
A Target of Satan's Envy

By David Wilkerson

March 19, 2007 Dearly Beloved:

PRAISE GOD FOR HIS TENDER MERCIES.

I have a short message for those who have experienced a painful, overwhelming situation. I am not speaking now to those enjoying a time of rest from suffering, who are not in any kind of pain or sorrow. Thank God for those times of quiet rest.

I receive so many letters from precious followers of Jesus who are living with incredible inner sorrow and crisis situations: divorce, children on drugs or in jail, the death of a spouse. A sister who is so in love with the Lord but grieves over the death of three of her children who suffocated in a fire. A pastor who grieves for his wife, who left him and his children for a lesbian lover. It goes on and on — so many godly people burdened with such grief and pain.

I have a message for you who suffer sorrow, who grieve or live in pain. In Psalm 40, David cried, "Innumerable evils have compassed me about... Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me" (vv 12–13). "Let all those that seek you rejoice and be glad in thee... But I am poor and needy; the Lord thinketh upon me; thou art my help and my deliverer; do not tarry, O my Lord" (vv. 16–17). I have been so blessed and comforted by this one line in verse 17: "The Lord thinketh upon me." Imagine that — the Lord God who created all things, the God of this universe, is thinking about me! Even now, at this very hour, his thoughts are about you in your hour of need.

When Israel was captive in Babylon, mourning over the loss of homes and families and enduring grief and trouble, God sent word to them through Jeremiah: "For I know my thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not evil, to give you an expected end" (Jeremiah 29:11). God said to his people, "Your nightmare is going to end. I have only good, loving thoughts toward you, and if you seek me with all your heart, you will find me" (see Jeremiah 29:11–13).

God is not mad at you. Godly people do get afflicted, so do not waver in your trust in God. In times of stress and feelings of loneliness and regrets, go to prayer. Pour your heart out to the Lord. He is thinking of you — he is at work for you.

A closing word: Our Bible school, Mount Zion School of Ministry, is now accepting applications for the fall term beginning August 27, 2007. This Bible school has been mightily blessed by the Holy Spirit. Our total enrollment is 132 students. It amazes me to see how the Holy Spirit calls such dedicated students to this campus. They are learning how to seek God, to know his voice and to walk a life worthy of Christ. This is a school you can send your children or grandchildren to, knowing they will grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord. Students may register online at www.mzsom.org. Or, write to Mt. Zion School of Ministry, Admissions Department, 74 Harrison School Road, Grantville, PA 17028.

Thanks to all our dear readers and friends who support our mission outreaches all over the world. We pray in all our funds — not one dollar is from the government — and it is all by faith. In over 50 years of helping the poor and needy, God has not once failed to meet every need. God be praised.

His bondservant,
DAVID WILKERSON

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Newsletter: A Target of Satan's Envy

March 19, 2007 If you are a Christian who seeks God with your whole heart, you are a target.

This message is for believers who are experiencing a season of severe testing. I'm speaking to those who endure deep trials and are worn out mentally, physically and spiritually. We live in a time of great stress, when trials can come upon us suddenly and leave us overwhelmed, weary and confused.

I thank God for every Christian who right now is enjoying a season of good times. Your life isn't under great stress, and you don't have to face trying tests or deep pain. I'm grateful to the Lord for providing such seasons in his children's lives.

Yet we know from Scripture that storms and great trials come to all who have truly given everything to Christ: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous" (Psalm 34:19). Moreover, if you hunger after the Lord — if you're determined to seek him with your whole heart, setting your mind and soul to obey his Word — you will continually be a target of the devil's envy.

For centuries, great Christians have tried to probe the causes and reasons why the godly suffer. My personal library is filled with such books. Yet answers seem elusive. Whenever I'm in the midst of a deep trial, I find it hard to apply any truths I've learned to my own anguished heart. Instead, I find myself praying, "Lord, I have to draw from your Word for my present need."

For many who endure long trials, questions abound within: "Lord, did I grieve you in some way? Is there something in my life that hinders you from hearing my cry? I've been faithful to your Word. So, why this never-ending trial? The Bible says you won't allow me to suffer more than I'm able to bear. Why am I at this breaking point?"

I'm convinced the most trying of all spiritual battles take place in the mind of the believer. Many Christians endure tremendous mental anguish, battling thoughts that are oppressive, un-Christ-like, fearful. They can't shake depressing memories of past failures. And they end up feeling not worthy of fellowship or God's blessings.

I don't have answers for all the reasons why we believers suffer so much, but I do know one thing is certain.

Once you set your heart to seek the Lord, determining to lay hold of his promises, you become a target of Satan's envy. There comes a time in every believer's life when he faces a choice: he can remain lukewarm in his faith, or he can cross a line to follow Jesus with all his heart. Whenever we choose to lay hold of Christ fully, we stir up the bowels of hell. And Satan sends his demonic hordes to unleash hell's wrath in our lives.

A Barna survey reveals that 70 percent of people who claim to be born again don't consider their walk

with God to be the most important thing in their life. This is an absolute tragedy. Yet it tells us why Satan is so stirred by the small minority who set themselves apart to serve Jesus.

The devil recognizes something in every devoted Christian — something that's absolutely destructive to his kingdom. It happens when a child of God resolves to trust the Lord through everything, drawing near to him in spite of all pains and difficulties. Satan realizes such a Christian is going to win others to Jesus, both by prayer and by enduring great suffering with his faith intact.

When Satan sees this kind of faith, he knows the foundations of hell are being shaken. So he commands his principalities to abandon their usual posts near cold, indifferent, pleasure-loving believers. And he redirects them to seek out every fiery-hearted Christian whose actions show he's moving into the fullness of Christ.

Consider the apostle Paul. When this zealous persecutor of the church received a revelation of Christ, he set his heart to fast and pray — and immediately he became a prime target of Satan's wrath. The devil wasn't just fearful of what Paul's conversion would mean to his work on earth. He was fiercely jealous of Paul's revelation of paradise.

You see, Scripture tells us that Lucifer had been cast down from heaven, out of the glory of God's presence. And ever since then, the devil cannot endure the thought that anyone "lesser" than himself could taste anything of paradise. He is totally envious of anyone who is blessed to behold what he lost for eternity.

Paul writes, "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me" (2 Corinthians 12:7). Now, God would never unleash a demonic power on any of his servants. Though Job was buffeted by Satan, the Lord put limits on the enemy's power to afflict him. Satan can harass us, but he cannot destroy a single life.

According to Paul, this hellish hound was permitted by God in his life to keep pride out of his heart. The devil assigned this messenger to afflict Paul's flesh, causing him physical and mental pain. And Satan instructed the demon to be unrelenting in his attack: "Buffet Paul repeatedly. Hit him day after day, never letting up." But envy had blinded Satan's eyes about Paul. What the devil used to try to bring him down — a barrage of physical and mental attacks — God turned to Paul's good.

Surely the powers of darkness had accompanied Saul as he rode along the road to Damascus. After all, here was Satan's prize servant: a zealous, "God-fearing" religious leader who literally did the devil's work. Saul was on his way to round up Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem, where they would be imprisoned and tortured.

But when Saul was struck from his horse and given a vision of Christ, he immediately fell on his face, crying, "Lord Jesus, show me what to do." He refused to eat or sleep for three days, focusing his entire

being on the Lord.

What do you think happened in hell at that moment? The devil's entire kingdom erupted. I picture Satan calling an emergency meeting, where he appointed a special messenger to be sent on a lifelong assignment: to focus every weapon of hell against Saul. Satan instructed this messenger, "Go after that man with all your force. You have the entire arsenal of hell at your disposal. Your one mission is to destroy Saul's faith."

I can imagine the torments this demon brought upon Paul: bombardments of lies, reminders of every Christian he tortured, memories of every past thing he did against Christ's name. Likewise, Satan does the same thing with every on-fire believer today. He sends evil principalities to hover over our lives and whisper lies to us with one intention: to destroy our faith.

These attacks were the result of Satan at one time losing his own intimacy with the Father. This is one reason why the devil continually tries to bring down God's saints. He wants to rob them of their rest, their intimacy, their hope of paradise with the Lord — in short, all the things he lost when he was cast out of heaven.

Think back on your walk with God. Perhaps at one point you were lukewarm, and you hungered for more of him, longing for him to use you. So you made a decision to cross a line of total devotion to Jesus. Suddenly you were drawn to prayer as never before, and God's concerns became your concerns. You asked Jesus to revive your heart, pour out his Spirit on you, make you an intercessor and give you his burdens.

I tell you, that was the time when you became a target of Satan's wrath. You may say, "But that period didn't last long in my life. I don't have that kind of zeal anymore. Most days I live under a cloud of despair." None of that matters. Even now your faith may be staggering, about to collapse. But Satan knows this truth: there is still a spark of fire smoldering underneath your troubles. And as long as those glowing embers are there, they could burst into red-hot flames at any time.

That is why Satan won't let up on you. It's why you are being buffeted. He is determined not to allow any chance for the Holy Ghost to rekindle that flame in you. For this reason, Paul warns us not to be ignorant of the devil's wiles: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11). If we ignore the enemy's tactics, we may allow him to gain a foothold, or advantage, over us.

Some Christians believe we shouldn't even mention Satan's name, that this would somehow glorify him. But the Bible makes clear that if we are taught about the enemy's devices, we have no reason to fear him. Indeed, we're told that in these last days, Satan has come on the earth with great wrath, so we had better know his strategy. Paul writes, "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (11:14–15).

Paul's warning here is crystal clear: Satan uses ungodly people as messengers of his wrath and envy. And, according to the apostle, these people have infiltrated the church. Have you met such people? Have you ever been the target of their wrath, as they spoke words that cut to your soul, words you knew were straight from the devil's lips?

You are a target of their reproach because your faith and zeal are a rebuke to their pleasure-loving lifestyle. In short, their words are Satan's envy raging against you. Yet the light of the gospel exposes every work of darkness, enlightening God's people to the enemy's wiles.

The godly King David writes of a time when his soul was cast down. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.... I will say unto God my rock, why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" (Psalm 42:5, 9).

When David wrote this Psalm, his spiritual state was not cold or lukewarm. In fact, he says, he panted and thirsted after God (see 42:1-2). Yet it was during this time that Satan sent his messengers to taunt and harass David. And they threw this piercing accusation in the godly man's face: "David, where is your God?"

This broke David's heart, causing him to cry, "My tears are my meat night and day, while they continually say to me, 'Where is your God?'" Note that the question Satan put to him was not, "Where is God?" but, "Where is *your* God, David?" In other words: "Where is the evidence of God's care and deliverance for *you*?"

When David wrote this, he was on the run from his son Absalom. He resorted to hiding in caves, and suffered anguish on every level, mentally, physically and spiritually. Most of Israel had rejected him, including some of his closest friends. David spoke of his deep pain over this, writing, "They continually say..." (Psalm 42:3). But, who were *they*?

Sometimes Satan finds people to say hurtful, damaging things out loud to us. But mostly, the enemy uses his demonic powers, sending them to shake our faith. They whisper to us subtle but devastating thoughts formulated by the wicked one himself. And even the godliest believers are not immune to such attacks. Such was the case with David, who heard these accusations: "You have no home. Your own family has rejected you. You've got problems of all kinds, David. How could you claim to be God's anointed?"

Likewise, Satan's messengers inject the same accusations into our minds today, causing us to question: "Lord, where are you in this crisis? Why am I facing this cup of pain, with so much stacked against me? And why don't you hear my prayers? I cry out to you day and night, but I hear nothing. Do my tears mean nothing to you?"

We know that David walked closely with the Lord, trusting in his faithfulness. He was a praying man

who called on the Lord in every matter of life. And the Bible says God was with David everywhere he went, in all that he did. Satan must have envied this man, and the revelations he received from heaven, which are reflected in the Psalms.

It is no surprise that Satan sent an evil spirit to possess Saul, a compromised king, who would manifest hell's rage against David: "Saul eyed [envied] David from that day and forward" (1 Samuel 18:9).

Make no mistake: Satan didn't care about David's fighting ability, or his artistic talents, or his winning personality. None of those things in themselves were threats to his dark kingdom. Rather, there was something about David's faith, about his relationship with the Father, that caused hell to quake. And that made David "Target Number One" in Satan's sight. This man was chased after, mocked, and brought to suffer for one reason: he walked closely with God.

The same thing happens today with every genuine seeker of God. Satan sees that the Lord is with such a believer, and that he himself is forsaken by God — and it arouses his envious rage. Indeed, Satan's envy of David was exposed through Saul's jealous outbursts: "Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David...and Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually.... And Saul sought to smite [kill] David" (18:28–29, 19:10).

Note that, although Saul raged at David, he was also afraid of him: "Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him" (18:12). Here is a clear picture that the devil is afraid of any righteous, praying, trusting man or woman of God. James exhorts us with this truth, reminding us of an important weapon we have been given: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

Satan envies and fears most those who have been with God in prayer and are determined to stand up and fight in faith. Satan fears even a small army of those who are girded up in faith for a fight. He cowers before those who are up on their feet and ready to resist. And because he fears you, his design is to neutralize your fighting spirit.

The devil does this by trying to flood your mind with defeating, distracting, hellish thoughts that breed mistrust and questions about God's power. He'll scream into your mind and spirit, "It's no use fighting anymore. You're too weak from your personal struggles. You're never going to be an overcomer. The powers of hell are just too big to overcome. So, you might as well relax. You don't need to be so intense about the battle anymore."

Beloved, this is all a distraction! Satan's entire strategy is to get you to take your eyes off the victory of the Cross. He wants to turn your focus onto your weaknesses, your sins, your shortcomings — and that's why he turns up the heat of your present problems and sufferings. He wants to make you believe you aren't strong enough to go on. But your strength is not the point; Jesus' strength is.

The fact is, we're all going to be in a fight until we die or Jesus comes back first. We may be given

seasons of calm, times of reprieve. But as long as we're on this earth, we are engaged in spiritual warfare. And there simply is no end to these battles. That's why Paul says Jesus has given us weapons that are mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. We have been equipped with weapons that Satan cannot withstand: prayer, fasting and faith.

Some Christians have become so focused on their pain or trial that they've become comfortable with it. When you meet such believers, the only thing they can talk about is their struggle. You never hear any mention of the victory Christ has won for them.

May it never be so with God's people. The time has come for us to get our focus unstuck from our current afflictions. We must take our eyes off our trials and fix them on the Captain of this war. Jesus holds the key to all victory, and he has promised us: "I have supplied you with every weapon needed for battle. And I am ready and willing to give you strength in times of weakness."

Often when we say, "I've crossed the line for Jesus," the truth is we have simply come to fully trust in Christ's "blood sacrifice." In Genesis 15, God made a glorious covenant with Abraham. He instructed the patriarch to take a female heifer and a female goat and cut them in two. Then Abraham was to take a turtle dove and a pigeon and lay them on the ground, head to head. Abraham did as he was instructed, and as these creatures lay bleeding, vultures began to descend on the carcasses. Suddenly, Abraham felt a terrible darkness surrounding him. What was this darkness?

It was Satan in a panic. You see, the devil had overheard the covenant God was making with Abraham. The Lord had promised to make Abraham a mighty nation and to bless his seed forever. Moreover, God pledged to give Abraham the land of Canaan. It was this last promise that stirred up Satan's envy. Canaan was the devil's territory, a land of idolaters, his demonic foothold on the earth. And now God was saying Abraham's seed was going to come and take it from him.

Beloved, when you enter into covenant with the Lord, he speaks good things to you. He promises, "I'm going to keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the Father's throne." "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world" (2 Peter 1:4).

How do you think Satan reacts when he sees all of this happening in your life? First he sees the glorious promises of the New Covenant becoming yours, as you give your life to Jesus. That sends the devil into a jealous rage. Then he sees your firm resolve to go all the way with the Lord. At that point, there is only one way for him to react: all of hell goes into a panic!

Satan recognizes that you have fully trusted the "blood sacrifice" of Jesus to deal with your fleshly desires and put them to death. And he knows this means his kingdom of darkness is now being challenged. So he sends vultures down to try to consume your sacrifice. What are these vultures? They're thoughts that are birthed in hell, coming to harass you and cause you to question Christ's faithfulness to you.

All it takes is one prayerful, trusting Christian to shake the very foundations of hell. And if that's true of you, then you may be feeling the swipes of vultures sent by Satan to make you falter.

I know many devoted believers who right now are battling a deep sense of insecurity. They struggle daily with feelings of worthlessness. They wonder, "If I were really faithful, I wouldn't be so troubled all the time, so ineffective in my witness, so financially strapped." No, it is all the work of hell's vultures, who come to steal the sacrifice.

God has given us a spiritual strategy to resist the envy and wrath of Satan. What did Abraham do when the vultures came? Scripture says he chased them away. Likewise, the Lord has shown us a way to deal with menacing vultures. We don't have to be afraid of the devil's attacks, because we've been given mighty weapons of warfare.

Whenever any voice of doubt or questioning of God comes into my mind, I have to line it up against what I know about my loving Lord. I can't accept any thoughts as true if they are based on simply what I'm feeling in the moment. They have to be measured against Jesus' promises to me about himself and about the victory he has won for me.

Simply put, if thoughts come to me that are accusing — if they cause doubt and fear, or are condemning, or bring a sense of rejection — I know they are not of God. We all have to be prepared for such horrible thoughts to come. Even the Lord Jesus was subject to these kinds of thoughts from the enemy during his wilderness temptation.

I have fellowshiped with some of the saintliest servants of God on earth. Many of them have told me that after dedicated times of seeking the Lord — fasting for days, setting their mind and heart on the Lord's concerns — they were plagued with awful doubts even about the very existence of God.

One godly prophet confessed to me, "Recently, I've been harassed by evil thoughts. It's the first time in my life this has happened." But the Holy Spirit assured him: "Stand still in faith. These are not your thoughts; they are from Satan. The devil wants to convince you that you're as evil as the thoughts he sends. He wants to stagger your faith. Just hold on, and trust the Lord. You're not going to sink. You're under attack, because you have shaken the foundations of hell."

Like Abraham, my friend chased away those vultures, using God's Word in faith. Likewise, Jesus resisted Satan's temptations in the wilderness, and the devil left him for a time. We can know God will do the same for us, if we will stand in faith, trusting in his promises.

So, dear saint, when vultures come at you, bringing thoughts of unworthiness and insecurity, chase them away with God's Word. The sacrifice that the Lord has led you to make is pleasing to him, and he will honor it. Hallelujah! ☐

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