Satan's Rage & Our Endurance — Delivery Transcript

Revelation 12:1–6 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, January 30, 2022 · *Kingdoms in Conflict*

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And thank you, band, for leading us in worship. If you got a Bible, we're finally getting back to the book of Revelation. So you can turn there, Revelation chapter twelve. If you're first time to Broadview, you're like, oh man, Revelation. That's the book they told me not to read when I became a Christian. Who told you that? They should have never told you that. It's a wonderful book of the Bible that talks about the triumph of Christ over any and all competitors. It's been a fascinating journey. In our church, we typically pick a book of the Bible and work our way through it line by line, verse by verse, chapter by chapter, until we're done.

And that we've been doing that with the book of Revelation since Easter. Now we've taken some breaks from time to time because Revelation is one of those books you want to eat in small bites, otherwise it does get a little bit overwhelming. And we've been on a break since advent of last year and we took a break for January. But now we're diving back in and if it's your first time here you really picked the best Sunday ever to come to Broadview because we're kind of at a section in the book of Revelation that has a way of kind of tying all the threads together and summarizing in a very overarching way all that's been described up to this point and all that's going to be described after this point.

It's a really interesting chapter of the Bible and has a way of just painting this picture of a cosmic battle between good and evil, the kingdom of God and the enemies of God trying to oppose that kingdom. And so the title of the series is kingdoms in conflict because there are in fact two kingdoms that are diametrically opposed to one another in this world and we're caught up in the front of that battle of them going to blows against one another. The

kingdom of light or the kingdom of God, and then the kingdom of darkness or the prince of the air.

Who is Satan. So you may say to yourself, surely you don't believe in something as old-fashioned as the devil and the demons and stuff like that. That's just something they believed back in the day. You don't buy that nonsense. You seem like a smart educated person and thank you. I think I am. I try to be a smart, educated person, but I still believe in things like Satan and demons. In fact I think there are proofs that you could point to today that do not make sense outside of some sort of supernatural spiritual explanation of certain kinds of hostilities against certain movements or ideas that in fact I think paint a powerful picture that Satan and demons do exist and they are active in the world.

And these two kingdoms are in fact in conflict, and we're caught in the middle, and we have to find ways in which we can overcome that opposition that we face on a day-to-day basis, which is what today's passage is all about. If you're new to the book of Revelation, in chapter one there's this vision of Jesus risen from the dead. In chapter two and three he writes these letters to local churches there in Asia Minor. Chapter 4 and 5, we see this throne room vision of heaven, the lamb seated at the center of the throne, who takes a scroll from the hand of God on the throne.

And he begins to break the seals on the scroll and unfold it. And as he breaks those seals, certain events begin to transpire on the earth. Things like famine and hunger and war. And false religion and all sorts of things. There's the destruction of the plant life, destruction of the air, destruction of the seas, all sorts of judgments that fall on the earth. And they're paired in groups of seven. There's seven seals, there's seven trumpets, and we'll find later on in our journey seven bowls of wrath that are going to be poured out on the earth before Jesus returns.

In our chapter, chapter 12, it's kind of a pause in the action between the seven trumpets. And the seven bowls of wrath. And it's almost as if John presses pause on the movie and says, let me take you behind the scenes to show you what's really going on. And what's really animating some of the terrible things you're seeing in the world. And before we read the passage, you need to know that it is highly apocalyptic in its genre. And all I mean by apocalyptic is that John is going to use symbols and metaphors and very picturesque language to communicate with us.

And it's going to sound very, very weird, okay? You need to know that up front. I mean, we're talking about a pregnant woman with stars on her head who's giving birth to a baby that's going to be consumed by a dragon. All right, sounds like a weird sci-fi movie that you would watch on a sci-fi channel, which I love that channel, but it just sounds out of control. And so you need to know that's apocalyptic imagery. And what apocalyptic literature does is it tries to use symbols and metaphors and picturesque language to communicate real truths.

And so while we may not take these symbols literally, we should take them seriously. Alright? It's not as though they don't point to actual realities. On the ground. The illustration I've used in the past is imagine if you were in some third world country and you'd never seen an iPhone or electricity or anything like that, and then you get immediately transplanted to New York City and you see all the tech around you and iPhones everywhere and then you get immediately transported back to the third world country and they say, what did you see?

Well you don't have words like iPhone or technology or screens or computer chips or silicon. You don't have any of that in your frame of reference. And so you try to use what you do have to communicate what you saw. And that's what John's struggle is. He's seeing things he doesn't know how to describe with limited tools, the language that he had available to him was not able to paint perfectly what he saw in this vision. And so he uses these metaphors. And imagery and he basically says the impact on the world at the end of days, these judgments that are going to fall are ultimately animated by Satan himself.

So Revelation twelve gives us insight into Satan's rage, the rage of Satan against God throughout redemptive history. And so I titled the message Ragin' Satan. This sounds so cool. But that's totally cheesy from a pastor. All right, Ragin' Satan. Revelation chapter 12, verse 1, a great sign appeared in heaven, and it was a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant, and she cried out in labor, in agony, as she was about to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven and there was a great fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven crowns.

The tail of the dragon swept away a third of the stars in heaven, and hurled them to the earth. And the dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she did give birth it might devour her child. She gave birth to a son, a male, who is going to rule all nations with an iron rod, and her child was caught up to God and to his throne. And so the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared by God to be nourished there for 1,260 days.

All right. How many of you read that and it just went right over your head? Okay, who's ready to come up and preach the sermon after that? That's how I feel. Yeah, I mean, crazy image, crazy pictures, it's just fascinating cast of characters. You've got a dragon, a pregnant woman giving birth to a child. Now first thing we got to answer to make sense of what's going on here are who are these characters, who do these people or these entities represent. And thankfully, John actually defines two of the three characters for us.

So thank you, John, for doing that. He defines the child pretty easily because he says the child is going to rule all nations with an iron rod, and the child also got caught up to heaven to the throne room of God. Who do you think the child is representative of? That's right. When in doubt in church, just say Jesus. You probably get the right answer, right? Jesus,

that's right. Alright. The other thing that's defined for us is the dragon. Later on in Revelation chapter twelve, John says of the dragon that it is the serpent, the accuser of God's people, who is Satan.

So we know who the dragon is. The fiery great red dragon is Satan. I think that's why a lot of people, when they think of Satan, they think of a red dragon with a tail and a pitchfork and the horns and stuff. That's because of a passage like this. Doesn't mean Satan literally looks like a dragon. It's a metaphor. It's a picture. 'Cause Satan's really an angel of light. He's a very beautiful, powerful, compelling looking angel. But he's presented in this grotesque form. So you got the child who is Jesus Christ, you've got Satan who is the dragon.

That leaves the third question, who is the woman? And this woman has stars on her head. I'm sorry, she has a sun. She's clothed with the sun. She has the moon under her feet, and she has a crown of twelve stars on her head. So while there's general agreement on who the child is and who the dragon is, there's a lot of disagreement on who the woman is. And I honestly struggled with how much do I share about that discussion and debate because it really is confusing and there is a lot of disagreement.

And I'm going to tell you what I think the woman who the woman represents and why. I just want you to know not everybody agrees with my view. And how you define this woman will determine how you kind of apply and understand Revelation chapter twelve. A lot of people take the obvious kind of surface level answer. Who's the woman that gave birth to Jesus? Mary, right? And so some people say, well, this is Mother Mary, and that's, I think, the official position of the Roman Catholic church that this is Mary, and she's just like glorious.

She's wrapped up in the sun. She's got the moon under her feet. She's got dominion and power. She's like large and in charge. She is the best mama who's ever mamaed in the world. So and that relates to a lot of honor and tribute to Mary and the Roman Catholic church. I struggle with that definition or that interpretation. Other people say, no, it's not a reference to Mary, it's a reference to the nation of Israel. And the moon under her feet represents the power and dominion that Israel had in their heyday.

The sun's descriptive of the glory of God that was wrapped around Israel, that they were his special people. And that Israel gave birth to the Messiah. The nation of Israel is the— it was through the seed of David or through the seed of Israelite men and women that the Messiah was born. And so that's a pretty sound idea or sound interpretive option. Others would say, no, it's not Israel, because Israel didn't give birth to the Messiah. The church gave birth to the Messiah. That Jesus and the church are linked up together and so we don't need to narrowly define it as Israel.

It's really a more broad definition of the church, which includes Jews and Gentiles. And some would even go so far as to say the church has kind of replaced Israel. As the covenant

people of God. And so God doesn't have two covenant people, he has one covenant people and it's the church Jews and Gentiles put together. So when the church was born it replaced Israel. And they would say that the twelve stars refer to the twelve apostles of Jesus. How many of you are getting bored? Okay, not yet. I know it's a little bit academic, so hang with me.

Just hang with me, okay? Then the last view, kind of a more nuanced view, And takes both of those second and third views into consideration and says, it's not necessarily Israel, carte blanche, it's not national Israel as a political entity. It is the believing covenant or the believing remnant in Israel who maintained faith. So you go back to the Old Testament, you have these hints that a Messiah was one day going to come in Genesis 3 through the seed of the woman. The Messiah will crush the head of the serpent.

Through the Old Testament sacrificial system you have these pointers towards a perfect lamb, a perfect sacrifice, a forever atonement for sin. You have through the prophets like Isaiah, there's a Messiah who's going to come, who's going to be pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities. He is going to rule in Isaiah chapter 9, the Christmas text. He will be a wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the prince of Peace, of the increase of his government, there will be no end. So you have all these promises by God in the Old Testament, and you had a remnant of people in Israel who kept the faith.

And they said, Messiah will come, he's going to come. We're going to keep walking faithfully. We're going to keep the covenant. We're not going to drift. We're not going to go do our own thing. We're not going to become carnal or wayward Christians or wayward Israelites. We're going to maintain the faith. And they say, those are the people in view. That's who this woman represents. Somebody's trying to get our Wi-Fi password. Nope. Denied. Sorry, it's just popped up on my popped up on my iPad here. Try again. Do not pass go.

Do not collect $200. I think our guest Wi-Fi maybe doesn't have an internet. Anyway. Rabbit, rabbit, rabbit. So if that's the case, then it's, you could say, true Israel. All right. It's Israel, but it's the true Israel. Not just a political entity or a national entity, it's the believing remnant. And therefore it would include believers as well, Christian believers, even Gentile believers. We are maybe not the same as the woman, but we are from her offspring. We are similar in that we too were believing and ushering in the coming of Messiah.

Now the reason I think it's Israel is because of a passage in Genesis chapter 37. And maybe I'm taking this too far, but in Genesis chapter 37, Joseph, who was the son of Jacob, the coat of many colors, that guy, he has a dream about this picture. He dreams about the sun and the moon and the twelve stars and in that dream the sun and the moon and the stars are actually a reference to Israel. So he says in Genesis chapter 37, verse 9, then Joseph had another dream and he told it to his brothers, and he said, look I had another dream, and this time the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars were bowing down to me.

Now you say that's eleven, not twelve. Well, Joseph was the twelfth. Okay, so that's twelve, the twelve tribes of Israel. You know that's what it's referencing because in verse 10 his father, or he told his father and his brothers, and his father rebuked him. And he said, what kind of dream is this that you have had? Am I and your mother and your brothers really going to come and bow down to the ground before you? So in other words the brothers he had were the twelve tribes of Israel. So he's saying, are you really saying that the twelve tribes of Israel are going to come down, bow down to you?

And eventually, if you read the book of Genesis, that's exactly what they do. But it just goes to show that this imagery has been used before in the Old Testament as a reference to the people of Israel. Now whether it's the nation of Israel or that believing remnant, it's hard to tell. I think its application is more narrowly to that believing remnant because of how the woman is described later on. In the chapter. So it's true Israel and then the birth pains that the woman experiences are the tribulations that Israel experienced in anticipation of the Messiah.

So you have in the history of Israel you have things like their bondage to slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt. You have the Babylonian captivity. You have the Assyrian captivity. You have these incredible seasons of hardship and difficulty in the lives of the people of Israel as they waited for Messiah, and it was especially brutal on that believing remnant, the ones who maintained faith, people like Daniel and Isaiah and Jeremiah, the prophets, the believing remnant who wanted to maintain faith in the Lord, they encountered incredible persecution and hardship and tribulation, and that's what these birth pains represent.

So is it Israel or is it the church? In some ways it's a blending of the two. It is true Israel leading up to the birth of the Messiah. But after the Messiah is born, you notice in this passage the woman gets caught up to the child, I'm sorry, gets caught up to the air, and the woman goes into the wilderness to be persecuted by the dragon. Well, that's not just Israel. That's that early church community. It consisted of predominantly Jewish people, but also a few Gentile people as well. So it is that believing remnant.

After the birth of the Messiah as well. So the reason I think that's relevant, the reason that the woman's relevant for us is because the kinds of hardships and persecution that she faced then is identical to the kinds of hardships and persecution that we face today. And so you may identify with the woman who's being persecuted by the dragon because in many ways you are that woman. You are experiencing hostility against the dragon. And we can learn from this nation of Israel, we can learn from the Old Testament saints how to persevere.

How to trust God even when you don't see a way forward, how to maintain faithfulness when you're experiencing opposition politically and socially and physically and every other way. So the tensions that they felt. As they waited for the Messiah are the same tensions that we experience today. They suffered great harm from physical or from godless nations like

Assyria and Babylon, we today will suffer persecution and harm. From godless peoples and powers. They experienced God's protection and provision even as they wandered in the wilderness, and we too will experience God's provision and protection.

Even as we wander in our wilderness. They had people who shipwreck their faith through pride and arrogance, they turn from the Lord. We too will see many people fall away. Because they think God is slow in fulfilling his promise, or maybe it was never even true to begin with. So that's who the woman is, that's what she represents in my view. Alright second thing we need to understand is the dragon. Who's the dragon? If the woman is true Israel or the believing remnant, who's the dragon? Well, we said the dragon is Satan, but really the dragon in the Old Testament, it was a standard symbol of anyone and everyone who tried to oppose God.

So you see Egypt referred to as a dragon in Psalm seventy-four. Pharaoh is referred to as a dragon in Ezekiel 29. Assyria and Babylon are both likened to dragons in Isaiah chapter 27 verse 1. That doesn't mean that Egypt and Pharaoh and Assyria and Babylon, it doesn't mean that they were actually indwelt by Satan, because Satan is a singular creature. He can't indwell multiple people at the same time. All this is saying is that Satan was the animating force behind those movements and powers and political realities. That it was the schemes and the plans of Satan himself that enabled and kind of animated Egypt's ruthless slavery or ruthless power grab over the Israelites.

It was Satan who was creating the ego by Pharaoh to say, I will not let these people go. It was Satan who was animating Nebuchadnezzar to say, nobody's been better than me, there's no kingdom greater than mine, and so I have a right to rule ruthlessly And when it says in verses three and four, a sign appeared in heaven, the great fiery red dragon, it says he has seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads are seven crowns. That's almost identical to the description of the lamb who has seven horns and seven eyes.[1] It says that a tail sweeps away a third of the stars in heaven and hurled them to the earth.

And the dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she did give birth it might devour her child. A lot of people think that tail sweeping one-third of the stars is descriptive of Satan bringing a third of heaven to become kind of demons instead of angels. And so it's the fall of the angelic realm to follow Satan instead of following the Lord. I don't know that's the case. There's not a whole lot of other evidence about that. It could just be a reference to the fact that Satan, as an incredibly powerful angel, marshaled resources and assets to thwart the plans of God on the earth.

But he does so in a way where he deceives the masses into thinking that he is worthy of worship, he is worthy of following instead of the Lord. And so two things in your notes. Number one, if you want to understand how Satan works, you need to understand firstly that he seeks to imitate God. He has the seven crowns, and horns, just like the lamb has horns.[2]

So we'll see this in chapter 13 with the Antichrist, he tries to look like Christ, act like Christ. Talk like Christ, make the same promises as Christ, produce the same deliverance as Jesus Christ said he would produce.

He wants to imitate God because he thinks he's worthy of the worship that belongs to God alone. This is what got Satan in trouble in the first place. He wanted the glory that belonged to God alone for himself. And so he seeks to imitate God because he craves that worship for himself. The second thing that you see about the dragon is because he's jealous of God's glory, he is relentless in his attempt to undermine God's redemptive purposes in the world. And not just his redemptive purposes in general, but his redemptive purposes in particular through the birth of Jesus Christ or the coming of the Messiah.

We could go back in the Old Testament. I could show you this a hundred different ways. When it gets to the New Testament, it's fascinating how you see the enemy, Satan, try to destroy the Christ. When Christ is born, right after he's born, you have Herod issue an edict so that every male child two years of age and under was murdered in and around Bethlehem.[3] Why was he doing that? Because he was fearful of the Christ. So you have Satan, I think, animating Herod, creating this ego trip. I don't want this prophesied ruler to overcome my rule, and so I'm going to issue an edict so that every child under two, every male child under two, is murdered.

You can read about it in Matthew 2. It's a devastating passage. Hundreds, thousands of young babies, their lives are ended. Because Satan's trying to destroy who? Not just babies in general, but the Christ child. You see this in Jesus' wilderness wanderings in Matthew chapter four. He's being tempted by the devil in the wilderness. If you'll worship me, I'll give you this. If you'll just stop following God, if you'll just do what I want you to do instead of what he wants you to do. I'll give you the kingdoms of the world.

Satan was trying to undermine God's redemptive purposes through Christ. Everywhere Jesus goes, he encounters resistance. He encounters resistance by demons. He encounters resistance by Sadducees and Pharisees and religious leaders. Sure, they are responsible for their resistance, but it was Satan who was animating it. He was the dragon trying to devour the child who is the Christ. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus is sweating sweat drops of blood because he's so tormented in his soul of being obedient to the will of the Father that he should go to the cross. And it is Satan who's there that entire time saying, do you really think you should do it?

Do you really think that God's going to get you through this? Do you really think he's going to deliver you? Do you really think this is the will of God? And that struggle is why Jesus said, I need you to pray with me. I need you to intercede with me because he was experiencing opposition. Satan imitates God because he's jealous of his glory. And he relentlessly tries to thwart the plans of God through the Messiah, through the proclamation

of the Christ, through the proclamation of the kingdom. And ultimately he tries to do this through the death of Jesus on the cross.

And I can't read Satan's mind. I wasn't there. But if I put myself in his shoes, you've got to imagine, because the disciples didn't understand the cross. I think a lot of the angels didn't understand the cross. And so perhaps Satan thought when Jesus was crucified, I've finally done it. I've finally done the impossible. I've thwarted the plan of God. His Messiah who was supposed to overcome, who is supposed to deliver Israel and rule the nations, he's not ruling anybody because he's dead. I've ended him. And it was through the seeming victory of Satan that God took that and he turned it and turned his victory into a defeat.

And it was through the death of Jesus on the cross that Jesus defeated death. And it was through the resurrection of Jesus from the grave that God put his stamp of approval saying, the sins have been paid in full. My people have been delivered, and Satan was crushed through the cross. And that's exactly what chapter twelve describes. Jesus dies, he is buried, he is raised, he ascends to heaven. What happens after that in verse seven? It says that a war broke out in heaven, and you have Michael, who is an archangel in the Old Testament, and the cohort of Michael, his angels, they fought against the dragon, who is Satan.

And then the dragon and his angels, so Satan and all his demons, they also fought against Michael. But Satan could not prevail, and there was no place for them in heaven any longer. So when the great dragon was thrown out, the ancient serpent who is called the devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world, he was thrown to the earth and his angels with him. Some of you may be wondering, when does Satan get thrown from heaven? Because isn't he in the Garden of Eden? Doesn't he like a non-heavenly being there?

Yes, he's on the earth there, but it seems like before the cross Satan has free range to come and go as he pleases to the court of heaven. You see this in the book of Job where Satan is talking with God about Job his servant. He only loves you because you give him stuff. And it's almost as if Satan would come to the throne of God to accuse the brethren. They're not good enough, they're not sufficient, your plan's not going to work, you're not wise enough, you'll never win this way, you'll never win through sacrificial love.

It's got to be brute force, it's got to be power. But it's through the cross, it's because Jesus lived this sinless perfect life and willingly laid down his life on the cross. That Satan was ultimately abolished and he was cast down from heaven. And so basically through this war in heaven, God the Father is saying you have no right here anymore. You can no longer accuse the brethren because they no longer have any sins with which you can accuse. Because those sins have been atoned for through the cross of Jesus Christ.

And so he's cast down from heaven. And then you see this song break out and all these things that we'll talk about next week. Why do I mention all of those things? Why do we need

to understand the woman? Why do we need to understand the dragon? I think that John put Revelation chapter 12 in here to remind us that these realities are in fact real. There is a heaven, there is a hell, there is a Satan, there are demons. And we, as God's people, are put on the front lines of that battle.

Whether you want to be or not, if you're someone who believes in God and wants to follow God, you are going to encounter resistance in your life because you have an enemy who is dead set, who is relentless in trying to thwart the redemptive plans of God. Now he could not stop the cross, right? He could not stop the resurrection of Jesus from the grave. But what he's trying to stop now is the advancing of that gospel, the advancing of that kingdom to the ends of the earth, because he knows his time is short.

And so he's doing everything in his power to make us miserable and our mission unsuccessful. And knowing that, knowing that's what his intentions are, it enables us to be more effective in the fight against him. The reason I think that is because of this description of the woman going to the wilderness for 1,260 days. I think that's not just a reference to the final three and a half years before Jesus comes, but it's actually descriptive of this entire age from the resurrection, from the ascension of Jesus all the way to the second coming of Christ, we are in this battle where Satan has been thrown down to the earth.

He is angry, he is raging against the purposes of God, and you and I are feeling the brunt of that war because we are committed to God's purposes and advancing his kingdom. Let me show you this in the final two verses and then we'll be finished. After Satan is thrown to the earth, there's this victory, this party in heaven. In verse 10, John says, I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have now come.

Why? Because the accuser, Satan, of our brothers and sisters who accuses them before our God day and night, he has been thrown down. And so you have this initial victory, the war has been won. And then you see on earth that the church, the people of God, conquered him, conquered Satan, by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony, because they did not love their lives to the point of death. Therefore, rejoice you heavens. And you who dwell in them, and woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you with great fury, because he knows his time is short.

And so just like with Israel in the Old Testament, you have this already not yet tension. Already Christ has won; already atonement has been made. Your sins are forgiven. You can have reconciliation with God. You can have freedom over sin and freedom from the power of sin in your life. It's already yours. But not yet has the kingdom been fully established. Not yet has Jesus returned. Not yet do we have every tear wiped from our eye. We still have disease and death and all of those things until Jesus comes. Again.

And so in the midst of that tension, John is saying, as the church, learn to fight. Learn to fight, learn to win, learn to be effective against the schemes of this enemy. How do we do that? We'll talk more about this next week, but there's two things mentioned. The blood of the lamb and the Word of our testimony. The blood of the lamb and the Word of our testimony. When he says blood of the lamb, I know that sounds grotesque. How am I going to put the blood of Jesus on me?

It's going back to the Old Testament sacrificial system. Without the shedding of blood, there could be no forgiveness of sins. And so essentially the idea is that you as a sinner have separated yourself from a holy God. Your sin is offensive to him. And you can't undo that sin. Once it's done, it's committed, your garments have been stained with the guilt of your choice, your actions. So in order for forgiveness to be made, someone had to make atonement. But you could not make atonement for your own sin because your sin is against the holy God, you were not God enough to atone for your sin.

And so God sent his Son, Jesus, into the world to die on the cross for your sin. Jesus lived the life you and I could not live. He was God in the flesh, and so as God, he atoned for our sins in a way that none of us could ever atone. The book of Hebrews says that the blood of bulls and goats never really was meant to take away sin. It was always pointing us to this ultimate Messiah who would pay the ultimate penalty for sin. Once and for all, one sacrifice forever and always abolishes all of our sin forevermore.

And so when you take that message, the message of the gospel, and you receive the blood of Jesus into your life, you basically say, I believe Jesus died for my sins. I believe that God loved me enough to send Jesus to the earth to pay the penalty for my sin. And so I receive that gift of grace into my life. When you do that, you stop the work of the enemy in your life. And what is the work of the enemy? The work of the enemy is to accuse you, is to say you'll never be good enough.

You can never be used by God. If anybody really knew the thoughts that you had and the things that you did when nobody was looking, no one would ever give you the time of day. You are a loser. You are a nobody. You are going nowhere. All of those accusations you've probably experienced in your life. You felt the heaviness of your sin. How do you get rid of that guilt? How do you get rid of that shame? Through the blood of Jesus Christ. You basically say, you know, I've been listening to your accusation, Satan, and to be honest, you're right.

I am pretty bad. In fact, you didn't even get everything. There's a few things you missed. I'm even worse. I'm far worse than you could ever imagine, than I could ever imagine. But I believe that I'm far more loved than I could have ever dared hope. And I know that because I look to the cross of Jesus Christ, and I see that my heavenly Father loved me so much that he

sent his one and only Son into the world to live the life I couldn't live and die the death I should have died.

And because I believe God loves me, I don't care what your accusations are, I don't care the word you speak against me, Jesus speaks a better word. And his word is a word of forgiveness, a word of grace, a word of reconciliation. And it's through the blood of the lamb that you silence the enemy in your life. And you can do that whether you're not a Christian and you've never trusted in Christ and you believe that good news gospel for the first time, or if you've been a Christian for 15 years, it's daily preaching that gospel message to yourself over and over again.

And so you defeat him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of our testimony. And that just simply means preaching the gospel, advancing the gospel. We'll never destroy the work of Satan by electing politicians and passing laws. We may restrain it, but we'll never destroy it. The only way to transform somebody, the only way to transform a society is through the proclamation of the gospel and the Spirit of God coming into the hearts and minds of individual people and changing them from the inside out. And that happens insofar as we are faithful to proclaim the good news of the testimony of Jesus.

And so through the blood of the lamb. And the word of our testimony, we can silence the enemy. Now as Taylor comes and leads us through a time of response, I know there may be some of you here this morning who are feeling the accusations of the enemy. Because the strategy of the devil is to use accusation in your life to take you off the field, to disqualify you from ministry. Maybe you feel like you'll never be a good dad, you'll never be a good mom, maybe you have sins in your past, some unforgivable act.

And maybe your family hates you because of that act, but you feel like because of that I can't be loved by God. And this morning Jesus is speaking to you a better word. A word that you can be reconciled and forgiven if you will just believe, if you'll repent and put your faith in Jesus. And so if you've never done that and you want to make that decision this morning, I'll be down here at the front to receive you. You can scan this QR code that we'll put up on the screen and it'll take you to a little form.

You can fill out that form and say, I want to give my life to Jesus Christ. And be baptized. But that's up to you. You make that decision yourself. Those of you who are Christians, this is a reminder that the tools in our tool belt are very simple. It's the blood of the lamb and the Word of my testimony. And so maybe this morning you would ask the Lord, would you renew in me the joy of my salvation? Would you remind me of your love and of your mercy and your grace?

I've been trying to earn it. I've been trying to prove it. I've been self-righteous and angry and critical because I've missed the heart of the gospel. I've missed the point of the battle. And

Satan has been effective in robbing my joy, making me anxious, making me angry, because I'm not walking in the way that you've paved for me to walk. And so would you help me to recenter my heart? And my affections on the Lord Jesus Christ and to walk with humility and a fullness of the Spirit because I'm living by grace.

I'm going to give you time to make that decision. The altar's open if you want to pray personally with somebody. I'll be here to receive you. But let's respond to the Lord. Father, we thank you for this time and for this passage of Scripture. And we do pray against the schemes of our enemy, and I know for . . .

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "the lamb who has seven horns and seven crowns"; the Lamb in Revelation 5:6 has "seven horns and seven eyes." Source: Revelation 5:6 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "He has the seven crowns, the seven horns, just like the lamb does"; the dragon has seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns on its heads (Revelation 12:3), while the Lamb has seven horns (Revelation 5:6). Source: Revelation 12:3 and 5:6 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩
3. Transcript note: spoken as "every male child under two years of age was murdered. Everywhere under his rule"; Herod ordered the massacre of "all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under." Source: Matthew 2:16 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩