

## THE DEFEATED FOE

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Luke 10:1-20

The term “fox-hole” Christian referred to a soldier in battle who promised God that if He would spare his life he would serve God from then on.

It’s come to refer to those who turn to God to get them out of some kind of jam. “God, if you get me out of this mess I’ve made of myself I promise I will turn over a new leaf and live the kind of life you want.”

The resolve of a fox-hole Christian usually lasts about as long as it takes to get out of whatever trouble they are in. Then back to same-o-same-o until the next fox-hole jam.

Most of us have been there. We’re going along doing things our way until we get in trouble. Then the fox-hole mentality kicks in.

When we’re healthy—the sun is shining—the bills are paid—when not feeling guilty about giving into temptation, then it’s easy to be thankful and praise God and say, “God, I really love you.”

But when we’re overly tired, our job is on the line, the bills are piling up, and the transmission goes out, we wonder, “Does God really care?” You’ve been there; I’ve been there.

Life is mountain tops and valleys. In Luke 10, seventy-two of Jesus’ disciples experienced the mountaintop (read 10:1-17). The disciples were sent out as lambs to wolves.

They were to take just the clothes on their backs and shoes on their feet—no money or food. They were to trust God to provide their needs and to protect them from whatever would oppose them. The disciples departed full of fear and uncertainty.

They return on a spiritual mountaintop, rejoicing, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your name” (v. 17).

Pay attention to what Jesus says in the next three verses:

Luke 10:18-20(NIV) 18He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. 20However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Notice three important things these three verses say to us:

## 1. Satan is defeated.

(v. 18) "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." There is confusion among commentators about what Jesus was saying.

But it's quite clear that Jesus is simply saying that Satan is a defeated foe. When we trust Jesus, we do not need to fear Satan. Here are four ways Satan is defeated:

### (1) Satan was defeated when he was thrown out of heaven

Ezekiel 28:15-17(NIV) 15You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. 16Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. 17Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.

The Bible does tell us that at his original sin against God, Satan and his minions were thrown out of heaven. That was his first defeat.

### (2) Satan was defeated at the temptation of Jesus

A couple of weeks ago we asked why are we are tempted? Remember, even our Lord was tempted. In Matt. 4:1-11 the Spirit led Jesus into the desert. There he fasted 40 days and nights.

At the end of the 40 days, Jesus was physically weak from hunger, spiritually strong because the 40 days had been a special time with his Father.

When Satan thought he was at his weakest he came and tempted him: "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Satan wasn't finished. He next took Jesus to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: He will command His angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Satan was persistent. Lastly he took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you, if you will bow down and worship me."

Jesus said to him, Matt. 4:10 (NIV) "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"

Jesus stopped Satan in his tracks by going on the offensive. He went from being pursued to being the pursuer. With every temptation he used the Word of God to defeat Satan. God's Word is a sword that we are to use in spiritual combat (Ephesians 6:7).

### (3) Satan was defeated at the cross

Col. 2:15 (NIV) "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

Who are these "powers and authorities"? They are the spiritual forces of evil that are in rebellion against God. They are the hierarchy of evil led by Satan.

They thought they won when Jesus went to the cross. In actuality, they lost. The cross made a public spectacle of them.

### (4) Satan is defeated at his ultimate fate

Rev. 20:10 (NIV) "And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Luaine and I lived in Hawaii in the late 60s. This was before satellites beamed TV world-wide. Because of the time difference with the mainland, the NFL football games were not seen as they were played. Films of the games had to be flown to Hawaii. Sometimes when Denver was playing I couldn't wait, so I would listen to the live broadcast of the game on the radio. Then, because they were my favorite team, when the game was finally shown, I'd watch the game on television, too.

If I knew Denver won the game, it influenced how I watched it on television. If they fumbled the ball or threw an interception, it was not a problem. I would think, “Its okay. In the end, we win!”

We know the final outcome. That’s why Jesus reminded us, “In this world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

A second thing I noticed is that we should rejoice because:

## 2. Christ is our power source.

(v. 19) “I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.”

The disciple’s mission was a great success. They went. They delivered the message. Even the demons were subject to them.

Jesus didn’t tell them to cast out demons. But because of their obedience and in his authority they were blessed in abundance. They were amazed at what happened.

Jesus probably isn’t going to send us without money and provision. But he gave them three important things that Satan cannot stand up to, and these three things are also ours:

- (1) Prayer “Ask the Lord of the harvest...” (2).
- (2) The authority of Jesus. “I am sending you” (3).
- (3) The message. “The Kingdom of God is near you.” (9).

Christ is our authority; when he sends us it’s in his authority, and with his exceptionally powerful message. The message is a matter of life and death.

It is about heaven or hell—eternal glory or eternal damnation. The driving power of the message is Jesus himself. All of it is under his control. It is the message that defeats Satan and gives us victory.

Sometimes we think that being a committed follower of Jesus means that everything is up to us. We think that being a follower of Jesus is something we have to accomplish.

No, being a Jesus follower is something we simply need to be. It means being faithful and relying on Jesus’ power instead of our own. When we are faithful, just like he did with these seventy-two, Jesus will bless our faithfulness.

Yes, we still struggle with temptation and sin. But from His view point Jesus knows Satan's history. Satan's destiny is the Lake of Fire. Satan is a defeated foe.

Brothers and sisters, Satan is defeated! Christ is victorious. When we get this through our heads life takes on whole new meanings.

When you are going through troubles and temptations, just let Satan know that he's already lost the battle; he has no authority over you. Knowing the final outcome strengthens us and helps us stay true to Jesus.

But also remember that Satan still has power in the world—but not over Christians. This doesn't mean he doesn't try. He still tempts us. He still tries to cause disunity in the church. He still tries to seed the church with non-Christians.

He does all this so that the world will look at the Church and say, "There's nothing there for us." So he keeps trying.

But Christ's victory at the Cross is our victory. We can live abundant, victorious lives in spite of the fiery darts Satan throws our way.

Christ has won the victory—that's past tense. It's a done deal. Satan is defeated—period. Think about the love of Jesus Christ. Talk about the love of Christ. Live in Christ's power. Magnify Christ.

Here's the third thing I want you to see:

### 3. We are kept safe by the power of God.

Luke 10:20 (NIV) "However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven"

Melody Saggus tells the story in the Christian Reader, "After explaining to my 5-year-old daughter that my grandfather had died and I was going to fly out of town for a couple of days, she went to school and told her teacher a different version of the story: "My great-grandpa died, my mommy had to go to heaven to see him, and my daddy's going there to pick her up tomorrow!"

Jesus said, "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:3-5(NIV), 3Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, 5who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

That’s the reason to rejoice! The greatest miracle of all is still the salvation of a lost soul. Our names are written in heaven. Our inheritance is reserved and preserved by God for us in heaven.

We have a home prepared by Jesus for us in heaven. That’s for eternity. And, while we’re still here, we have authority over Satan. How about that!

Jesus, the one who gave the 72 the power to overcome their severest enemy was also capable of writing their names in the heavenly record. That’s why they should rejoice.

Link v. 18 with v. 20. “I saw Satan fall from heaven” (v. 18). “Rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (v. 20).

Satan out of heaven; our guarantee is heaven! We are at a higher level of authority, blessing, and future than Satan.

## Application:

Enjoy your mountain tops. But remember that there are going to be stretches of dryness—the valleys. Rejoice in the fact our foe, Satan, is defeated. Rejoice that you belong to heaven, and to the Throne, and to God, and to the Kingdom, and to God’s eternal family—this will carry you through the valleys as well as the mountain tops.