

## ***The Power of the Gospel: Walking in the Benefits of the Cross***

### **I. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL**

- A. The truths of the gospel are the only means through which we can experience the power of God. The gospel has qualified us to freely receive God’s love, power, favor, and many other benefits. We experience these benefits by having faith—confident agreement—in Jesus’ work on the cross.
- <sup>16</sup>***...the gospel of Christ...is the power of God to salvation [from the penalty and power of sin] for everyone who believes...<sup>17</sup>For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith... (Rom. 1:16-17)***
- <sup>18</sup>***For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Cor. 1:18)***
- B. Paul’s confidence was in Jesus and the truths associated with His crucifixion and resurrection.
- <sup>2</sup>***For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (1 Cor. 2:2)***
- C. Paul’s dramatic declaration that we have become a new creation in Christ, with all things becoming new, has vast implications. The “he” that is a new creation is our born-again spirit.
- <sup>17</sup>***If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away...all things have become new...<sup>21</sup>that we [our spirit] might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)***
1. ***Old things passed away:*** We were under *condemnation* before God, and *powerless* with regard to overcoming sin at the heart level and resisting the attacks of the devil.
  2. ***All things are new:*** We are *accepted and enjoyed* by God and have the *authority of Jesus’ name* and the *indwelling Spirit*, which enable us to resist sin, sickness, and Satan.
- D. David was zealous to experience *all* the benefits of the grace of God available to him (Ps. 103:1-5).
- <sup>2</sup>***Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: <sup>3</sup>who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, <sup>4</sup>who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies... (Ps. 103:1-4)***
- E. ***The Lord who forgives all:*** All of our sins are forgiven; there is no condemnation before God.
- F. ***The Lord who heals all:*** Jesus purchased our healing on the cross. It is God’s nature to heal, as revealed through the ministry of Jesus. One reason Jesus came was to destroy Satan’s works (1 Jn. 3:8). Healing is partial yet substantial in this age, and full and final for all in the age to come.
- <sup>8</sup>***For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 Jn. 3:8)***
- <sup>38</sup>***Jesus...went about doing good...healing all who were oppressed by the devil... (Acts 10:38)***
- <sup>17</sup>***“These signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons...<sup>18</sup>they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” (Mk. 16:17-18)***

## II. OVERCOMING THE ATTACKS OF THE ENEMY: THREE PRINCIPLES

- A. The call to overcome is one of the primary themes in the book of Revelation (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 12:11; 15:2; 21:7). It includes overcoming Satan's accusations against us, which are like flaming missiles sent to convince us that we are failures who are guilty, disqualified, forgotten, and irrelevant and that the small things we do will not matter to anyone, especially not to the Lord. <sup>10</sup>*The accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night...<sup>11</sup> And they overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. (Rev. 12:10-11)*
- B. **Blood of the Lamb:** Jesus' death qualified us to freely receive all the benefits of the gospel. On the cross, Jesus' gained victory over Satan for us, removing his *legal right* to torment us. The gospel (blood of Jesus) transferred us to God's kingdom and qualified us to freely receive new benefits. <sup>13</sup>*He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom... (Col 1:13, NAS)*
- C. **Word of our testimony:** Our testimony, or confession of faith, is what we believe about who Jesus is, what He did on the cross, who we are in Him, and what we believe about Satan's assaults. <sup>23</sup>*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering...He is faithful. (Heb. 10:23)*
- D. **Did not love their lives to death:** This speaks of having a deep allegiance and loyalty to Jesus and His leadership. We set our heart to love Jesus and obey Him more than we love our natural life. We seek to obey Him regardless of what it costs us in terms of our fleshly interests.

## III. THE WORD OF OUR TESTIMONY

- A. We release Jesus' power in our life by the word of our testimony, by our confession of the Word. <sup>14</sup>*Let us hold fast our confession...<sup>16</sup> Come boldly to the throne of grace... (Heb. 4:14-16)*
- B. **Analogy:** Imagine a homeless beggar who suddenly inherited great wealth. The *announcement* of his new inheritance doesn't stop him from living in poverty. He must take the simple step of withdrawing the money. It only takes a few moments, but it is essential to *accessing* the wealth.
- C. Our confession engages our heart with God and His truth. It is what we say to the indwelling Spirit about who we are in Christ. Truth changes our heart as it gets into our conversation with God. The word that contains God's promises and releases His power is so near. It is as close as speaking it. There is a deep connection with what we say with our mouth and what our heart believes or is moved with confidence. In Romans 10, Paul referred to what Moses said in Deuteronomy 30:14. <sup>8</sup>*The word is near you, in your mouth...that is, the word of faith...<sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart...you will be saved [delivered from the penalty and power of sin and Satan].<sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation [complete deliverance]. (Rom. 10:8-10)*

- D. In Deuteronomy 30, Moses taught that the command to love and obey God was not *too mysterious* (too hard to understand), nor was not it *far off* (outside their ability to do it), nor did they need to *ascend to heaven* (have a heavenly encounter), nor *go overseas* (to receive it from others) to do it.  
***<sup>11</sup>This commandment...is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. <sup>12</sup>It is not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us...?” <sup>13</sup>Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us...?” <sup>14</sup>The word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. (Deut. 30:11-14)***
- E. When condemnation, shame, fear, hopelessness, lust, etc., rise up in us to challenge what God promised in His Word about loving, forgiving, empowering, directing, or providing for us, then we must apply the promise of the Word to our heart, by *confessing the truth* and *resisting lies*.
- F. Faith does not come by asking, but by *hearing* the Word. The way our heart *hears* the best and most is when the Word comes *from our own lips* as we speak it to the Lord or to the enemy.  
***<sup>17</sup>So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom. 10:17)***
- G. We are transformed by changing how we think. Transformation begins by *knowing* who we are in Christ. As our mind is renewed, our emotions are transformed, and thus our behavior changes. Our emotions are not transformed by *trying harder*, but by *seeing the truth* more clearly.  
***<sup>2</sup>...be transformed by the renewing of your mind... (Rom. 12:2)***  
***<sup>32</sup>And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (Jn. 8:32)***
- H. Paul exhorted us to reckon ourselves alive to God, or to see ourselves as God sees us in Christ.  
***<sup>11</sup>Reckon [see] yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ... (Rom. 6:11)***
1. ***See yourself alive to God:*** We see ourselves as enjoyed, indwelt, and empowered by God.
  2. ***See yourself dead to sin:*** We are no longer condemned by sin and powerless to challenge the attacks of Satan and the sinful promptings that arise in our emotions.
- I. We either overcome oppression or live in it, according to our confession. Our words are powerful in causing either faith or fear to grow in us. If our words agree with God’s Word, we release His power in our life. If our words agree with Satan’s lies, then we allow darkness to continue. Many have “faith” in the devil’s words. The war of words determines who has dominion in our heart. Whose words do you allow to take root in your heart? There are consequences to our choices.
- J. Jesus gave us His authority. Authority is delegated power. A police officer stops a car by the authority of the government (backed up by the might of the military), not his own physical power.  
***<sup>19</sup>I give you the authority...over all the power of the enemy... (Lk. 10:19)***
- K. We use our authority in Christ to resist Satan’s “breaking into our house” to steal and destroy God’s blessing in our life by fears, addictions, sickness, emotional or financial oppression, or broken relationships. We must enforce our rights by resisting Satan as an intruder.  
***<sup>10</sup>The thief [Satan] does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. (Jn. 10:10)***

- L. The primary way Satan tries to gain access to people is first through their mind. The degree to which one yields to Satan in this affects how much Satan is able to oppress them.
- M. We must not allow Satan's attack against us to go uncontested, because his attack against us continues if we accept it.
- N. We must not confuse the commitment to trust God and to do His will with passive resignation that accepts Satan's attack against our lives.
- O. Walking in victory includes an element of "wrestling" in our resistance of Satan's attacks. We must maintain the ground we take from the enemy, knowing that demons often return to attack again (Mt. 12:43-45). We employ the *shield of faith* by consistently declaring the Word against the enemy's attack. We employ the *sword of the Spirit* by speaking God's Word against the enemy.  
***<sup>12</sup>We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers...in the heavenly places...<sup>16</sup>taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one...<sup>17</sup>Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God... (Eph. 6:12-17)***
- P. ***Darts***: Satan's fiery darts or flaming missiles often strike people as irrationally heightened feelings of fear, lust, oppression, anxiety, etc. We resist these demonic influences by declaring the Word.
- Q. Our problems are often the result of several factors working together, including *psychological* issues (our mindset, belief systems, and life choices), *physiological* issues (diet, alcohol, chemicals, etc.), *sociological* issues (what others do to us), and *spiritual* issues (demonic attack).
- R. By using our authority, we can remove the added pressure that demons bring to our problems. This makes it much easier to solve physiological, psychological, and sociological problems.
- S. Exercising authority against Satan's attack does not automatically cancel all the consequences of our wrong choices or all the effects of what others do to us.
- T. Satan's attack against us will continue unless we resist and refuse by using our authority in Christ.  
***<sup>7</sup>Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (Jas. 4:7)***  
***<sup>8</sup>Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. <sup>9</sup>Resist him, steadfast in the faith... (1 Pet. 5:8-9)***
- U. We must take authority over the spirit of fear. It must not be accepted or allowed to grow.  
***<sup>7</sup>God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Tim. 1:7)***

#### IV. QUESTIONS FOR SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION (e.g., FCF FRIENDSHIP GROUPS)

1. Identify one point that inspired or challenged you. Why? What will you do differently to apply it?
2. Identify one area in your life for which you would like prayer to overcome the enemy's attack.
3. Identify one point that you would like to gain more understanding of. How will you seek to gain it?