

Elder Ronnie Loudermilk



But Satan Hindered Us:

1 Thessalonians 2:18, "**Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.**"

Without question, every disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ will have, and should expect, opposition. The world in which we live, our old Adamic nature and the devil will always till the last day, wage their warfare against those that will take up their cross and follow after the Savior, Jesus Christ.

In the text previously cited the Apostle Paul writes to the brothers and sisters of Thessalonica and draws their attention to Satan, who hindered him from coming unto them. Paul felt it needful for the disciples to understand, using his own experience to teach the Church, that there was a being called Satan who would hinder and throw stumbling blocks in the way of the servants of the Lord. Paul understood and taught plainly that the devil could never take one of God's little children out of the hands of their precious Savior (John 10:27-30), but exhorted the saints to be aware that the devil was their enemy in their service to God. In the following two chapters of 1 Thessalonians, Paul addressed at least 6 ways that Satan could/would attempt to hinder them, which are:

(1) By troubles and persecutions of the world (1 Thes 3:3-4, "**these afflictions**", "**suffer tribulation**")! The Apostle Paul suffered many times during his ministry for the cause of Christ and knew that the Thessalonians would often face the

same. According to Paul, those obstacles of persecutions and troubles were the efforts of Satan to hinder the gospel and joy of the saints in Jesus.

(2) By the temptations of this present evil world (1 Thes 3:5, "**lest by some means the tempter have tempted you...**")! The city of Thessalonica was filled with many worldly pleasures. In 2 Timothy 4:10 we read of Demas, who forsook Paul and went to Thessalonica "**having loved this present world**". The devil will often show the child of grace the shine of the world (much like he did Jesus in Matthew 4:8), to tempt them to turn from their service and indulge in the pleasures of this present time.

(3) By bringing past faults and failures of other saints to their minds (1 Thes 3:12, "**the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another...**")! The will of God is for His children to love and forgive one another (Eph 4:32). The devil, to combat the child of God's effort to walk in God's service, will bring to their memory the past offenses, faults and failures of other saints. Paul prayed that the Lord would give them temporal grace to overcome those hindrances to increase and abound in love. In 2 Corinthians 2:11 when Paul would write, "**Lest Satan should get advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices**", he is referencing this very principal. The devil will hinder our fellowship with God by helping us remember our brother or sister's faults that should be forgiven and forgotten.

(4) By bringing to remembrance past sins (1 Thes 3:13, "**To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God...**")! One of the devil's greatest devices against the child of God is his ability to whisper to them the remembrance of their sins of yesterday. In Proverbs 16:28 we read of the "whisperer" who "**separateth chief friends.**" Even though this verse of scripture has other practical applications, it's always good to remember that the craftiest whisperer of all is the old dragon who, as a roaring lion (1 Pet 5:8), will whisper his roars of remembrance in your ears to separate you from the temporal fellowship of your greatest friend, Jesus Christ the Savior.

(5) By the fleshly, carnal temptations of lust (1 Thes 4:3, "**that ye abstain from fornication**")! The world that the disciples of Thessalonica lived in was corrupt. The world that we live in here in 2016 is no better, if not worse. The

devil often uses these tools of fornication to hinder the child of grace from walking in obedience.

(6) By clouding the mind of the child of grace, preventing their focus on Christ's second coming (1 Thes 4:16, "**the Lord himself shall descend from heaven...**")! The devil knows he has but a short time (Rev 12:12). When the Lord returns, he will be cast into the lake of fire. Oh how he attempts to blind the child of grace of this truth. I heard an old preacher once say, *"Oh devil, you troubled me much, but when the Master comes you will have a terrible end."* I love that saying, it comforts me much to know that my Big Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ is coming one day to defeat the play ground bully, who has caused many to fear and stumble.

In closing I would like to remind the reader of three important truths:

(1) God is greater than the devil! The Bible teaches us this truth over and over. When Jesus walked on this earth in His public, personal ministry, the devil's feared saying "**What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?**" (Matt 8:29).

(2) God's grace is greater than Satan's devices! Paul, when he prayed three times unto the Lord received this answer, "**My grace is sufficient for thee...**" (2 Cor 12:9). God's grace is sufficient to help the child of promise to overcome the efforts of the devil. What a comfort it is to know that the Lord has and will equip you to win the battle against the already defeated enemy. This doesn't mean that we should look for the fight, but be consoled that God's grace is able to help when the fight comes to us.

(3) God's grace is able to repair and restore what the devil has affected by the wiles of his efforts! The man of the country of the Gadarenes could tell this truth well. Satan had tormented this child of God, but Jesus freed him of the devil's grasp. The man, who at one time lived among the tombs, would sit with the Lord. How far the Lord brought him! Jesus is able to do the same today. If Satan has troubled you sore, dear child of grace, look to Jesus asking Him for His help and temporal grace. God is able! Praise His Holy Name!

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