

“THEREFORE, REJOICE, O HEAVENS AND YOU WHO DWELL IN THEM! BUT WOE TO YOU, O EARTH AND SEA, FOR THE DEVIL HAS COME DOWN TO YOU IN GREAT WRATH, BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT HIS TIME IS SHORT!”

A roaring lion, round he goes,
No halt nor rest he ever knows;
He seeks the Christians to devour
And slay them by his dreadful pow'r {*LSB 522:6*}.

The devil is a roaring lion seeking to devour us. Daily, we are attacked and assaulted in the church pew, in your living room, at your place of work, in the classroom, in the nursing home, in your heart and in your mind. This is a battle that is waged right here, right now, every day of your life. It is the battle for your heart and soul and mind; it is the battle for your very life.

In our Epistle, St. John tells us how this war began. Some time, after God had ceased from creating the heavens and the earth, Satan, in his pride, began to believe that he should be higher than God and so, he rebelled against God. The devil's pride led him to believe that he was the most important thing in heaven and on earth, and so he fought against the Lord, and against His anointed Christ. War broke out in heaven between the evil angels led by their captain Satan and the armies of God, led by the angel Michael.

St. John tells us that Michael & his angels were victorious and that Satan “was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him (v. 9).” And that means for you and I today, the devil is as a prowling lion seeking to devour us on this earth, and John warns us, “he knows that his time is short (v. 12)!”

I. Satan has one chief weapon -- the lie. Jesus warns us that he is “the father of lies (John 8:44).” God’s Word is truth. Satan has only the lie and so he comes to deceive us and try to make us doubt the truth of God’s Word.

Last Sunday in Bible class, we looked at how the great deceiver tempted Eve in the Garden. The very first words that liar speaks is, “Did God really say...” The evil one wants Eve to doubt what God has said.

And, “Did God really say,” is what he continues to whisper to you today. He whispers his lies to deceive us, to make us doubt God’s Word, to lead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. “Did God really say that He loved you?” “Did God really say that He forgives you all your sins?” “Did God really say the grave is defeated in the resurrection of Jesus?” “Did Jesus really say that He has prepared a place in heaven for you?” “Did God really say He would never punish you?” “Did God really say that all things work to good?”

The devil’s weapon is the lie. And, we by our fallen, sinful natures are too weak to stand against his lies.

II. But, we learn the Good News of the Christian faith in our text, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb (v.10-11a).

Our Savior came from heaven above in human body, of virgin mother. And the Bible tells us, “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil (1 Jn 3:8).” Satan, which means “accuser,” by the way, continually accused us of the guilt of our sin. So, Jesus came and the very Son of God took our sin upon Himself and carried

those sins to the cross. Our Savior's blood flowed from His sacred wounds to wash and cleanse us from our sin. Our sin is gone, so the accuser no longer has anything to accuse of us. The book of Hebrews says it this way,

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery (He 2:14).

Satan's head has been crushed. He has been defeated. He has been overcome by the blood of the Lamb Jesus. He has been hurled down from heaven.

III. And, did you notice what John tells us? "He was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him (v. 9)." That's right – the devil was cast out of heaven and thrown to this earth. And, he knows that his time is short. He knows that the battle was lost when Jesus' died on Calvary's cross. His fate was sealed when Jesus broke the seal of the tomb on Easter morning. He knows that he'll never win. He knows that when Jesus comes again, he will be cast into hell forever and ever. And, he wants to take as many to hell with him as possible – including you. The devil knows he'll never rule in heaven, and so he makes his short reign on earth as miserable and painful as possible for those saints of God who feebly struggle in the Church Militant.

In baptism, we become one with our Victor Christ. Everything of Christ's becomes ours -- His death, resurrection, ascension in heaven, eternal life, and -- AND -- His warfare with the father of all lies. Immediately after His baptism, the great deceiver came to Jesus to make Him doubt the words of His Father. After our baptism, the great deceiver comes to make us doubt the words our Father.

The earth is the devil's terrain, at least temporarily. Sin and evil are all around us. There are times in your life and mine when it may appear as though the devil is having his way, whether it be crime and vandalism, the alcohol and drug temptations that challenge us and our children, the total disregard for marriage or a temptation to sin what we cannot shake. We look around -- **or even within** -- and it seems the old enemy looks like he's winning.

The warfare is long and the battle is hard. And perhaps, even often, you may feel as though you have been driven to despair itself, because the might of the evil foe is more than you can bear.

Where is our hope? God's Word tells us, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come (v. 10)." It is in times of fear and sorrow that our Lord comes with a word of hope. Have no fear. Christ comes to you through His Word -- the spoken Word and the Visible Word of the Sacraments -- to give you faith, to forgive you for your weakness and doubts, and to strengthen you in your fight. God's Word gives hope and the certainty of an eternal future free from despair, sorrow, and pain.

When the devil is taunting and accusing you, causing you to doubt whether or not you have been saved, causing you to question whether God loves you, making you think you have committed a sin that God won't forgive, it is then that you must cling all the more to God's Word of forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ.

Not only does God's Word assure you that the victory is yours through Jesus Christ, but God's Word assures you that you are not alone. In fact, you have never been alone in this battle.

On our bulletin cover this morning, the leader of God's army of angels, St. Michael stands with sword in heaven. Our cover reminds us that St. Michael and all of God's great army of angels are on our side. Daniel in our Old Testament reading teaches us that Michael is the protector of God's people who comes to our aid in times of struggle and suffering. When you have Jesus Christ and his holy angels at your side, you have nothing to fear.

And, remember that St. John told us that the devil had been hurled down, out of, heaven. When we breath our last and receive our transfer to the Church Triumphant of heaven, the devil will not be there to tempt and torment us. In the Church Triumphant of heaven, we will wear the crown of victory and we will rest from all our earthly struggles in the bosom of Jesus forever and ever, without end. And, with the angels, the archangels, and all the company of heaven, we will sing the praises of the Lamb who was slain so that we may live. Amen.