

The Dragon Slayer

15 - Living the Simple Gospel: Philippians
Church on the Park I Sunday, 26 March 2017

Text: Philippians 1:27-2:4

Theme: Jesus is the dragon slayer and he has called you to follow in his footpath.

Intro: The Gospel is not merely about what you believe; it's about living worthy of the Gospel. Living the Gospel will mean conflict with the devil, who doesn't want you to live like his archenemy, Jesus. The modern disconnect between faith and life is tragic. Paul's passion is that the Philippians would not just believe in Jesus, but that their very life would have its source in Jesus. Paul's goal was that they would not just worship Jesus, but look like Jesus—that everyday they would be progressing and moving forward.

Over the last few weeks we've had a series of messages within a series, like a Russian nesting doll. We've been studying how Jesus overcame the temptation in the wilderness. We've seen the devil and the world tempt us in three main areas: 1) The lust of the flesh, 2) The lust of the eyes and 3) The pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). These three temptations are like a three headed dragon, breathing out hell-fire and wanting to consume you with lust and pride.

1) Be a dragon slayer (Luke 4:9-13).

- To **live like Jesus**, you need to be a **dragon slayer** (cf. Rev. 12:17, this one has seven heads).
- Today, we will focus on **cutting off the dragon's head of pride**.
 - We are learning how Jesus **overcame** and how you can too.
 - I'm going to give you **intelligence** on how the **enemy operates** and how you can **defeat** him.
- The last temptation in Luke is a **temptation** in the **spiritual realm**—it happens at the temple.
- Here in the temple, we are tempted to **prove ourselves**—to make a **show off** how much God loves us.
- The last temptation in Luke has to do with **PRIDE**.
 - At the **centre** of our english word '**PRIDE**' is the letter '**I**'.
 - Pride has to do with the '**I being first—self-centred and self-focused**'.
- *Have you heard of Saint George? Did you know he is England's Patron Saint?*
- According to tradition, Saint George was born around **280AD** and died a martyr on **23 April 303AD**.
 - He was a **soldier** in the **Roman army**, but the Emperor **Diocletian hated Christians**.
 - George was commanded to **renounce** his faith in Jesus, but wouldn't. Diocletian even offered him **wealth** and **land**, but he still refused. They put him on a **wheel of swords** that lacerated his flesh, and still he confessed Jesus.
 - In the end, they **beheaded** him.
- According to **legend**, Saint George is also the one who killed a **dragon**.
 - There was a dragon tormented a in a town of **Libya** and the people were feeding him sheep and even children to appease him.
 - Eventually, the **king's virgin daughter** was up for the lot of being fed to the dragon. She was dressed up in a bridal outfit and sent to the lake where the dragon resided.
 - George happened to be going passed the lake when the king's daughter was about to be eaten.
 - He **tamed** the **dragon** and then **killed** it, saving the **King's daughter**.
 - Again, this part of the story is probably **fictitious**. But, I want you to be dragon slayers, especially slaying the dragon of pride.
- This is the one temptation where the **devil** uses **Scripture**. Yet, he **distorts Scripture**.

- We know this is what the devil did in the beginning with **Eve**; he **distorted** God's Word.

2) Humility is the sword that slays the dragon of pride (Luke 4:12; Phil. 2:1-4).

- Notice Jesus' quote, it has to do with **humility**: "It is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the **test**'" (Luke 4:12).
 - *Now, in life who are the one's who give us tests? Teachers* give you tests. A student doesn't test a teacher, a teacher tests a student.
 - Also, **parents** (fathers and mothers) test us so that we learn.
 - By **answering** like this, Jesus is responding in **humility**. He's saying, "As a **man**, I am not the **teacher** putting God to the test. Instead, I'm the one **under the teacher**."
- **Soldiers** are usually associated with **pride**, but in **Jesus** we see a **humble warrior**.
- *Do you know why the devil was cast out of heaven?*
 - Because of **pride** and **lust**. Listen to **Isaiah 14:12-15**. Observe the repetition of "**I will**."
 - Also, see **Ezekiel 28:11-19**.
 - These passages are speaking on **two levels**: to **earthly kings** but also to the **devil** who is **motivating** these kings, who are now becoming like **puppets** to satan.
- When **Jesus** quotes the Word as a **sword** to **satan**, he is quoting Scripture on **two levels**.
 - The first **as a man** overcoming the enemy's **temptations**.
 - The second as **God** who **kicked satan out of heaven**. Jesus is specifically quoting these verses to **rebuke** the spirit of the **devil**.
 - Again, when Jesus is **quoting** these Scriptures, he is **directly rebuking the devil** who he kicked out of heaven.
 - The devil was **not satisfied** to live on **every word** proceeding out of the mouth of God—he **lusted** after his **own thoughts and reason**, his own word.
 - He **did not want to worship** the Lord God and serve him only; he wanted to **worship and serve himself**.
 - Lastly, the devil wanted to be the **teacher**—the **tester**; he didn't want God as **first**, so he **tested him** and ultimately got kicked out of heaven.
 - The battle for your life is about the **serpent** wants to make you **like him** and **God** wants to make you **like Jesus**.
 - In order to **slay the dragon**, you need to **know your enemy**.
 - **First**, you need to **know your God**.
 - Second, you need to **know your enemy**.
 - Third, stop being **friends with the enemy**.
 - **Humility slays pride**. The Proverbs, which teaches all about wisdom, focuses on humility. Humility **listens**. Humility **fears** God. Humility **honours** others. Humility **submits** to God.
 - **Summing up**, to combat pride, you need to know the **Word** and the **Spirit of God** on how to **apply** the Word. The **wisdom of knowing** God's Word only comes with **humility**.

3) Humility is learned through relationships (Phil. 2:1-5).

- Paul is teaching us that **humility** is the **foundation of unity** in God's people.
 - In our Philippians passage today (Philippians 1:27-2:5) Paul is **calling** us to **unity**. And Paul makes it clear the **unity** is only **possible** through **humility**—"regarding one another as more important than yourselves." "Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."
- The picture is a **mutual submission** of **one to another**—putting others **above yourself**.
 - God doesn't give you **relationships** so that you can **direct** other people around.
 - Relationships are for the purpose of **learning love**—**real, sacrificial love**.
 - **Difficult relationships** are also for the purpose of **practicing love**.
 - *Did anybody ever have a more difficult relationship with people than Jesus?*
 - And he **died** for them. This is our **example**.
 - Humility **can't** be learned if you are **independent** and by yourself. You don't know how **proud** you are until you are brought into **relationship** with other people.
 - It seems like we have had a whole generation **throw themselves** off the **temple**. In other words, they **stopped honouring the church**, God's people. They've **thrown themselves out of fellowship** and have **expected** that God would **uphold** them.

- God only upholds you as you do things his way. His heart is for his temple, his people. Only in fellowship are you going to grow. Only in fellowship will you learn humility. Only through the church can you put your faith in practice. You need others and others need you.
- Remember **Uzziah's** pride. "I'll do all the ministry myself, even what is unlawful to me." (**2 Chron. 26:16-21**). *Do you know your boundaries?*
 - P - Performance based (It wants to show off)
 - R - Rebellious (It does not listen to God)
 - I - 'I' Centred (Self-focused, rather than Jesus-Centred)
 - D - Divisive & Demanding (It destroys unity and true fellowship)
 - E - Elevates Yourself (It is egotistical. Rather than elevating God and others you elevate yourself)
- Instead be **HUMBLE**
 - H - Honouring
 - U - Unselfish &
 - M - Motivated
 - B - By
 - L - Love
 - E - Everyday

Conclusion: You are called to be a dragon slayer like Jesus. It's through humility that you will slay his temptations of pride. Look to Jesus as your example. And live in relationship with God's people to learn love and humility.

Pride of Life - Word Study

212. ἀλαζονεία *alazoneía*; gen. *alazoneías*, fem. noun from the adj. *alazón* (213), a boaster. Ostentation, boasting about what one is not or does not possess. Someone going about with empty and boastful professions of cures and other feats. An *alazón* shows off that which he thinks or pretends he possesses. An ostentatious quack. A boast or boasting (James 4:16). As joined with *bíos* (979), life, it means the period of extension or duration of life as contrasted to *zōé* (2222) which means the breath of life. Therefore, *alazoneía tou bíou* in 1 John 2:16 means showing off to fellow mortals; the pride, pomp, or manner of life; the ambitious or vainglorious pursuit of the honors, glories, and splendors of this life; the luxury of life for the purpose of showing off, whether in dress, house, furniture, servants, food.

Syn.: *kenodoxía* (2754), the act of pretending to be what one is not; *kaúchēsis* (2746), the act of boasting in a good or bad sense; *kaúchēma* (2745), the boast itself in a good or bad sense; *hyperēphanía* (5243), pride, the desire to show off what one may be or have in comparison with others, thus appearing above them.

Ant.: *tapeinophrosúnē* (5012), lowliness of mind; *tapeínōsis* (5014), humiliation; *euschēmosúnē* (2157), decorousness, comeliness, showing one's proper shape.

Misc Personal Notes

Also, in another sense, he is saying to the devil, "I'm the Lord God! Don't put me to the test." Every response of Jesus was both on one level from his manhood and also from his deity.

In the wilderness, God is testing you. He is purifying your heart. Don't test God, rather trust him and do things his way.

You'll never get to your destination—to the delivery stage—unless you go on God's way, rather than your own.

Notice the serpent's original temptation of Eve. It's the same temptation that happened in Israel's wilderness and in Jesus' wilderness. His techniques haven't changed.

You are to submit yourself to God, but stand against the devil. Your heart is to be soft towards God and hard toward temptation.