

# Being a Witness for God to Satan

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of teamwork in ministry, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the need to overcome Satan's influence in the world through the power of God.*

**Duration:** 48:23

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:11

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Gods Grace"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of serving God faithfully, highlighting the roles of different ministries in the church and the need for unity and cooperation. It contrasts the Old Covenant with the New Covenant, showing how grace empowers believers to overcome sin and temptation. The speaker delves into the concept of grace as not just unmerited favor but as a power that helps believers in their time of need, enabling them to walk in humility and victory over spiritual pride. The message also touches on the significance of being a witness to Satan by living in holiness and dependence on God, rather than engaging in earthly conflicts or arguments.

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## Transcript

The primary ministry God has given us, given me I mean, is teaching. The Lord has appointed in the church Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds, Teachers, and not all have the same ministry, but they all have to contribute towards the building of the body of Christ. That's what Ephesians 4, 12 says, 11-12, the building up of the body of Jesus Christ.

And one of the wonderful things about the New Covenant is that unlike the Old Covenant where there was the lone prophet who stood for God right from Noah all the way up to John the Baptist. Every prophet was a lone man and you never see any prophet working with another, not even one. The closest you see is probably Haggai and Zechariah towards the end of the Old Testament.

And it's probably they were ministering separately, although around the same time. But there were other prophets in Jeremiah's time as well, and whole other prophets as well. But they never worked together.

We never see a single instance of that in the Old Testament. Even though there were people living at the same time who were prophets. They probably prophesied in different areas.

And one of the reasons was because they didn't have the Holy Spirit within them, like I said yesterday. It would not be possible for them to work together in harmony. You know how human nature is.

You get two people close together and very soon there's conflict. I mean you ask any husband and wife, they'll tell you that. I'm talking about born again husbands and wives.

And if born again people find it difficult to live together, can you imagine how it was in the Old Testament? When they didn't have grace, they didn't have an understanding of Calvary, there was no taking up the cross. There was no understanding of the New Covenant or of grace or anything. And so God kept prophets alone.

But as soon as you turn to the pages of the New Covenant or the New Testament, you find Jesus sending out his people two by two. This is unique. It never happened before.

And you turn to the Acts of the Apostles. Two completely dissimilar people like Peter and John. Completely opposite temperaments.

You see them working together in Acts chapter 3 and raising the lame man from where he was sitting as a beggar. And when the Holy Spirit began the first great missionary move in Acts chapter 13. He doesn't call one person.

It's not the Old Covenant anymore. It's separate me, Saul and Barnabas. It has to be a team because there's a balance that has to be manifested in the ministry.

The body of Christ means what? The first body of Christ was the body of Jesus. And on the day of Pentecost, Jesus got another body. A spiritual body.

He's got a physical body up there in heaven on the right hand of the Father. Now he's got a spiritual body from the day of Pentecost of 120 people who were baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body. So now there were two bodies of Christ.

One in heaven, the physical one, and the spiritual one on earth. And the reason why the church is called the body of Christ is that it's supposed to carry on the same ministry that the physical body of Christ began on earth. It's very important to understand that.

Turn with me to Acts of the Apostles chapter 1 verse 1. In Acts 1.1 we read, you know that Luke was the only non-Jewish person who wrote scripture. He was a Greek. And Luke wrote two books in the Bible.

The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. And both were written to some man called Theophilus, as you see in the very first verse. But if you were to ask Luke, Luke could you give us a title for the gospel that you wrote? This is the title Luke would give.

Verse 1. All that Jesus began to do and teach. That's his own title. The first account I suppose.

That is the correct title for the Gospel of Luke. Inspired by the Holy Spirit. All that Jesus began to do and teach.

Now you're all intelligent people. Let me ask you a question. What would be the title that Luke would give to Acts of the Apostles? The answer is, all that Jesus continued to do and teach.

First in his physical body and now in his spiritual body. There's no difference. It was a continuing of what began in that stable in Bethlehem.

And went all the way to Calvary and the resurrection and the ascension. And from the day of Pentecost onwards continuing. And so the body of Christ can expect the same treatment as the physical body of Christ.

Not a lot of earthly pomp and glory and honor and all that stuff. Born in very shameful circumstances. Most churches in many many places are born in very difficult circumstances.

And killed finally in very difficult, in a shameful way on the cross. Reproach, ridicule, persecution characterized the entire ministry of Christ. And he was finally killed.

And he never wanted to vindicate himself. One of the wonderful things I see about the life of Jesus is that after his resurrection. It's always challenged me and I have learned an example from that.

In 1 Corinthians 15, it says that after he was raised from the dead. In verse 6, 1 Corinthians 15, 6. He appeared to more than 500 brethren at one time. So 500 believers he appeared to.

But he never once appeared to an unbeliever. Can you imagine as a human being the lust there would be in a man to stand before Pilate and Annas and Caiaphas and say. You guys thought you could get rid of me.

Here I am. There was no such desire in the Lord's heart. There should be no such desire in our heart.

To try and, a spirit of cheap triumphalism over non-Christians who hurt us. No, he had no such desire. He lived all his life to please the father.

He lived only to please the father. He was not interested what Herod or Annas or Caiaphas or Pilate or anybody thought of him. And he never wanted to prove himself.

He lived before his father. It's the way that every servant of God must live. Not to prove to unbelievers that here God is on our side.

That's a cheap triumphalism which we don't find in Jesus or in the early apostles. The Old Testament was different. You know when the Jews were, whenever they were defeated in battle.

Throughout the Old Testament it was a proof that God was against them. You read particularly in the book of Judges. When they back slid they were defeated.

When they were faithful to God they won the victory. Throughout the Old Testament the mark of God's presence with the Jewish people was that they would always win against their enemies. And the mark that God had withdrawn from them was that they were always defeated.

The Babylonian captivity being the greatest example of that. And here were Jewish people like Peter, James, John and Paul and all these people who began the New Testament ministry and they find it's exactly the opposite. Now it's not through victory over our enemies that we prove that God is with us.

The enemies are allowed to triumph over us physically. And Jesus Christ being the foremost example. It was a time now we were going to live before God's face and God was proving something not just to the

world around.

I don't know whether you have thought about this verse in Ephesians chapter 3. In Ephesians 3 and verse 10 it speaks here about a mystery in verse 9. Paul says that he was given grace, verse 8, to proclaim this mystery, verse 9, which for ages has been hidden in God. That means there was something that God could not do in the Old Covenant which is hidden. But now it's a mystery because I find that even today many Christians don't seem to understand it.

A mystery is something that can be revealed only by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, I thank you Father that you have hidden these things from the clever and the intelligent, Matthew 11, 25. But you have revealed them to babes.

Do you know that you cannot understand the New Covenant Scriptures unless you have those two qualities of a babe. Humility and simple trust. All your cleverness and intelligence will leave you blind to the real meaning of New Testament Scriptures.

You can analyze it if you are a clever person and do all types of things which isn't presented very beautifully. But you won't get revelation that changes your life. It's a mystery.

The word mystery is found only in the New Testament. There's a mystery of godliness, the mystery of the church. And here it speaks about a mystery which has been hidden for ages.

And he had the privilege to proclaim it. And that is to bring to light this. And that is in order that, listen to this verse 10.

And read it slowly and carefully. The manifold wisdom of God or the many-sided, many-colored wisdom of God may now be made known through the church, not to the world. Acts 1.8 is clear.

You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, to the uttermost parts of the earth. That's one part of our witness. But here's another.

That through the church the wisdom of God may be manifest to the authorities in the heavenly places. And if you read Ephesians, whatever it speaks about heavenlies and authorities in the heavenlies, it's always speaking about the evil authorities in the heavenlies. You see that later on in Ephesians 6. We do not wrestle with flesh and blood, but with evil principalities and powers.

And just one word about that in passing. I remember in the early years of my life before I really experienced being filled with the Holy Spirit, I never knew much about this conflict in the heavenlies. I wasn't very aware of satanic activity in the church.

I had never cast out a demon before that. But the fullness of the Spirit lifted me into another realm where I understood things that were going on in the heavenlies. Then it became easy to have authority over demons and to cast them out wherever I found them in people.

But I saw something there that the Lord said to me from Ephesians 6. Maybe you can turn there for a moment. Verse 12. Our struggle or our battle or our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers and powers and authorities, spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

What the Lord showed me from that verse is, if you want to really battle against satanic forces and overcome and be an effective warrior in the church, you have to make one decision. And you've got to

stick to it. And that is in the first part of the verse.

That you will never again fight with flesh and blood. Do you know that a lot of Christians fight with flesh and blood? They fight with their husbands, they fight with their wives, they fight with their children, they fight with their parents, they fight with their brothers, they fight with their sisters, about all types of silly earthly things. If you look at the things that you argue and fight with others, it's almost always something earthly.

And that's what takes away our energy to fight against the devil. And once I understood that, I said, I'm not going to fight anymore with human beings. Because it saps my energy.

I want to concentrate all my battle against satanic forces. And once I made that decision, I began to get all types of revelations on scripture. I began to see things in scripture that I'd read so many times, but I never got revelation on it.

See, revelation is a New Testament word. In the Old Testament, it was understanding. That's why you had scribes who studied and studied and studied and went to the schools of the prophets, which are like the Bible schools, to study about the law and they could explain everything, chapter and verse and all that.

But revelation was not there. But in the New Testament, the great word is revelation. Even in Ephesians chapter 1, when Paul writes to them, he says, in verse 17, he says, I'm praying that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, will give you, not understanding, but a spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.

Think of phrases like this, spirit of revelation, so that the eyes of your heart be enlightened. He doesn't say, study my letter 25 times. Make notes, try and analyze it and split it up into different subjects, and then you'll understand it.

He doesn't say that. That's all an activity of the mind, of the soul. In the New Covenant, we serve God in our spirit.

Paul says that in Romans 1, he says in Romans 1,4, I serve God in my spirit. And so he says, what we need is revelation in our spirit about these truths. It's all in Scripture.

But here's one of those, Ephesians 3,10, that God's wisdom is to be manifested through our earthly life to the satanic forces in the heavenly places. It's being a witness in the heavenlies for God, a light that shines in the midst of darkness. The whole world is in darkness because it's ruled by the prince of darkness.

The entire world system, which the New Testament calls the world, there are two worlds in the New Testament. One is God so loved the world that he gave his son, which is the people of the world. And then there is another world, love not the world, 1 John 2,15-17, for all that is in the world is not of the Father.

So that's not speaking about people. We have to love the people of the world, but there is a world system which we are not supposed to love, which we are not supposed to have any contact with, because that's under the control of Satan, and we must not allow it to influence us. And that world system, controlled by Satan, and Satan controls the educational system of the world.

He controls the entertainment industry. He controls Hollywood. He controls so many things, television channels.

The devil is in control of all this, and his whole aim is to brainwash people, prepare them finally for the rule of the Antichrist, to control the world. So we, as Christians, have got to be very alert to this. We must not live in fear.

We don't live in fear at all. We are not afraid of the devil. In fact, the devil should be afraid of us, because the Bible says, submit to God, and if you do submit to God completely, and you resist the devil, he will flee from you.

It took me many years to believe that that could be true in my life, but I believe it with all my heart today, that the devil can have no authority over my home, because he was defeated on the cross. He doesn't like to hear that. We must be firmly assured in our heart, that when Jesus died, he not only took away our sins, but he also defeated Satan on that cross.

And that's not proclaimed as much as Christ dying for our sins. And that's the reason why we live in unbelief and fear very often, in difficult circumstances. Think if you did not believe that Christ took away all your sins on the cross, don't you think you would live in constant uncertainty, and torment in your conscience? Have I really been forgiven? Has God really accepted me? What would you say to a Christian like that? Hey, believe.

Christ, he said it's finished. He took away all your guilt on the cross. It's gone.

But there's another thing that was finished on the cross, and that was the power of Satan over God's children. I remember once when a woman was brought to me for prayer, and I asked her to say to the devil, you've been defeated on the cross. The demon from within her spoke to me, and said, I've not been defeated on the cross.

I didn't expect that, because I didn't even think she was demon possessed. So I rebuked the demon. I said, you were defeated on the cross.

You're a liar. Get out of her right now, in Jesus' name. I said, no, I told that woman, now tell the devil you were defeated on the cross.

And she could say it. There's something I learned that day, that the devil doesn't like to be reminded that he was defeated on the cross. And I decided to remind him of that as often as possible, and to teach others that.

He doesn't like to hear you say this. We overcome him by the word of our testimony, it says in Revelation 12, 11. Do you ever speak back to Satan? Jesus spoke to Satan.

He would say, get behind me, I'm not going to do that, etc. And we need to tell him, you were defeated on the cross. Whenever I bring, whenever I lead a person to Christ, I always ask him to renounce every known and unknown contact he had with Satan in his past years.

It's very important. And then I say, now proclaim to Satan, now you've finished praying to Jesus, he's coming to your heart, he's your Lord, now speak to Satan. And tell him, I don't belong to you, Satan.

You've been defeated on the cross, Jesus Christ is my Lord and he defeated you. It's very important, our testimony to Satan. In the Old Testament, there was no such thing.

There's no reference in the Old Testament to involvement with Satan. There was no demon possession in the Old Testament, there was no casting out demons in the Old Testament, because Jesus had to do that. Until Satan was defeated on the cross, until Jesus came to earth, these things could not be done.

So that's why as soon as you turn to the pages of the New Testament, you see conflict with Satan. Jesus and Satan for the first time in the Bible. Satan appears in conflict.

Going back to the first book of the Bible, which is the book of Job. Job is the only book of the Bible that was written before Moses wrote Genesis. And I think he lived 500 years before Moses.

And when God wanted to write a book for the human race, he did not begin with telling us how the heaven and earth were created. We would think that's the most important thing. A lot of people argue about that, the creation evolution argument.

But that's not the first thing God wrote. God said that can wait 500 years. But I want to begin writing a book for the human race, and it begins with the story of a man.

I don't have time to turn to the book of Job right now, but he begins the story of a man who feared God, who lived a blameless life, who turned away from evil. Look at these qualities. A man who brought up his 10 children in a godly way, and when he lost all his property and all his children, he fell down and worshipped God.

That is the first chapter that God wrote for the human race. And it's been a challenge to me. I said, Lord, this is what you're looking for.

You're not looking for people who will get into this creation evolution controversy. You're not looking for people who will argue about when the earth was created. I have no time for that.

You're looking for a man or a woman who is upright, who fears God, who turns away from evil, and even if he's got 10 children, he'll bring them all up in the fear of God. And these 10 children were grown up, and when the father called them to come, I want to pray for you. They came.

Imagine grown up children listening to a dad. What a testimony. And when they came, you know what he prayed for them? He says, you guys have been feasting, and I wonder whether you cursed God, not with your mouth, but in your heart.

Take time to read the first chapter of Job. It's the first page that God wrote for the human race. And imagine Job had a concern that his children should not sin in their heart.

That's the way he brought him up. And then, here's what I'm coming to. There you read in the first chapter, in the first page, about something going on in the heavenlies.

That's about the only book in the Old Testament where you read about Satan. And Satan is doing his old job of accuser, accusing God's people. Right there in the first page of Scripture, Satan's saying, I think he was saying, God asked Satan, where are you coming from? I've been traveling all over the world, and presumably saying, I've seen a lot of hypocrites, God.

A lot of people who take your name, they're a bunch of hypocrites. They don't love you. They love themselves, they love their comfort, they love their money, they love their ease.

And when God hears that, he says, that's true, Satan. But, have you seen Job? He's different. Have you seen him? That man who lives in the land of Uz, perfect and an upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil.

When you read a sentence like that, what is the challenge that comes to you? I'll tell you what came to me. Satan is doing the same job today. Revelation 12, 10 says, he's accusing the brethren before God, day and night.

He's a full-time worker, 24-7, accusing God day and night. That's why we've got to be very careful. He's called the accuser of the brethren.

Be very careful that you don't hold hands with him to accuse the brethren. Because the devil's got a lot of agents in Christendom who hold hands with him and accuse the brethren very often without any knowledge of what's happening. It's a tremendous temptation.

The Christian church is riddled with people who are out to find fault with others. And whenever the devil finds someone like that, the devil says, give me your hand. I love you.

I'll give you ideas what to say. I'll give you information what to say. It's an old story.

And we see that in the very first page that God wrote in Scripture. And isn't it wonderful that God could point out to one man who was upright. He wasn't perfect according to the New Covenant standards.

But according to the level he had, like a child in second grade gets 100% in mathematics. That child doesn't know everything about mathematics, but it's perfect. At his level, he's perfect.

And Job, at his level, without the Holy Spirit, without a Bible, without fellowship, without a church, without any understanding of what we have, according to his level, was perfect. Compared to Job, we're like college students. We should be at a much higher level than second grade students.

But at his level, he was perfect. And God could boast about him. I'll tell you what came home to me when I read that.

I said, Lord, can you point me out like that and one of you should be asking yourself, Lord, can you point me today to Satan in the midst of hypocrisy, accusation, and all types of wrong spirits and christened them and the devil sees it all and gloats over it and rejoices in it and points out to God all the hypocrites he sees all over the world and God can say, yes, but have you seen so and so living in such and such a house in such and such a town? Have you seen his family? Have you seen what he talks about? Have you seen what he writes in his emails? Have you seen what he talks about when he's on the cell phone? Have you seen what he talks about when he's with other believers? That is what it means to be a witness in the heavenlies. And today, God is seeking to show that wisdom through the church it says here in Ephesians 3.10. So I'm concerned more about my witness before Satan, to tell you honestly, than my witness before people. Because even those who, I mean I've been in a local church in Bangalore for 40 years, but even people who know me very well, who've been with me 40 years, they know 10% of my life.

They don't know how I speak to my wife at home, whether I ever get angry, whether I raise my voice. They don't know anything about my financial transactions, whether I'm upright with money, whether I pay my taxes properly. They don't know.

They don't know how I behave on the roads when there's road rage around me. They don't. 90% of my life, they don't know.

And there are areas of my life which even my wife won't know, even though she's lived with me 47 years. What about my thought life? What does my wife know about my thought life? What does she know about what I'm thinking? What does she know even about my attitude to money? Externally I may look as one who doesn't love money, but my mind could be on money all the time. But the devil knows a lot more about you than even your wife or husband or any other person.

And if you can be a witness to him, that God can point you out to him, have you seen so-and-so? That thrills my heart. Lord, if I can hear you say that about me in this new covenant age, of course, the standard God expects of me is far higher than what he expects from Job and even more so because I'm a teacher to whom more is given, more is required. Many of you know the Lord and you know so much of the Word.

Please remember that the more you know, the more God expects of you. It's like going to a higher grade in school. The standard is going to be higher, what's expected of you is going to be higher, the examination is going to be tougher.

And isn't it wonderful if the Lord can point us out? He's not pointing out us as perfectly becoming like Christ. That is still a long way off. Becoming like Christ is like reaching the top of the mountain.

But if you're walking in those steps and living according to the light we have, God can point us out as perfect in our conscience. That's all we can be today, perfect in our conscience. And that is possible.

It was not possible in the old covenant age. In the old covenant it says the law could make nothing perfect. But now, we can be perfect in our conscience.

Turn with me to the book of Hebrews. We read in chapter 9. Hebrews chapter 9 and verse 14. If the blood of speaks about the blood of bulls and goats in verse 13, how much more will the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

A conscience that's all the time perfectly clear through the blood of Christ. That's why it says in Revelation 12 we overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb. It's very important that we live in this way all the time.

Turn with me now to Acts 24. In Acts 24 we read about Paul giving his testimony to Felix who was the king there. And this is what he says when he's accused by the Jews.

The Jews were in the hands of the accuser of the brethren, the devil. And they were accusing the man who was the most upright man on the face of the earth I think, Paul, the apostle. And Paul says to this king in Acts 24 verse 14 This I admit to you that according to the way which they call a sect or a cult or according to what they call heresy.

The Jews called Paul's teaching heresy. They called Jesus' teaching heresy. They said he's not teaching what Moses taught.

They couldn't understand the scriptures properly. Do you know that Paul was called a heretic? Do you know that Martin Luther was called a heretic? Do you know that John Wesley was called a heretic? William Booth was called a heretic? All the great men of God who started a movement that pointed out

something that others had not known up to that time was called a heretic. Every person.

Paul was one of them. He says according to the way that they call a sect or a heresy or a cult I'm not ashamed to say that I serve the God of our fathers. Ok, what does this so called heresy heretic believe? I believe everything that is written in the Bible.

Law and the Prophets is an expression for the Bible. I believe everything written in the Bible. That should be our position.

Let them call us heretics. A lot of people in India have called me heretics for 40 years. It doesn't bother me.

I'm in a tradition of godly men. And what is my mistake? I believe everything written in the Bible exactly as it is. I don't change anything.

I don't modify anything. I believe the New Testament is for today. Every verse of it.

I believe when it says in Romans 6, 14 that sin will not rule over you because you are not under the old covenant but under the new covenant. I believe it with all my heart. I believe everything written in the Prophets.

I believe if I have to give thanks in everything I can give thanks in everything. I believe if I am commanded to rejoice always 24-7 I can do it. I believe everything written in the Bible.

I believe everything written in the Bible. Let them call it heresy. They call it heresy because they don't believe in living in that standard.

They believe living defeated Christian lives and finding an excuse and saying this is grace. Grace is one of the most misunderstood words in Christendom today. You probably heard what I call the unscriptural definition of grace.

God's unmerited favor. You'll never find that in scripture. Those are all expressions invented by some theologians who had no revelation.

Unmerited favor. Do you think that non-Christian is getting God's merited favor? Do you think the terrorist who can breathe oxygen and who is healthy and who eats food freely is he getting merited? No, it's all unmerited favor. Every human being is getting unmerited favor on this earth but it's not grace.

Grace is defined for us in scripture. First of all, the forgiveness of sins. But let me show you two definitions of grace.

First of all, Hebrews in chapter 4 and verse 15. It speaks here about Jesus, our high priest who was tempted in every point as we are. Tell me the temptation you are tempted with.

Hebrews 4.15 says Jesus was tempted with the same thing but he did not sin. He was tempted like us and he did not sin. Now that's not something for us to admire or something for us to follow.

Jesus never once said admire me, admire me, admire me, admire me. Never once. And yet I would guess that the vast majority of Christians do not follow Jesus, they admire him.

What about following him here where it says he was tempted like us and he did not sin. We say that's impossible. Let's go on to verse 16.

Therefore, therefore what? Let us also go to the throne of grace with boldness so that we can first of all receive mercy, forgiveness of our past sins which Jesus never needed because he didn't sin. But so that we can also receive grace to help us like grace helped Jesus. In his time of need, in the time of temptation.

So grace is a power that helps us in time of temptation. If you read it in its context that's exactly what it means. It's more than forgiveness of sins.

And if I don't go to the throne of grace to get that grace I won't get it. You have not because you ask not. Let us go boldly without any fear.

Lord I not only want mercy which is dealing with my past. A lot of people think mercy and grace are the same thing. No, mercy is dealing with my past.

It's an old covenant word. The mercy of the Lord endures forever. In the old covenant there was no grace.

Grace is a new covenant word. It relates to the future. Grace to help me in my time of need in the future.

To help me to overcome the power of temptation like Jesus overcame. Another verse that confirms it. Second Corinthians in chapter 12.

In second Corinthians in chapter 12 when Paul had this thorn in the flesh which I believe was a sickness whatever people may say. It was a messenger of Satan. Verse 7 And he rebuked it resisted it prayed against it and it didn't go.

God's greatest servant on earth at that time God allowed him to have a messenger of Satan harassing his body. It couldn't touch his spirit. His spirit was pure.

But this teaches us that God may allow Satan to afflict our body. He allowed Satan to afflict Jesus' body on the cross. He allowed Satan to kill almost all the apostles and to persecute Christians for three centuries and even today around the world.

That's permitted. A thorn in the flesh a messenger of Satan second Corinthians 12.7 And God used it to humble Paul. And when Paul prayed and he didn't get relief from it God said no I'll give you something else.

Instead of removing the thorn He says I'll give you my grace. Verse 9 My grace is enough for you for my power. Grace is power.

It's perfected in weakness. Or as the living Bible says My power shows up best in weak people. Those who recognize their weakness you know one of the best pictures of that is the branch in the vine.

I mean Jesus used a vine let's use an apple tree. A branch in an apple tree that says I can't produce any apples. I don't have the ability.

But if I stay in the tree the sap a picture of the Holy Spirit will flow into me and I don't know how fruit just comes. It's not by strain and struggle. No.

It's by resting. There remains a rest for the people of God. When we have faith we come into rest in God.

Like we sing in that song there is a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God a place where sin cannot molest. Near to the heart of God. That's why we are supposed to live everyday in the midst of the turmoil of earth.

In the midst of the problems we face to be at rest in God at all times. This is God's will for you. We must enter into this rest.

Hebrews 4.1 says Let us fear lest we miss out on this. For many years I lived in unrest even as a Christian worker. But I can say I've entered into rest and it's made all the difference in my ministry and in my life.

Entering into rest He says My power is made perfect when you recognize your weakness. And even if that branch has been producing apples for 50 years you know what it will say? All my 50 years experience leaves me today just as helpless as on the very first day I still can't produce fruit if I'm not in the tree. When you live like that you have no problem with pride.

Pride comes so easily to a believer. But if you recognize living in rest in God recognizing that it's when you're weak that God manifests His power. You'll have no problem with pride.

God helps say you know Paul honestly acknowledges in verse 7 I had a problem with spiritual pride. Paul he was a very honest man. You know some of us can pretend we have no problem with spiritual pride.

You're fooling yourself maybe you don't have light on it. But every believer has a problem with spiritual pride. But as you battle it and battle it and battle it it becomes less and less and less.

I mean I had a bigger problem with it earlier on in my ministry. It's almost gone. The solution for it is to look at Jesus and depend upon Him all the time to recognize that like the branch in the tree all my experience and all my knowledge is worth zero when it comes to producing fruit.

It still has to be the same old sap that flowed into my life 50 years ago. Without that tree I can do nothing. It's one of the greatest lessons that Christian has to learn that apart from Christ you can do nothing.

And that's the wisdom that God is manifesting to Satan. Have you seen those people? What a lot they accomplish for me. And there's not an atom of pride in them.

Satan can't understand that. Satan was born through pride. He became the devil through pride.

He can't understand how people can be godly overcome sin serve God faithfully and be mightily used and still remain humble you know desiring no honor no position no fame and considering themselves equal to the least of the saints. This is what grace accomplished in Paul. And she's then I'll rejoice I'm quite content verse 10 in weakness insult, distress persecution anything it doesn't make a difference to me.

He could rejoice in all types of circumstances have no complaint about anything because he had grace. Grace is a power. Don't let the devil rob you of that power by just saying it's unmerited favor or just forgiveness of sins.

There's a lot that our heavenly father has written in his inheritance in his will for us to inherit. And you see that in Paul's life particularly when he was about 50 years old he wrote in 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 9 I am the least of the apostles. He had done a lot more than all the other apostles.

I mean handkerchiefs from his body would go and heal the sick. But he says I'm the least of the apostles. Five years later he writes Ephesians and says in Ephesians 3 in verse 8 he goes even lower now.

He says I'm the least of all the saints. I feel myself to be the least of all the believers on earth. You feel like that? Paul did.

Move onward another five years. Paul is 65 now. And he writes in 1 Timothy in chapter 1 in verse 15 I'm the greatest sinner on earth.

Not I was once upon a time. Notice the tense. Don't forget the tense.

I am right now the greatest sinner on earth. How is Paul growing in holiness? The least of the apostles five years later the least of the saints five years later the chief of all the sinners. This is spiritual growth.

How did that happen? It wasn't artificial he's saying you know a lot of us say in prayer I'm such a wretch and all we don't really mean it. Because if we ever heard somebody calling us a wretch behind our back we'd be really upset. Even though that's exactly what we said to God in prayer.

I don't mean that type of hypocrisy. Paul really meant it. And how is it possible? Because he was coming closer to God.

One of the amazing things I've discovered is the closer you come to God the more you walk in the light. You get light on all types of unchrist-likenesses in your life. Little thoughts and attitudes and expressions and even the way you look in your face and look at people and all and you repent and repent and when the light of God shines upon you like Isaiah said Oh God I'm such a terrible sinner I speak all types of wrong things with my lips.

That's what happens when a man sees the glory of God and Paul lived so much in the presence of God that pride just could not come because he was so conscious of unconscious areas where he was unchrist-like. He wasn't living in open sin. He was probably the holiest man on earth at that time but he felt he was right then the greatest of sinners because he had seen the immense holiness of God and he saw what a lot of corruption there still was in him that needed to be cleansed away.

And the Lord points out people like Paul to Satan and says Have you seen Paul? All that he's accomplished he's never made his head big. He doesn't fight with people who accuse him he just leaves them. Jesus said If my kingdom were of this world my servants would fight.

Anyone who fights for anything earthly or argues about earthly things is proving thereby my kingdom is of this world. Jesus said If my kingdom were of this world he told Pilate in John 18.36 my servants would fight but they don't fight because my kingdom is not of this world. Anyone who's coming to the kingdom of heaven will not fight for earthly things.

We will not even fight and argue with people over a doctrine. I've had people coming to my house and want to argue with me about some doctrine I believe which they don't agree with and I say if you want to understand what scripture says I don't mind sitting one hour with you and explaining it to you from scripture but if you're just going to get angry because I disagree with you I say let's change the subject let's talk about cricket. Cricket is a great thing in India where I say there you and I are on the same side right? I don't want to argue with you about this doctrine.

I don't believe in fighting I reserve my energies to fight the devil. Dear brothers and sisters seek to be a witness to Satan. Ask God to fill you with his Holy Spirit so that the light will shine not only on earth but in the heavenlies and God can be proud of you.

Let's pray. Ask God to help you to remember what you have heard and if you can't remember everything get a copy of the message and listen to it again so the truth will sink deep in your heart and make a permanent change. Heavenly Father help us we pray.

To be witnesses for you on earth and in the heavenlies. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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