follows him. Every time he comes to a community.

Okay, I'll step in. Stir up opposition. Every single town, village, city.

Paul, you're one of the most loving. Remember he wrote 1 Corinthians 13? Remember that? You know, years ago, I've stopped doing it now. But I used to keep saying in my preaching, I'm a really nice guy, you know.

I really love people and I'm kind. And if you really get to know me. Honestly.

I've stopped that now. But you know why you need to say that? Because it makes no logical sense. What the reaction of some folk.

You're a cult. You're a demon. You're demon possessed.

Are you serious? This is the man who wrote 1 Corinthians 13. What was the hindrance? Opposition being stirred up everywhere. Fifth and lastly, let me finish.

You go, is that where you're going to leave us? No. No way. No way.

Number five, God's greater purpose. Why would God allow Paul to be hindered? By Satan. Or why would God allow you to be hindered? You're doing the will of God.

You have godly desires, spiritual desires. And Satan is allowed to raise up an immovable barrier. And you do not get past it.

You don't get past it. Why would God do that? Why would God allow Satan to seem to have strength? Well you've got to write in a letter, Satan hindered us. And everyone knows it now.

Satan hindered Paul. Doing the will of God. It's written there.

Why would he do that? Surely this is a defeat. In Job we have both the hand of God and the hand of Satan working at the same time. Some people think it's one or the other.

Is this God or is it Satan? Why can't it be both? Because to be hindered by Satan, you see the devil at work. Surely this is all the devil. Some of you when you're opposed and doing the will of God, it stops there.

I am so discouraged. The devil has hindered me. The devil has stopped me.

This cannot be the will of God. One year ago, I walked through that door and I announced to this church. My precious Candice has just departed.

First thing I done when she breathed her last breath was fall down on my knees and worship God. Then I got up and said I'm going to that church. I'll get there just before the breaking of bread.

A message, Brother Soup, Brother Paul said don't end that worship until I get there. I walked in this door. Do you know how much I've screamed going this hinders me.

Hinders me preaching. Hinders me praying. Hinders me serving.

Hinders me ministering. The hand of Satan is all over this. Some people will want to tell you this is all God.

Just rejoice she's in her reward now. Death is an enemy. It's not a friend.

It's the last enemy. To act like death is a friend, that's abnormal. I've been separated from my best friend.

My great love. The one I commune with. Satan's hand is on it.

Don't tell me I'm not hindered in the will of God. Do not tell me that my preaching, every sermon, all my ministry over the past year, isn't hindered in the greatest way of my entire life. Don't tell me that's just God's sovereign will.

Do you remember Job, the fire comes down and consumes everything. What does Job think? Fire came from God in heaven. Job, you got that wrong.

You've done right in worshipping God, but you got that wrong. You can't even see the hand of Satan in this. But I'll tell you what Job did see was the greater purpose of God.

See Paul says, Satan hindered us, but there's more to it. Can I leave you with this? So what was God's greater purpose? Paul is hindered in coming to the church of Thessalonica. He's stopped in his tracks.

He will not do it. So what happened? Two wonderful things happened. And it's in the next chapter.

Let me read it. This is one thing that happened. Paul was stopped.

So what happened? God's greater purpose. 1 Thessalonians 3 and 1. Wherefore, when we could no longer forbear. I couldn't bear it anymore.

We thought it good to be left at Athens alone. Paul said, okay, I'm going to leave myself with no help. And I'm going to send Timothy.

I'll stay at Athens. I don't want to be alone. I don't want to be by myself.

But I couldn't bear it any longer not to be able to see you. Not to be able to be with you. I'm worried about you.

You're a young church. You're young Christians. I'm scared about you.

I'm concerned. Are you still in the faith? Are you still walking with God? Oh, we're secure. Nothing can touch us.

Doesn't sound like that, does it? This is the heart of an apostle. I'm concerned for you. Are you still walking with God this morning? Is your love still aflame for God this morning? So Paul couldn't tolerate it anymore.

I can't come. And so I sent Timothy as our brother and minister of God. And our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ to establish you.

And to comfort you concerning your faith. Do you realize it was in God's greater plan that Timothy go to the church at Thessalonica? Paul is hindered. But do you know what he does? He sends Timothy.

Timothy is going to minister. Timothy is going to strengthen them. Timothy is going to comfort them.

Timothy is going to see if they're okay. I believe this was one of the great plans of God. Timothy has to go to that church alone.

And that no man should be moved by these afflictions. For yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. The Christian is appointed to afflictions.

Why am I going through this? You're appointed to it. It's in the will of God. You're appointed thereto.

For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation. He preached this to young Christians, a young church. As it came to pass.

And you know it. Didn't I warn you? Didn't I preach about it? God help the preachers who aren't preparing the church then. You're going to suffer.

You're going to face tribulation. You're going to suffer persecution. You'll be hated by this world.

Christ taught that as well. Why don't they preach that? Oh, people leave the church. They might be too immature.

They've been hung around here for 20 years playing games. But they're maybe too immature to handle a sin you can suffer for being a Christian. These were young Christians and a young church.

And listen. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith. Lest by some means the tempter hath tempted you and our labour is in vain.

But now when Timotheus came from you unto us and brought us good tidings of your faith and your charity, that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us as we do to see you.

Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith. For now we live if we stand fast in the Lord.

For what thanks can we render to God again for you? For all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God, night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith. Now God himself, since this is the answer to it, I am hindered by Satan. That isn't the last.

You've got an entire chapter. It's God's greater plan. I find out you're okay.

I find out you're feeling for us like we're feeling for you. Timothy is comforting you. The ministry goes ahead.

Saints of God, Satan hindered Paul, hindered them going together. But he didn't triumph. Don't think that.

God just brought forth his plan. I allow Satan to do things, maybe to hinder what you think is God's perfect plan. But I do bring forth my will.

Look at this Timothy ministering there. It is beautiful. So Timothy goes, but there's another thing.

Paul got hindered. What was the result? Can you think? Do you know? What would not have happened if Paul hadn't been hindered by Satan? What would we have lost if Paul had not been brought to a standstill, immovable, frustrated in doing the will of God? You would not have won Thessalonians in your Bible. Paul actually goes on to write this letter, won Thessalonians.

Satan has hindered us. What a defeat. Oh no.

You think that's a defeat? Well, he wanted to go and preach to one church. Do you know what he's done through won Thessalonians? He has preached to churches for 2,000 years in that letter. In nations all over the world.

Some 200 nations of the world. Every nation. Every color.

Every language. For 2,000 years. All because Satan hindered Paul.

Do you hear what I'm saying here this morning? Do you understand what I'm saying? And let me, just as I, give me two more minutes and I'm finished. Listen to this. How this letter finishes.

Won Thessalonians 5. You would have lost these verses. Listen. Verse 16.

Rejoice evermore. It wouldn't be there to encourage you if Satan hadn't hindered Paul. Pray without ceasing.

Can you imagine losing that from your Bible? In everything, giving thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. This is a man hindered by Satan saying this. Give thanks in all things.

Paul, where did you get your theology? Well, actually Satan hindered me. But out of that I wrote, inspired of the Holy Ghost, give thanks in all things. Quench not the spirit.

Despise not prophesants. Can you imagine being without these verses? Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good.

Abstain from all appearance of evil. How many times have I used that verse? And the very God of peace, sanctify you wholly. And I pray God, your whole spirit, body and soul, be preserved blameless.

We wouldn't have a verse with body, soul, spirit mentioned in it together. If this verse hadn't been written. Very important verse.

Be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus. And then let me just give you one last verse. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it.

If Satan had not hindered Paul. If that had not been happened. If that had not happened.

If God had not allowed Satan to break up the road. And hinder this apostle. And stop him in his tracks.

And frustrate him doing the will of God. You wouldn't have this letter in your Bible with all these precious verses. And counsel.

And Timothy wouldn't have went to the church to encourage them. Will you stand with me here this morning. Oh let's just praise him.

Let's just thank him. Let's give him glory. Are you being frustrated in the will of God? Are you here and have you felt the opposition of God? Have you said this is a defeat? Have you been saying the devil has hindered me? Do you feel like the devil has stopped you in your tracks? I want to tell you.

Hold fast Christian. Hold fast. You don't know what God is going to birth out of this.

You don't know what he's going to bring forth. You can't even imagine how God will work out his divine plan. Keep praying.

Keep believing. Keep preaching. Keep standing.

Don't move aside. Don't throw in your confidence of God. Yes the hand of Satan is at work.

Yes he seems to have won. But I want to tell you here this morning. God is greater.

God is sovereign. God is in charge. God will use the hindrance.

God will use Satan to bring forth his glorious plan. Hallelujah. We love you.

We bless you. We thank you Lord Jesus. Be glorified this morning.

Be exalted in our midst. Be exalted in our lives. My God we praise you.

We love you. We desire you. We magnify you.

In Jesus mighty name. Hallelujah.

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