

You can overcome powers of darkness

Text: Exodus 15:1-4, 6-7, 9-13

Introduction

This is the oldest record of a song in human history – it is probably 3400 years old. The oldest song ever sang was a song of praise to our God. It is a song about God's victory over the enemy. It is a song that exalts the strength of God and His mighty acts.

- a) This song introduces God as a '*man of war*' (v.3).

In a world filled with evil and violence, God reveals Himself as a divine warrior, fighting on behalf of His people. He is a man of war because the world we live in, is a world at war.

- b) Verse 9 speaks of an *enemy*.

The oldest book in the bible, which is the book of Job (written probably 100 years earlier than Exodus), speaks about an enemy. **One of the oldest realities in the Bible is that there is an adversary**, a sworn enemy of God and man, called satan, and he has been fighting against man since the Garden of Eden. The book of Revelation calls him, "that serpent of old" (Revelation 12:7-9). That is why we live in a world at war.

Revelation 12:7-9 - *7And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

Regarding this enemy, people often make two mistakes:

- a) one is to ignore that we live in a world at war and that we have an adversary

There was line in the 1995 movie, *The Usual Suspects*, that goes like this: "*The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist*". That was actually taken from the writings of French 19th century writer Charles Baudelaire.

- b) At the other end of the spectrum, there are those who are aware of this evil enemy, but end up magnifying him. No, we need to magnify our God, like Moses did.

Psalms 34: 3 - *Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.*

Here's how you can overcome the enemy and powers of darkness:

1. **Know your enemy**

2 Cor. 2:11 - *“lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”*

Know that there is an enemy. There is no blessing or victory in ignorance or denial.

Hosea 4:5^a - *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*

John 8:33 - *You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free*

Freedom always manifests where TRUTH is embraced.

2. Know his game plan

Knowing the devil’s game plan, starts by knowing where the battlefield is.

This very real spiritual battle happens at a ‘cosmic’ level and a lot of what happens in the natural world often is just a reflection of what is taking place in the spiritual realm.

However, let me bring this home to you and say that there is a ‘personal’ dimension to this war: this enemy wars against us in our minds. Our minds are the battlefield.

‘We are not ignorant of his devices’ – the word ‘devices’ = *noemata* (gr) literally means ‘a deceived mind’.

Colossians 2:15 says that Jesus disarmed principalities and powers. He has stripped them off their armors and weapons. Therefore, the enemy has to depend on deception to get to God’s people. He primarily uses **deception, fear and accusation**

a) Deception

Revelation 12:9 - *So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world*

2 Corinthians 11:3 – *“But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ”.*

The enemy assaults our minds. The mind is the center of our decisions, it is also where our emotional and reasoning processes take place. It is the center of our will. The mind is therefore strategic.

He uses deception and lies. There is no truth in him, he is the father of lies (**John 8:44**)

b) Fear and intimidation

Exodus 15:9 *“The enemy said, “I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; My desire shall be satisfied on them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.”*

“the enemy said” or “the enemy boasted” (NIV)

Daniel 7:20-22 (Message) ¹⁹⁻²² “But I wanted to know more. I was curious about the fourth animal, the one so different from the others, the hideous monster with the iron teeth and the bronze claws, gulping down what it ripped to pieces and trampling the leftovers into the dirt. And I wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and the other horn that sprouted up while three of the original horns were removed. This new horn had eyes and **a big mouth and spoke arrogantly**, dominating the other horns. I watched as this horn was making war on God’s holy people and getting the best of them. But then The Old One intervened and decided things in favour of the people of the High God. In the end, God’s holy people took over the kingdom.

The enemy has a big mouth, boasts, defies and intimidates

1 Samuel 17:10-11 “*And the Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. "When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid”.*

...
44 *And the Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!”*

Words carry images. If the enemy can plant some catastrophic image of defeat, sickness, death, poverty etc, he will then proceed to build a whole stronghold in the mind.

The enemy plays psychological games – he is after your mind. We cannot be ignorant of the enemy’s devices.

c) Accusation

Another device he uses against us, other than deception and fear, is accusation.

He is the *accuser of the brethren*. The enemy will challenge you regarding where you stand with God. He will bring accusation and guilt to make you believe that you’re not accepted by God, that you are not in right standing with Him and that God will not answer your prayers. He will try to convince you that you are not righteous and deserving of anything.

Isaiah 54:17 - *No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me, says the Lord.*

2 Corinthians 5:21

3. Know how to respond

a) Respond with immovable faith!

1 Peter 5:8-9 - *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith,*

knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."

Ephesians 6:16: *above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*

We need to deal with the enemy from a perspective of faith and not fear.

2 Samuel 17:45-47 – *"Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But **I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts**, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands."*

Watch your confession

- We need to respond in **the name of Jesus** (mindful of the authority of that name, mindful of the complete work of Christ on the cross)
- We need to respond mindful that our God is a man of war (like Moses sang), He is the God of the armies, the battle is not ours but the Lord's!

b) Respond with worship

We started this message with this great song of worship about a God who is greater than any enemy.

I believe that praise is one of the most powerful weapons of warfare.

Psalms 8:1-2 - *O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth, who have set Your glory above the heavens! O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth, who have set Your glory above the heavens! Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength. Because of Your enemies, that You may **silence the enemy and the avenger.**"*

The enemy is a big mouth. The best way to silence his accusations, his intimidation, his boasting is to sing to God!

- The evil spirit that tormented Saul was silenced when David worshiped God!
- Jehoshaphat's worship team sang to God in the battle and they won the victory. Praise precedes the victory – **2 Chronicles 20:17-22**
- Paul and Silas at midnight sang songs to God and the walls of the prison came down!

Conclusion

These are challenging days. There is an assault that has come against our world.

Our enemy is invisible but not invincible. He has been defeated by Jesus and we too, can defeat the powers of darkness. Know your enemy, know his game plan and know how to respond! Praise your way into victory!

The battle is not yours it is the Lord's.