

97-12-07b

We're back now from our break and having reviewed some of the major themes of human history that are introduced and become a part of human history in Genesis chapter 3 in the garden with the statements of the Lord God concerning the woman, the man, and the serpent especially. Having reviewed the frequency with which Satan in the guise of the serpent or more directly identified is found in Scripture, we want to figure out the bottom line here. This concept of understanding that there is unseen conflict, that our warfare in Ephesians 6 is with principalities and powers and rulers of darkness.

Well, what does that all mean? How do we answer the question so what? There is enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. There is enemyship between ourselves and Satan and everything that he controls, his rulership of the world. Well, what are we supposed to do with that information? How should that affect my life this afternoon and tomorrow? Well, it helps us to have a good understanding of what Satan is up to.

How does he express that enmity? Does he run around trying to thwart our plans and make his power known to us? What exactly is the nature of this conflict? We've already seen in our first lesson this morning that he has authority and it is limited and circumscribed on this earth. It's expressed on this earth, but because of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, that is a voluntary submission. We are not required to be under Satan's authority.

Only if we live in the world, only if we see and live our lives as being earthly, defined by earthly things, measured by earthly measures, do we yield ourselves to this authority that Satan has. Jesus had this question put to him. Do you want earthly authority from Satan or do you want heavenly authority from God? The Lord Jesus quotes the word of God.

Satan presents this choice. He says, I've got all of this authority over the kingdoms of the world and I'll give it to you. You can have rulership of the earth without the cross, sort of a pseudo-millennial kingdom.

I have the authority to grant this to you if you'll bow down and worship me. Jesus says, I'm not living an earthly life. My goals and objectives are not measured by an earthly standard.

Jesus is going to sit on David's throne in Jerusalem and he is going to rule his millennial kingdom as well as the world from that throne. But his authority and the measure of his victory greatly transcends that simple government of the earth, doesn't it? It's because Jesus remembered who he was and the God that he represented and the God that he served on this life. That's what he tells Satan.

That's the thing that we need to remember. How do we keep that in the forefront of our minds and how do we perform that function? What is the means by which we make that happen in our lives? Look at what it is that Satan is trying to keep us from doing. What is the nature of his enmity, the nature of his attack on us? What does he do? The scripture has abundant references to this.

We know from the example of Job, one of the most familiar and obvious examples, Job 1.12 and 2.7 that in some cases, we know at least in Job's case, God gave permission from heaven for Satan to do something to Job on earth. Satan did not indwell Job, did he? He didn't get into his soul, didn't mess with his head from an internal point of view. God allowed Satan to mess with Job's circumstances.

That's where Satan's authority functions. It's in circumstances. The attack on our soul, the unseen conflict in which we are engaged, the entry point is our senses, our experience in the world, our life in the material society in which we live.

The people, the things that confront us and force us to decision points. Satan does have authority over those things. He can make a difference in circumstances.

He takes away Job's wealth, takes away Job's health, takes away his family, but he cannot get inside Job's soul. Job has to decide what is he going to do with circumstances that look bleak. The book of Job is a fascinating study.

The dialogue between Job's three friends and the fourth young man enters the conversation, and then God, who ends the conversation, is a fascinating book. I hope that we get to study it sometime soon. I think this is often overlooked in the study of the book of Job.

All of the friends are right, and the fourth young man is right. The issue in the book of Job is, which of these right principles of doctrine apply in the book of Job? You have people going on and on about the nature of faithfulness and of divine disobedience. You have statements made about the holiness of God and His right to do as He pleases with His people.

Many of these statements are absolutely right. The tension in the story comes from the fact that we know, from the information that God gives us in the first two chapters, that they don't apply to Job. People are going on and on.

You must have some sin in your life because look at what God has done to you. This is an understanding of God's dealing with man. If you do well, you are blessed, and if you do badly, you are cursed.

There is a one-to-one correspondence between circumstances and spiritual standing. The book of Job is the Old Testament argument of what we see in the New Testament, talking about the transcendent life, the transcendent measure of life. You can't always

go by circumstances and make a statement about spiritual standing.

They take right truth and right doctrine, and this is an exercise in how to use everything you know, all of the truth that you have, and make application an advanced problem. It's kind of like in story. You take math and you have two trains.

One leaves Boston and the other leaves Chicago, going at a certain rate of speed. They meet. How far will they travel when they do meet and that sort of thing? You do your multiplication.

You do your time distance problems and figure these things out. Then you get something more complex. How do you get a man on the moon? Well, you've got the moon in an orbit at a certain distance from the earth, and you've got acceleration problems and leaving the earth's orbit.

How are you going to aim? You get some advanced application of those same basic time distance problems, and it's a life and death situation. Watch Apollo 13. How do you get there? How do you get back? Job is an advanced problem in the application of doctrine.

It isn't that people are talking. They're all speaking the truth, but which of those truths and in what order and in what priority do you apply in Job's case? To understand that as you go through the book is to understand what God says when you get to chapter 4. So anyway, we see Satan at work because where does this all come from? What is the occasion by which you get the chance to study this wonderful problem in application? It's Satan. It's his accusation.

What is his accusation before God? It's about the nature of Job's soul, the nature of his motivation. He doesn't come up and say, look at Job. He's a hypocrite.

Look at Job. He's not caring for the needy. He's not caring for his family.

He's not sacrificing. He's not living the obedient life. Satan goes before God and says, Job's motives are impure.

Job serves you because you give him with blessings. He doesn't really trust you. He doesn't really love you.

The nature of the accusation against Job is the unceasing conflict. What is the nature of the thoughts and intense heart when it comes to Job? Job says, if we change the circumstances around this mouth, and God says, go ahead and change the circumstances, he does, and Job really is motivated by love for God. He really is motivated by faith.

He really does want to understand what God is doing in his life, and he is vindicated ultimately. But this is a function that Satan performs. He is an accuser, and the nature of

his accusation is not believers aren't having enough impact in life.

The nature of his agony and his accusation is in the unseen realm, because he knows that that's where the battle is being fought. You can see this in 2 Corinthians 4, 3, and 4, the passage we went to on the break. If our gospel is hid, I can hardly read this in the New King James, I memorized it out of the old.

Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the God of this age has blinded, who do not believe. I don't particularly care for this, or if you go straight out of the Greek. Those who do not believe are the ones who the God of this age has blinded, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them, or shine on them, it says here.

And what's the point? To whom is the world truth veiled? Who is it that cannot see the truth? Those who are perishing, whose minds have been blinded and are backward, they are perishing. Why? Because they are blind to the truth. Why are they blind to the truth? Because they have not believed.

The cause and effect is not they've been blinded and therefore they can't believe. That is to say that the conflict has been won by Satan. Satan can go to people and successfully blind them and prevent the power of the truth of the word of God from having an effect.

In essence, the power of the gospel and the power of Satan clash here and Satan wins, if you try to distort the verse in that sense. People don't believe because the God of this world blinds them. Well, who's more powerful, the gospel or Satan? Is the word more powerful or is Satan more powerful? Well, fairly obviously from the whole bulk of Scripture, it is God who has authority in heaven and in earth.

It is God who has a measure of authority on earth. But if you clash those two, God is going to win every time. So you cannot understand this verse in this way.

You will notice that preaching this statement in verse 2, Paul says, We have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in emptiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. He doesn't say we're commending ourselves to the conscience of men who haven't been blinded by the God of this world. Every man's conscience faces the issue that Paul and his helpers are presenting them with the gospel.

But if that is hid, it is hid to the ones who don't believe because when they refuse it, the God of this world is able to blind them. They voluntarily relinquish themselves to Satan's control. You will note that he continues in verse 5 and 6, We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus the Lord, and ourselves, your bondservants, for Jesus' sake.

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our

hearts to give light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. That's where the true power is. So Satan is going to afflict and accuse because he is blind to unbelievers, and he is going to deceive and blind unbelievers.

Those are two of his major functions on earth. Those who choose darkness, he feeds darkness. Those who choose the light, he attacks and seeks to deflect and divert and accuse.

You can see this in Zechariah chapter 3 and verse 1. Not a book we turn to every Zechariah, second to the last book of the Old Testament. Zechariah 3, you have the picture of the high priest in Israel, Joshua. God in the form of a vision shows Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand for what purpose? To oppose him.

The Lord said to Satan, The Lord rebuke you, Satan. The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem to rebuke you. Is not this a brand plucked from the fire? You go on and of course there's a whole separate issue going on here in Zechariah, but here is Satan pictured at the right hand of a believer ready to oppose him.

He is told by the Lord that he is rebuked. This is one of his functions, to accuse, to oppose, to tempt. We saw this in Matthew chapter 4 when he is tempting the Lord Jesus.

In John chapter 13 and verse 2, you have the mention of Satan entering into Judas and leading him to betray the Lord Jesus. The phraseology there is interesting in John 13. Before the upper discourse and so forth, when supper is ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.

Satan doesn't just grab things and conduct Judas around. He puts it into his heart. Judas responds, seizes on that and executes it.

Jesus says in John 8 verse 44, the whole context that Satan is a liar and a deceiver. He has been from the beginning. He is a murderer from the beginning.

Those who participate in those things are following his lead. Ananias and Sapphira, when they are confronted by Peter in Acts chapter 5 and verse 3, we find that Satan is involved in that as well. Ananias and Sapphira are manifestly believers, manifestly members of the church.

Peter says to Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of this land for yourself? Satan puts the issue there. Satan introduces the idea of justification before men, recognition before men, and they fall for it. They are not looking at the transcendent truth, the transcendent measure of God's pleasure.

They are looking at will people think we are holy. When we let ourselves be dragged

down into the dust where the serpent dwells, we are losing the battle. When we think of our victory, when we think of our life in terms of how circumstances turn out, what people think, whether or not people think we are successful or people think we are believers or people think we are righteous, we are down in the dust and we have been successfully opposed.

We have been successfully attacked. So our task, our calling is to not be dragged into the dust with the serpent. To stand on our feet like the Lord tells Saul to do on the Damascus Road.

Get up out of the dust. Arise and stand on your feet. There is a mission to be accomplished.

There is truth to be seen. There is truth to be communicated. Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

He knows that this is the issue. He knows that faith in the truth is the issue. So he is going to present a distorted truth.

You have that in 2 Corinthians 11. Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. He offers a false gospel.

That is the way to subvert. That is what has happened today to the bulk of the church. We are living an earthly truth and pursuing an earthly mission.

The conflict is on earth. Satan tried to keep us from going over to these people that we were trying to build a church for, but we overcame. We got on the plane and made it through customs.

We got the lumber. We got the nails. We built the church.

We are a success. We measure in those terms. Did we make a difference? Did we impact? Did we change something in circumstances? It's not measure.

Success or failure is in the soul. It may end up expressing itself in circumstances and often will, but we don't look for vindication and we don't look for victory in circumstances. We look in the soul, not in the dust.

Because of the power of the Word of God and because of its growth and fruit bearing in our lives, Satan is going to attack the truth. He is going to distort it. He is going to present alternative truth.

He is going to counterfeit it. He is going to snatch away the good seed. We saw that in the parable of the seed.

You see it in Matthew 13, 24. He is going to sow wheat that look like fruitful plants and

are not. In the parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13, 38 and 39, Jesus says explicitly, the tares are those sown in the world who look like they are fruitful, but they are not.

The issue is faith in the truth. What does Jesus tell Peter? He says over in Luke 22, verse 3, Peter, Satan has asked for you that he may sift you like wheat. But Jesus says, I have prayed to the Father for what? To bind Satan? To keep the circumstance from coming up? I have prayed so that the servant girl won't ask you if you are a disciple.

I have prayed that you won't deny me three times. Occasion will be taken away. It is not what Jesus says.

He says, I have prayed for you that your faith not fail. That is the issue. Do we keep trusting God in the face of circumstances that look bleak? Do we trust God? Do we trust in the higher and unseen reality in the face of these things? In Luke 22, verse 3, he goes on, and in verse 4, that afterward, and we say, after what? That you be able to go and encourage others.

After Nile that Jesus knows is coming. Actually, Luke 22, verse 3, is Satan entering into Judas. But Peter understood this, and in 1 Peter 5, he talks about the role of Satan going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

What is the response? What should we do in the light of that knowledge? Be sober, be vigilant. Your adversary, the devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. What are we supposed to do? Well, he says in the next verse, 1 Peter 5, verse 9, resist him.

How? It is the same thing Jesus told Peter when he knew he was going to be tempted to betray him. Steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. This is the common lot of the seed of the woman.

There is a conflict, and we resist him steadfast in the faith. We have to know something. We have to understand the nature of our opposition.

It is not circumstances. The fact that Peter betrayed the Lord, or denied the Lord, not betrayed him, but denied him, those three times, was a circumstance in the world. But the battle is not lost.

The war is not lost. When Peter acknowledges that sin, remember he realized the cock crowed, and he wept bitterly. He is one of the greatest of the apostles.

He is a great man of faith. He did not let that failure defeat him. And he is able to encourage others, and that is what he does in his two epistles.

So this is what we have come to. There is a way to resist Satan. We are told, resist the

devil and he will flee from you, James 4.7. Peter says resist him in 1 Peter 9. 2 Timothy 4.17 is an example of Paul employing this method.

He says in 2 Timothy 1.17, The Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. That lion that roams to and fro, seeking may devour.

Paul was not deflected by his circumstances and prevented from his particular calling of communicating the truth. Now, let's get more specific. We know that we are supposed to resist the devil.

We know he is our adversary. We know it is an unseen conflict. How do we resist him? What are the means of attack? And where is the point of conflict? Where is the point where we resist him? Well, go back to Ephesians, Ephesians chapter 4. We know that in Ephesians chapter 4, Paul points out that this is an unseen conflict, but in Ephesians chapter 4, in verse 25, the nature of Satan's attack is deceit.

He is a liar. He has been a liar from the beginning. He deceived Eve in the garden.

It is deceit that works in our hearts to deflect from fulfilling God's call. So, in verse 25 of Ephesians, Paul says, therefore putting away lying, putting away deceit, let us even speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. And look at verse 26, be angry and do not sin.

Do not let the sun go down on your path, nor give place to the devil. One of the primary avenues of attack in our soul in this unseen conflict is anger. Anger is the battering ram in the soul.

Don't sin through anger, Paul says. Don't let the sun go down on your wrath. That is what gives a place to the devil.

Anger is a mental attitude sin motivated by pride. Anytime you find yourself angry and it is not a righteous sin, it is motivated by pride. I have suffered a wrong.

I have been attacked. I have been abused. I have received an unjust something.

Something has happened to me that should not have happened. I am now angry. This is one of the primary fiery darts that Satan flings.

Why does he mess with our circumstances? What is he going to do to us to be deflected and be diverted from our calling? He is going to put something in our circumstances to make us angry. Even the attack in the garden with Eve when he says, God has deceived you. You are not going to die if you eat of this fruit.

God knows that if you eat of this fruit, you are going to be like Him, knowing good and

evil. What is the nature of that attack, that deception on Satan's part? Eve, God is depriving you of something you deserve. You could be greater and higher than you are.

You could have something that God does not want you to have. It is an appeal to pride. I am lacking something.

I deserve more than I am getting. If I eat this fruit, I will be like God. I will have something that God has that He is not letting me have.

Pride is the original sin. I deserve more than I am getting. I deserve better than I am getting.

The natural consequence of pride is anger. We easily become angered that we don't have what we think we have. We justify ourselves.

We vindicate ourselves. But anger in the soul is the place for Satan. How do we resist him? Turn over a page to Ephesians chapter 6, back to the visible warfare.

Ephesians chapter 6, verse 12. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but prince of peace, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly place. Therefore, to resist the devil, to resist the unseen conflict, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand evil day, and having done all, to stand, to continue to stand.

Here comes the evil day and you stand. Here comes the time to accomplish something and you are still standing. You do that.

Stand therefore, how? Having girded your waist with truth. You can't have faith if you don't have truth. You can't exercise faith if you don't meditate on the truth.

If you don't figure out which truth applies. What is the issue of the conversation, the extended conversations that take place in the book of Job? Which truth applies? What is it that we are asking Job to trust? What truth in God's Word, in God's plan, is Job supposed to be applying in this very difficult circumstance? How is Job going to stand in this situation? Which truth should he gird his waist with? Having put on the breastplate of righteousness. How do we put on that breastplate of righteousness? Well, we come full circle.

You remember our scripture reading this morning in Psalm 32? How is it that we are cleansed of iniquity? How is it that our transgressions are covered? How is it that we become righteous? How do we put on the breastplate of righteousness? It's a physical thing laying there that we can pick up and strap on. There is a way to pick up and put on the breastplate of righteousness. And it is acknowledgment of sin.

It is confession of sin. It is recognition of sin. This is, in some ways, one of the most

emphasized truths and in other ways it is the most misunderstood truth in the Christian life.

How is it that we gird our waist with truth? How do we put on the breastplate of righteousness? How do we do our feet with preparation of the gospel of peace? Taking the shield of faith with which we are able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. How do we put on the helmet of deliverance, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of which is the word of God? Well, we have arrived at that point. Here's how.

It is righteousness. Righteousness by faith. Where does faith come from? Faith has as its object the word of God.

We've got the truth. It's the truth that frees us. It's the truth that stands us up out of the dust.

It's the truth that informs us and conditions us to live in the head realms and not the earthly realms where Satan dwells. It is claiming that truth by faith that achieves the victory. What is it that prevents us from that? It's the only place where Satan can attack.

It's sin. It's sin in the life of believers. How do we put on the breastplate of righteousness? How do we take the shield of faith? We've got to get rid of sin.

We've got to see it and we've got to expunge from our souls. Think about Genesis 3. How do Adam and Eve survive the fruit of their sin? They acknowledge their sin and God forgives and God cleanses and God makes provision. God stands them on their feet and gives them deliverance.

It's because they acknowledge their transgression. It is a key fundamental in the Christian life that we have to exercise frequently. We are powerless when there is unconfessed sin in our life.

We do not have a breastplate of righteousness. We can't get over our anger. We can't take up the sword of the Spirit.

We can't use the shield of faith when we are powerless to see any of those resources that God has given us. We have to be cleansed. We have to be righteous.

We have to be vindicated in God's eyes before any of those weapons and defenses will work. If I gave a pop quiz now and said give a verse on the question of sin, I know what would be on the first line of every quiz. Let's take a look.

Is that the only place in the Bible where confession of sin is taught? Think about Psalm 32. You remember our scripture reading this morning. That's a central one, especially Psalm 32 verses 5 and 6. I acknowledge my sin to you, and my iniquity I have not hidden.

I said, I will confess my transgression to the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Where is the victory in our lives? How do we achieve victory in the unconflict against the serpent and the seed of the serpent? How do we take advantage of Christ's work on the cross every single day? How do we fulfill our calling to be righteous and be holy by faith? Well, this is a necessary function. We have to do this.

We can't neglect it. We can't overlook it. We can't be slipshod and inconsistent about it.

The presence of iniquity means we're not righteous, and if we're not righteous, we are immobile. We are neutralized, and nothing else is going to take place in our life until that problem is squared away. How do we know that we're in that condition? We saw it in Psalm 32.

When I kept my bones old through my groaning all the day long, the fruit of the Spirit will disappear almost immediately. Love, joy, peace, patience. Do we find ourselves short with somebody? Do we find ourselves hypercritical? Do we find ourselves quick to blame, quick to find fault, quick to be irritable? Irritability is not consistent with living in heavenly realms.

That's living in the earthly realms. That's being quick to anger. That's giving a place to the devil.

If we find ourselves irritable, we need to stop everything and get back into the place of fruitfulness and function in God's plan. Nothing more important. This is the war.

This is the battle. My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. The life we have in Christ is neutralized when we fail to extricate ourselves from the dust.

We have to acknowledge our sin. Look at Psalm 38, verse 18. Just turn a few pages over.

David says in verse 15, In you, O Lord, I hope you will hear, O Lord, my God's faith. This is confidence in God. I said, Hear me, lest they rejoice over me, lest at foot slips they exalt themselves against me.

For I am ready to fall, and my sorrow is newly before me. For I will declare my iniquity. I will be anguish over my sin.

This is the means of recovery. This is to extricate oneself from sorrow, from adversity. Look at Psalm 41, verse 4. David understands this.

How could David be a man after God's own heart, after so many great failures? I said, Lord, be merciful to me. Heal my soul, for I have sinned against you. Look at Psalm 86, verse 5. He said in verse 3, Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I cry to you all day long.

Rejoice the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. For you, Lord, are good and ready to forgive and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon you. Look at

Psalm 100.

Praise the Lord, give thanks for he is good. His mercy endures forever. Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can declare all his praise? Blessed are those who keep justice and he who does righteousness at all times.

Remember me, O Lord, with the faith you have toward your people. Visit me with your deliverance, that I may see the benefit of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your name, that I may glory with your inheritance. We have sinned with others.

We have committed iniquity. We have done wickedly. Our fathers in Egypt did not understand your wonders.

They did not remember the multitude of your mercies. If you read on down through Psalm 106, this is a recounting of failure. This is an acknowledgement and a recognition of what constitutes failure for God and an acknowledgement of responsibility for that.

It is a confession. To confess sin we have to be able to recognize it. We have to see it and identify it where it is.

Once again, this is an application of truth. We are not like unbelievers when we have sinned. Their idea that you are in fellowship and out of fellowship and when you are out of fellowship, you are no better than an unbeliever is not true.

Here is the reason why. How is it you are going to identify sin? If you have sinned, how are you going to recognize it as sin and come before God and confess it? To identify and acknowledge sin, you have to apply the Word of God. To apply the Word of God, you have to be functioning under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit and taking hold of that Word of God by faith.

The very act of confession and the very act of recognition and acknowledgement is a spiritual function that an unbeliever cannot accomplish. The Holy Spirit does not leave us when we sin. If anything, the Holy Spirit's ministry is more active because He will bring to our minds the truth that we know that will afflict our conscience and vex our righteous soul and motivate us to repent and turn.

We do not lose the ministry of God the Holy Spirit when we have sinned. We could not recover because we do not have it in ourselves to apply the Word of God, understand it, use it as the object of faith apart from the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. What we do lose is our fruitfulness, our ability to bear fruit, our ability to be pleasing in God's sight when we have unconfessed sin in our life.

God the Holy Spirit will invoke all kinds of things in our soul to turn us and it is one of the big advantages we have as children of God. And that's what's detailed here in Psalm

106. Take a look at Psalm 119.76. It's fun to go to Psalm 119.76 to see if you can find your way around in it.

This is the very last verse of that incredible psalm that mentions the Word of God in all verses but two. 174 of these 176 verses make some reference to the Word of God. But look at verse 176, the very last verse of Psalm 119.

I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments. Remember the parable of the lost sheep we studied over in Luke and the principles that we've seen there in Luke and in Matthew? I have gone astray like a lost sheep.

This is a believer. Seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments. Judging ourselves, exalting ourselves frequently and acknowledging our iniquity is essential.

This is the key. This is the way to be prepared and ready to fight the unseen battle. This is the victory.

Whether or not anything changes in our circumstances, we frequently have to recognize the consequences of failure. If we hurt one another, that hurt will continue even after we acknowledge. Uriah didn't come back from the dead.

David recognized that he had murdered him. The child that was conceived with Bathsheba didn't become unconceived once David acknowledged his adultery. The consequences continue.

But the ability to achieve spiritual victory regardless of circumstances is once again available. And David prevails in the spiritual realm even though he suffers through consequences in the physical realm, in the realm of the earth. That's how cursing is turned to blessing.

It doesn't mean the consequences will go away. What it does mean is that those consequences can be the akin for victory in the unseen realm. But we are not equipped and able to do that if we don't stand righteous before God, able to pick up the shield of faith, able to wield the sword of the Spirit, able to pick up and wear the helmet of deliverance.

We have been cleansed and we have been made whole through the cleansing work of God in our soul. We've seen this throughout the Psalms. You can see this in Job 31.33 when his three friends are saying, You've got some fast sin in your life.

Job says, No, that's not the problem. I have not covered my sin like them. He says in Job 31.33, that's not my problem.

I don't have fast sin. This is a true thing you're speaking, but it doesn't apply to me. This

is one of the key to understanding the whole set of discourses in Job.

It's not that they're saying wrong things, it's that they don't necessarily apply or they're not being applied in the correct way. But Job understood and his three friends understood that confession of sin was essential. He says, I'm not being disciplined because I haven't confessed my sins.

I've not covered transgression. You can see this in Proverbs 28.13. Proverbs 28.13. He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. Happy is the man who is always repentant, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

Jeremiah 3.13. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God, and have scattered your charms and deities under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, said the Lord. Return, O backsliding children. And he goes on there.

Look at verse 25. We lie down in our shame, and our sin covers us. For we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from youth even to this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.

This is the necessary step to cleansing, to forgiveness, to recovering, the ending of righteousness that enables us to once again take hold of the victory of Christ, the crushing of the serpent's head in the dust. You can see this throughout the Scriptures. Lamentations 1.20. Jeremiah the author of that book as well.

Lamentations 1.20. See, O Lord, that I am in distress, my soul is troubled, my heart has overturned me, for I have been very rebellious. Confession of sin. Same thing in chapter 3 verse 40, a lamentation.

The Old Testament is replete. Let us search out and examine our ways, and turn back to the Lord. Lift our hearts and hands to God in heaven.

This is the essential step. Ezekiel chapter 9 and verse 4. God sends the angel through the land for those who take this necessary step. Ezekiel chapter 9 verse 4. The Lord said, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem.

Put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abomination done within it. To the others He said, Go after him throughout the city and kill. Do not let your spare nor half city, and any pity.

Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and children and women. Do not come near anyone on whom is the mark. Those who acknowledge and see the failures are spared.

The ones who do not, regardless of their standing, young or old, rich or poor, child,

woman, does not matter. Being spared is conditioned on acknowledgement and transgression. You can see this.

We have many more passages, but this point, this unseen conflict is introduced in Genesis chapter 8. God puts enemyship between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Satan is here. He is alive and well.

He is roaming, seeking to divert us, seeking to stop us. The key to seizing and exploiting victory in the unseen realm is being righteous, righteous by faith. That is why everything hinges on righteousness by faith, living by faith.

Faith, hope and love are the key. It does not matter what happens in circumstances. God will work out circumstances.

God will make sure the law is evangelized. God will make sure that the needy are cared for. He will use those who have first achieved the standing of righteousness and who are ready to express, in circumstances, a victory that has already been won in the unseen realm.

It is the victory in the unseen realm that counts. That is what fulfills our calling. That is where we have to focus.