



Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Here we are looking at a new month, in a new season, with all kinds of new mercies available from God! For those walking with The Lord, each day should carry new expectation of some good thing that He wants to do for us and through us. With that in mind however, let me draw your attention to what our Pastor Frank said last week:

Expect opposition

Territory has been forcibly taken from the world's poorest loser—Satan. More is to follow. Although his options are limited, what mean little tricks he has available are being used overtime against the work of God and more specifically, the people of God. What does that mean for us? We must be especially vigilant right now, not only for ourselves but for those around us.

What kind of opposition should we expect? Well, fortunately our adversary has a limited repertoire. One can pretty well name the categories and just watch for them.

Offenses

This is the overall basic strategy. Whatever else happens, he wants us offended. When we hear the word we immediately think of people but our ultimate offense is with God. Remember, nothing can happen to us except that which God not only allowed but figured in a plan that would work for our ultimate good. If you don't sense the potential for offense there stop and re-read that last sentence, because you must not have gotten it yet.

The cure for offenses is the ultimate offense, the cross of Jesus Christ. God not only paid for man's sin but delivered a terrific slap in the face to all the pride, selfishness, and rebellion within mankind. The cross rebukes all of these. It also stands as a signpost between Heaven and Hell, directing us

either to God or to Self, which leads by default to Satan. Remember that, whenever you stand in that place of offence, because it guards the doorway to all the new blessings God has for us.

Just standing in that place of offense is not a sin. God will bring us there many times as we walk with him and grow to new levels. In fact, finding yourself there usually means that you've been seeking God and He's opening a new door for you. Ever wonder what would have happened had Eve resisted the temptation of the apple tree? I thought on that one day and it changed my whole view on what temptation really means.

So offense, and offense against God is the goal, but there are several levels to the opposition. Many of them run like a nasty program on your computer, out of sight but tying up system resources and making things happen that shouldn't. Too often we don't connect the dots and see the total picture.

Harassment

Many forms of opposition appear as natural circumstances. Sickness, accidents, conflicts with other people, mood swings, financial reverses, you name it. Are you really sick, or afflicted by lying symptoms? Or were you sick for two days, but still suffering because the symptoms haven't gone away? Once we accept a situation as legitimate, then our faith finds another area to operate in. Does this mean that all adversity is demonic? No, but some is.

I'm reminded of some slick lawyer tricks. There's more to be learned about spiritual warfare by watching lawyers than most of us realize. Lest any think that might be a lawyer joke, let me remind you that Christ is a lawyer, and a good one (1 Jn 2:1). The devil is also a lawyer, the original shyster.

In a legal case you might be induced to sign a paper. Motivations could include intimidation (We can help you if you just *work with us*), deceit (This is only a receipt that shows we've *talked* to you...), or even altruism, (Won't you do your part to help this poor person?). But when the dust settles the

only piece of hard evidence is that paper you signed. Guess who holds the bag?

Spiritual warfare is like that. We sign the paper when we accept situations and say *That's just the way it is...* Is it? Maybe yes, maybe no. Or would you rather just roll over and play dead?

Separation

As we back up a bit and look over the bigger picture, one trend to look for is separation. Spiritual power builds in unity, harmony, and agreement. An isolated person is an easy mark for 'Ol Devil, just what he likes to see. He wants people isolated, separated from others and bound by fear, pride, habit or ignorance from entering in to the true communion of the saints. One purpose of all the harassment is to physically make it difficult or impossible to attend church meetings, or get to a TORCH event, or even pick up a phone and call for help. Why is it so hard? **Because there really is help available!**

This is why TORCH exists, and will continue to work, to provide a place where singles can get together and first of all belong, for belonging gives a place one can identify with and work out from. Many of a singles' needs are met in this one basic concept-where do I belong, fit in, need to be, feel comfortable, and who will stand by me when I need it? Conversely, who needs me, and will call me when they are in trouble or under attack?

Another factor in this is that people who have leadership callings on their lives are especially vulnerable. They receive special attention with not only harassment, but tempting, inviting distractions if only they will steer clear of paths that will lead them to fruitfulness and productivity in God. And when they step onto that wrong path many times the harassment will stop and they will heave a big sigh of relief and relax.

This is why we need to pray especially for leaders and potential leaders in the church, for whatever they say, they never feel the true peace and satisfaction that God's will would produce until they fight their way

through the jungle and enter into their true calling. This will not happen in isolation.

Togetherness

What happens when Believers allow the Lord to properly assemble them? Many things, all good. There is a protection and defense against demonic harassments that an individual cannot attain to. Not only is there more discernment available for what is and is not of God, Satan, or circumstance, but there is a lot more protection against all kinds of wierd ideas and doctrinal errors that can be worse than sickness. Having needs met socially and relationally closes the door to some areas of temptation.

Will all this be done through TORCH? No, but some of it will be. Some will be done through attendance and involvement within the Bible Temple church. Some will be through the cell group program. (Are you signed up?) Some will come through vocation, or community involvement. But For many people, TORCH is their starting point, the place to begin to deal with areas of life that keep them isolated, and alone, and beaten down by the enemy. It doesn't necessarily start easily either. It takes time. But it happens. Don't let the enemy rob you through harassment. That only shows that help is available.

EVENTS

Well, let's see what we have on the calendar for May. Four out of 5 Sundays should just about SNAC us properly, but we didn't want to even try to organize anything at a restaurant on Mother's Day. On the 3rd we're going to do a bit of driving and catch another meal at Calamity Jane's on Highway 26 just out of Sandy. They have hamburgers in all styles and sizes, but if you eat a big one all by yourself someone will probably have to roll you out in a wheelbarrow. Be careful!

Tad's on the 17th requires a reservation, so please call E- so we can get a head count. When the food's this good a little extra trouble is worth it.

E- says let's go do Cinco de Mayo again this year. Meet at the Gateway TC (Maxx Station) at 1PM on Saturday the 2nd. For more details call her.

Prayer is again at Gary's place. All I can say is that we've just got to keep hammering away at Hell. God has good things for us, and we want them.

T- and M- are again hosting Promise Keepers this first day of May. It's always good, but T- called to say that something extra special was in the works for this month, so be there (men)!

Our monthly group meeting will be at R-'s. Come ready to worship and meet God, as well as food and fellowship. We've been starting these at about 7:30, but it's OK to come a bit early and get in some extra fellowship, eh?

Looks like that's about it. Let's just remember to keep one another lifted up in prayer.

Have a great month!

GAH

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