“Has Satan Hindered You” 10/2/2016

“...but Satan hindered us.”

There are those times in your life when you would have seen more accomplished, but Satan hindered you. You would have prayed more, said more, served more, learned and grown more, but Satan hindered you.

Every child of God has the enemy of his soul walking about this earth as a roaring lion looking for the opportunity to disrupt, confuse, frustrate or tempt the saints of God.

I Peter 5:8 *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:…”*

I've titled today's sermon “Has Satan Hindered You.” Shall we pray?

Given the choice, the one person you might not want to hear a sermon about is Satan. Yet, in the process of growing up in Christ, we need to know just what Satan is like and learn the steps we can take to defeat him.

Please find with me this verse of Scripture. “...but Satan hindered us. It's found in the Book of I Thessalonians chapter two. The phrase is only found once in the Bible. And certainly the Apostle Paul knew Satan's power and his schemes.

Look with me at I Thessalonians 2:14 *“For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: (15) Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:*

*(16) Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. (17) But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. (18) Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.”*

When I read I Thessalonians chapter two, I see Paul moving from his blessed memories of the Thessalonians in verse fourteen; that they had become followers of the Churches of God; that they had suffered persecution at the hands of their loved ones and friends, verse fifteen and sixteen; that his plan was to return to Thessalonica and, here in verse eighteen, to Satan’s hindering him.

Let’s begin with this. Can you think of any ways in which Satan has interfered, disrupted, and hindered you? Here are just a few ways that Satan hinders the Believer. [Found on www.slideshare.net by Charles E. Whisant from August 9, 2009 # 1 - 4 below]

What does Satan do to hinder?

1. He tempts you with despair.
2. Sometimes he gets you to think much more highly of yourself than you ought to. He promotes pride.

3. He initiates or even multiplies your doubts.

4. He puts immoral and untrue thoughts into your mind.

5. He uses unbelieving friends and family to persecute you.

6. He discourages you into not making time to pray or into believing that God won’t answer your prayer.

7. He creates problems for you that disable your attempts to reach others with the Gospel.

8. He works in your life so that you won’t accomplish God’s will.

Won’t you agree with me that these all fall under the category of “Satanic Hindrances”? Here’s what the Apostle Paul experienced. I Thessalonians 2:18 *“Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.”*

Are you among those who incorrectly assume that Paul and the other Apostles were so “super spiritual” that Satan could *not* deter them from accomplishing God’s will? Obviously, that’s just not the case. There were times even in Paul’s life when Satan distracted him. And certainly you’ve read the accounts of Jesus being pressed by the devil? Do you remember the difficulty Peter had when he was hindered by Satan? And how about Job? And how about Moses being opposed by the henchmen of the devil? And how about Nehemiah whose heart was set on re-building the walls of the city of Jerusalem? Do you remember the people Satan used to hinder him? They, and most, if not all of the Saints throughout history were deterred, hindered, obstructed and delayed from accomplishing what they knew was God’s will. [Found on www.slideshare.net by Charles E. Whisant August 9, 2009].

You see, first of all, the devil is opposed to your spiritual success. He doesn’t want people to hear and believe the Gospel. He’s the quintessential hinderer. II Corinthians 4:4 says this *“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*

Think about your own experience and difficulties you have when it comes to sharing the Gospel message with friends and family.

I can still remember the day when I first shared the Good News with my family. Here was the response “You have you Jesus. We have ours.” Now, subsequent to that, much has changed; as many of your know. But, consider the devil as the one who has hindered you from reaching your loved ones and friends with the Good News.

Folks, shouldn’t opposition be expected? It’s really the norm for any and all spiritual success. Satan is frustrated whenever and wherever the kingdom of God advances. So, he will do all he possibly can to hinder you.

Second, remember that he did all he possibly could to sidetrack the LORD Jesus. Jesus came from the glories of Heaven to submit Himself to the His Father’s will. And Satan preferred that He not yield Himself to that will.

In Matthew’s Gospel we read this. Matthew 4:1 *“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. (2) And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.*

*(3) And when the tempter came to him, he said, if thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. (4) But he answered and said, it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”*

The essence of the devil is deceit. He’s a deceiver.

II Corinthians 11:3 *“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”* He’s a subtle beguiler.

Ephesians 6:11 *“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”* His wiles are his schemes to hinder any sort of progress you want to make in your walk with Christ.

He’s a liar and he a murderer John 8:44 *“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”*

Can you see why it’s so critical that you learn God’s word? Can you see what the LORD says about him? Can you see that knowledge of the truth about Satan is a part of your preparation for your daily service in this world?

And the devil will always attack those whose goal is to accomplish God’s will.

Here’s Paul’s testimony again. II Cor. 12:7 *“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. (8) For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

*(9) And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”*

Folks, Satan is your personal adversary. He’s out to ruin you; to disturb you; to keep you unsettled and full of doubts.

So, as you can see from I Thessalonians 2:18 that Paul’s plan had been to return to the city of Thessalonica. He wanted to further minister to the Christians and to Churches that had been established there. But, what do we find? “Satan hindered” him.

And what did Satan do? Here’s what Satan did. This term “hindered” is a military term. “Hinder” = “dig trenches” in a road to impede the progress of an advancing army.

You see, the LORD’s army advances when the Gospel is preached and people respond to God’s Word. And, invariably, when Satan sees that you want to reach someone with the Gospel, he commissions one or more of his demons to find a way to stop your advance.

So hindrances are simply “obstacles” that block your progress in reaching out with the Good News.

Now, note with me that there are at least four obstacles Satan lays onto the road of success when it comes to expressing the Gospel message.

1. First, Satan intervenes by bringing events and

circumstances your way that will block your attempts to bring the Gospel to someone’s heart.

Here’s Romans 15:20 where Paul reminds that Romans of *his* desire to get to Rome and bring the Gospel message to the lost. Romans 15:20 *“Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: (21) But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. (22) For which cause also I have been* ***much hindered*** *from coming to you.”*

Not only was Paul hindered from going to Rome to preach Christ, he was “much hindered.” We aren’t told here exactly what those hindrances were. But this you can be sure of. It was Satan’s roadblocks that hindered Paul’s getting there.

Now, imagine for just a moment that you want to present the Gospel to a loved one who has just gotten very ill. Your hope it to get there to visit them and initiate a conversation about spiritual matters. Your hope is to lead them to the LORD for their salvation.

Yet, how many interruptions? How many people, events, and things of all sorts find their way into your path? Those are hindrances. And they may all be hindrances from Satan. And how do you know? Simply this.

Is it not God’s will that your loved one hear the Good News about the salvation that is offered in Christ? Absolutely. So, when you go with the Gospel, pray. Look to the LORD for His work in the heart of that man or woman. And when you are being hindered, remember what is really taking place. The devil is often the one who is hindering you.

When you go with the Gospel to a loved one or someone you are trying to reach for Christ this week, be sure to pray this prayer. “LORD remove any of Satan's hindrances so that I can tell them the Good News.”

What then are the obstacles on the road to success when it comes to sending out the Gospel message?

1. Events and circumstances will block the Gospel.

2. Some people will encourage your disobedience. Here’s Galatians 5:7 *“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?”*

When the Galatians should have been obedient to the LORD, they had been hindered. Paul knew that the personal growth of the Believers in the Churches in Galatia came by obedience. Yet, after a while there were those who entered in among them who promoted disobedience. Some in Galatia had been telling the Believers that it wasn’t necessary to obey the LORD Jesus. Here's what they were teaching. Galatians 5:6 *“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”*

False Teachers are everywhere. They had arrived in Galatia and were teaching that faith in Christ is too simple; too easy. It was not enough, they said, for their eternal security and therefore, that must return to the Laws of Moses as soon as possible.

And where did this encouragement to disobedience come from? It came from the devil himself. Look at Galatians 5:8 *“This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.”*

It certainly wasn’t from the LORD. Folks, sometimes the devil uses false teachers. And sometimes those false teachers are very persuasive; very wrong, but very persuasive. Either way, often it’s individuals who are hindering true spiritual progress.

What then are the obstacles on the road to success when it comes to sending out the Gospel message?

1. Events and circumstances that block the Gospel.

2. People who encourage you to disobey the LORD.

3. A lifestyle that prevents you from spending time in prayer. Turn with me to I Peter 3:7.

I Peter 3:7 *“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”*

Peter is teaching that a husband has a responsibility to show honor to his wife as unto the weaker vessel and because they together are heirs of the grace of life. And when a husband lives so that neglects to so honor his wife, he himself has become a hindrance to his own prayer life. Men, it's very important to your spiritual life, especially to your prayer life that you show honor to your wife.

Even your attitudes towards your spouse can be a hindrance.

1. Events and circumstances that block the Gospel.

2. People who encourage you to disobey the LORD.

3. A lifestyle that prevents you from spending time in prayer.

4. The fourth hindrance is whatever circumstances you area allowing that block you from fellowship with other Believers and involvement in service to them.

In I Thessalonians 2:17 we read this. *“But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. (18) Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.”*

One of the greatest joys of belonging to the LORD is Christian fellowship coupled with service to others. Paul had been to Thessalonica to reach that city with the Gospel. Then, he had traveled on down through Macedonia and into Greece. He was now writing this letter to the Thessalonians from the city of Corinth.

And he was missing his friends in Thessalonica. His heart was aching to fellowship again with these new Believers. He wanted to see them, to fellowship with them, and to serve them in some way; and certainly further instruct them in the ways of the LORD.

But circumstances hindered him. And how did Paul see those circumstances? Verse eighteen; *“...Satan hindered us.”*

Folks, as a Christian you are here in this world and in this Church to help those around you. You are here for fellow-ship. You are here to glorify God. And part of glorifying the LORD is spending time in fellowship with other Believers in mutual service.

And when fellowship and service is blocked, it’s not just missed, it’s considered by this spiritual man, the Apostle Paul, as an obstacle in the path of your spiritual maturity. Satan have never and will never want Believers to fellowship and minister together.

What always happens to a live, hot coal when it is removed from the “fellowship” of the other live coals in the hearth? It cools down. It cools off. It grows dim. And every single time, left by itself, it dies.

The LORD has called us to fellowship, hasn’t He? And yet too often you don’t see the circumstances that you are in or even the events of your life that is hindering that needed fellowship. The Bible says, as you now know, that the true hinderer is the devil himself. He knows your need to walk with other Christians and to serve with them in the ministry of His Word. So he throws an obstacle into your path to keep you from that needed fellowship.

Folks, Satan knows the power of the Gospel and the progress of the Gospel across the world. And he despises it. Why? Because the kingdom of God advances when the Gospel reaches people and their hearts and lives are transformed.

So, in conclusion, what can you do with the devil’s hindrances? Fortunately, we are told in God’s Word what we are to do. Here’s what you can do.

1. First, expect it. You are a child of God and Satan

despises you just because of who you are. As long as there are Christians and God-fearing people, there will be hindrances. I Peter 5:8 *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:…”*

1. Stand against the devil by resisting him. James 4:7

*“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*

1. Third, remember Who it is that has already overcome

the devil. In John’s Gospel we read these words of Jesus. John 16:11 *“the prince of this world is judged.”*

As a Christian, you are dealing with a defeated foe. Jesus already has His foot on the devil’s head. You can be confident in resisting the devil because your Captain has already won the battle.

1. Make your Bible the priority of your life. Apart from

God’s truth, you have no success.

1. Realize that all of Satan’s obstacles are mere

temporary obstacles. After all, it’s an obstacle and you are able, in the LORD’s strength to overcome it. It’s not a defeat. It’s a hindrance with a temporary tag on it.

1. Lastly, constantly submit your heart to the

LORD. You’ve found, by now that one of the LORD’s goals for your life is that you accomplish the things that are pleasing in His sight. Let the LORD have His way in your heart. Keep your heart tender to Him. He wants us to be tender-hearted children. And folks, when we commit our way unto the LORD, He will direct our paths.

Psalm 37:5 *“Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”*

And here’s Proverbs 3:5 *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. (6) In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”*

Folks, hindrances are obstacles, not dead ends. See them as the Apostle saw them. Deal with them as Paul dealt with them. Don’t let them become dead ends in your spiritual life. Nothing is more important than knowing and believing the Truth.

So, today you have a choice. You’ve only got this life to do respond to God and receive His free gift of Salvation. Soon the LORD Jesus will return and we’ll be ascending into Heaven. So, today is the day to believe His Word and respond to Him.

So, my constant question and hope and prayer is this. Will you submit your heart to the LORD and let Him have His way today? In order to effectively live in light of these hindrances, you’ll need to pray this prayer. I call it the Prayer of Surrender. It’s a wonderful prayer and I’m sure it honors the LORD when you pray it and truly mean it.

“LORD, I submit all that I am to you; my spirit, my soul, and my body. Do with me what is most pleasing to you. Work out Your will upon me today.”

Now, it’s possible that you are not a Believer in Jesus Christ. And the big question for you, of course, is, “Why not?” What is quote “hindering” you from turning to Jesus Christ and receiving His free gift of eternal security?

The Bible is plain about this. Today is the day of Salvation. What will you do about the condition of your heart for eternity? The Scripture tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him hath everlasting life. The one matter that stands between you and God is the matter of sin. And Jesus went to the cross to take care of that for you.

Here's what we find in the Scripture about coming to Him for salvation.

REPENT - “Will you change your mind about God, Christ, your sin, and God’s free gift of salvation?”

BELIEVE - “Will you simply trust Jesus Christ alone as the One Who paid the entire penalty for your sins?”

Here’s a simple salvation prayer for you to pray if you’ve never trusted the LORD for His free gift of eternal life. Salvation Prayer

“LORD, I admit that I am a sinner and in need of your grace. I believe that You sent Your Son to the Cross to die for me. Please forgive me of all my sins and make me Your child. Thank you.” Shall we pray?

Please find with me hymn number 737 “Like A River Glorious”.