

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY



Wednesday, June 3, 2020 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

PSALMS, HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS
“A Bible Study Drawn from Old and New Songs of Faith”
Ephesians 5:18-19

Music has a rich history in the story of God’s people beginning with the songs of the Old Testament called Psalms, and the rise and spread of Christianity around the globe with the great teaching hymns of faith. And even today, though music has sometimes been a point of contention and division centering on styles and methods of worship, many of the spiritual songs of our day are rich and power lyrics and sounds of worship that exalt our God and feed the souls of men. The Apostle Paul instructs us in Ephesians 5:18-19 to, *“¹⁸ ...be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”* – *Ephesians 5:18-19* We are actually commanded in God’s Word to dive head long into the music of faith... to be *“singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”* with all kind of expression of music (psalms, hymns and spiritual songs). What many miss in great hymns and songs of faith is the rich Biblical tradition and teaching embedded is many of those songs. The Bible study will attempt to dig into some of those select songs of faith and the powerful Biblical truths and lessons those songs that generations have loved to sing may have for us. Perhaps this will change our worship as we begin to sing these lyrics with deeper appreciation and understanding for what they are actually proclaiming. We looked at the great old hymn, “Farther Along,” and last time we dug into the subject of assurance of salvation by looking at the hymn *“Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine”*. Let’s look at another great hymn of faith, one that is a favorite of many, with an interesting history that speak further to assurance. This one is so popular that many have this hymn memorized.

VICTORY IN JESUS

“Victory in Jesus Over Enemies that Defeat Us”

1 John 5:4-5, Genesis 3:1-13, 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 16-18, Hebrews 12:2-3, Various Scripture

The song, “Victory in Jesus” written by Eugene Bartlett, a prolific hymn writer, having composed several hundred hymns. Bartlett was born in Christmas Eve in 1885. He dedicated his life to Jesus Christ at an early age. He is considered by many to be the founding father of Southern Gospel Music, and he was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 1979. Throughout his 56 years of life, he composed more than 800 hymns and gospel songs. He was the founder of the Hartford Music Company and Music Institute. The school attracted many talented artist and became known for publishing great Christian songs and hymnbooks, many of which he wrote himself. He gave many very famous hymn writers their first opportunities to

publish their music. Among them was Alfred E. Brumley who wrote “I’ll Fly Away” and “Turn your Radio On.”

Bartlett had a massive stroke that ended his career and he became confined to one room in 1939, unable to communicate. Dying, he spent almost a month writing his very last song, when most of his hymns were written in just a few simple minutes. Although broken in health, and unable to speak, he wanted to demonstrate that his great faith in Jesus Christ had not cracked under suffering and his great victory over doubt and despair. That last hymn was “Victory in Jesus.” Bartlett died in 1941,

VICTORY IN JESUS

By E.M. Bartlett (Hymn #426)

I heard an old, old story, how a Savior came from glory
How He gave His life on Calvary to save a wretch like me
I heard about His groaning, of His precious blood's atoning
Then I repented of my sins, and won the victory

I heard about His healing, of His cleansing pow'r revealing
How He made the lame to walk again, and caused the blind to see
And then I cried, "Dear Jesus, come and heal my broken spirit,"
And somehow Jesus came and brought to me the victory

I heard about a mansion He has built for me in glory
And I heard about the streets of gold beyond the crystal sea
About the angels singing, and the old redemption story
And some sweet day I'll sing up there the song of victory

(Chorus) O victory in Jesus, my Savior, forever
He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood
He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him
He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood

Questions to Explore: “Victory in Jesus”

- (1) What particular “victory” in life is the hymn writer speaking to in the first verse of the song? And how was this “victory” found/gained? **ANSWER: He found salvation and was saved.**
- (2) How was he saved according to the first verse of the song? **ANSWER: It this is interesting in this song, because He essentially is witnessing in this song and how to be saved. He says, “He heard the story, and believed in Jesus, and He repented of his sin, placing his faith in Jesus!” That’s verse 1.**
- (3) What kind of “victory” did the hymn writer experience in the second verse of the song and how did he find that victory **ANSWER: He received healing of his brokenness, whatever that was. He speaks of healing power and cleansing power. And that healing victory seems to have come through prayer... He cried out to Jesus and specifically ask for healing and victory.** What does this tell us about finding victory in our own life?
- (4) What particular “victory” in life is the hymn writer speaking to in the third verse of the song and what did that “victory” look like? **ANSWER: Victory over death and that ultimate victory looked like Heaven.**

- (5) The powerful chorus to this great old hymn is one that is very familiar, but it also a great reminder of where our victory is truly found... based on this familiar chorus where do we find victory in this life and how does that help us today and in our present circumstances?

***"⁴For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."** -1 John 5:4-5*

Christians are overcomers and truly are to live victorious Christian lives every day, but let's be honest, there are many enemies along that way that daily steal our victory and sometimes defeat us. We know the saying we may win the war, yet lose the battle. We ultimately know that we win and will be victorious in the end, but it's the daily battles that defeat us and keep us from living the victorious and abundant life that Christ came to give us daily. This study, looking at the anthem we love to sing, "Victory in Jesus, is about finding victory in Jesus over those enemies that so often defeat us. They can be numerous and varied. They can make an insidious assault on our lives as believers, stealing our joy, dashing our hopes, creating disillusionment and despair in our lives, and keeping us from the abundant life that Jesus desires for us.

Fill in the chart below as you think about the enemies that can steal our victory and defeat us in this life. Beside each list how you feel it steals our victor and then cite a Bible verse that you feel speaks to that struggle or a verse that you feel helps with that particular struggle.

WHAT DEFEATS US?	HOW IT DEFEATS US?	A HELPFUL BIBLE VERSE
<i>ex. Doubt</i>	<i>Causes us to question things, even God</i>	<i>James 1:6</i>

James 1:6 says, "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind."

THE ENEMIES THAT CAN DEFEAT US IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: We have looked at four of them so far. They are:

- FEAR** - One of the enemies that can defeat a Christian is FEAR. FEAR has a paralyzing effect on our lives as believers. As believers, fear keeps our faith from flourishing and growing. **Ralph Waldo Emerson** said, *"Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world."*
- DOUBT** – Another enemy that often defeat us is DOUBT. The enemy of DOUBT. Doubt defeats and disillusiones the lives of many professing believer and keep them from enjoying the full benefits of their faith and the victorious Christian life that Christ died to give them. Christians can have doubts about many thing, not the least of which is their own relationship and salvation with God. Circumstances, hardships, trials, affliction, suffering, heartache and difficulties in life can cause us to doubt. We may doubt God's love and goodness. Some may have doubt about themselves, but sometimes even Christians may question God. **Charles**

Haddon Spurgeon said, *“Doubt discovers difficulties which it never solves; it creates hesitancy, despondency, despair. Its progress is the decay of comfort, the death of peace... doubt nails down his coffin.”*

3. **SELF** – Fear and doubt really aren’t your worst enemies though... not really. Those two things, fear and doubt, can defeat us as believers and take a terrible toll on our spiritual and even physical life, yet then may in fact, actually be alerting us to something deeper going on with us... warning signs of a greater enemy at work within. Your worst enemy is named SELF. It can become the greatest enemy that a believer will face. The enemy of SELF is a powerful, controlling enemy, that blinds us, hardens us, and holds us captive... this enemy clouds our judgment and even deceives us, and we talked about how to defeat the enemy of self. Remember Francis of Assisi said, *“Above all the grace and the gifts that Christ gives to his beloved is that of overcoming self.”*
4. **WORRY** - There is also another deep seeded enemy that lurks within, but often shows on our face. The enemy of WORRY! Our minds are frequently weary with worry... our spirits are often weighted down. It defeats our faith like a deadly enemy waging war against us. Remember, Vance Havner said, *“Worry is like a rocking chair, it will give you something to do, but it won’t get you anywhere.”* It’s really worse than that... it will keep you from living the life of faith that God desires for you to life. It will stifle your joy and the peace you can be experiencing in life and will enslave you to a life of misery, fretting, and anxiety!
5. **TEMPTATION** – There is another enemy that we often let in... and that is the enemy of TEMPTATION. Henry Ward Beecher said about temptation, *“All men are tempted. There is no man that lives that can’t be broken down, provided it is the right temptation, put in the right spot.”* We often have a mistaken notion that the older we get, the wiser we get, and therefore the less tempted we become. Oh how mistaken we are by the clever deception that this enemy can throw our way. Temptation doesn’t discriminate. It doesn’t care how old you are or how many battles you may have won. Temptation never goes away on this side of heaven, it just often takes on a new face. What may have tempted you as a young man may have less appeal to you now, but you can be sure that the enemy of temptation will find a new appeal to you. And I love Oswald Chambers’ take on the subject. He said, *“Many of us suffer from temptations from which we have no business to suffer.”* We are tempted to gossip, to steal, to become rich, and to desire popularity. We’re tempted to take revenge, to be lazy, to overeat, to cheat, to fight, and to yield to sensual desire. We are also tempted to be selfish, to envy, and to hold grudges. Then there comes a time when we are tempted to give up, to quite, to fear, to doubt, to worry!
6. **ANGER** – There is also the enemy of anger... that red-faced enemy. Dr. Charles Swindoll’s words on anger help us to understand a little of what is going on inside of us when this enemy gets hold of our lives. He said, *“Anger is an emotional reaction to hostility that brings personal displeasure, either to ourselves or to someone else.”* We found great help and encouragement for dealing with this enemy in Paul’s words in Ephesians 4:26-27, ²⁶ *“In your anger do not sin”*: *Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,* ²⁷ *and do not give the devil a foothold. – Ephesians 4:26-27 (NIV)*

These enemies (fear, doubt, self, worry, temptation, anger) are so real, and their warfare against us so successful, that we often just resign ourselves to living in their grip, imprisoned as captives of their onslaught against us... “We’ll that is just life... everyone worries! Everyone is tempted! Everyone has fears! We are all a little selfish, and doubt plagues us all at some time! Everyone

gets mad!” We stop waging war against these deadly enemies and therefore our Christian faith become less than abundant, less than victorious, and less than what God desires for us to experience. We resign ourselves to defeat, and therefore live as captives essentially to these things and their effect on our lives. And the truth is, those are just a short list of five (5) of the enemies that war against our Christian faith and walk on a daily basis. That list could go on and on of the enemies that defeat us. They are a problem for us to say the least, but our problems and troubles, our failings and struggles with these things and any of the other enemies that threaten to defeat us don’t and shouldn’t keep us from experiencing the abundant life that Jesus came to give us. Remember victory is and can be ours through Jesus Christ. So let’s take a look at the enemies and problems that threatens to defeat us and keep us down, and how to find victory in Jesus in the midst of the battle.

Sure it doesn't feel good to go through abrasive moments of trials and problems, dealing with our enemies be it worry, or doubt, or anger, or fear, or temptation, or any of another problem enemies we face... selfishness, pride, unfaithfulness, material greed, lust, etc. Remember this, life is full of rubbing shoulders and exchanging words. Every time life would seem to cut you and grind you, it means God is working in you to make you a better you.

Life really is marked by problems... troubles... exchanges with these enemies that threaten to overtake us. We all experience these battles with these enemies, and maybe we haven’t mentioned your biggest enemy. Listen, no one is immune to them... not even Christians. Some skirmishes with these enemies are major, most are perhaps minor... some linger, many can be resolved about as quickly as they appear. When we are in the midst of battling these enemies they can all seem major at the time, and life impacting in some ways. Never easy at the time, otherwise it wouldn’t be called a “problem” or a “battle” or a “enemy.” Listen... here is a key, in the process of growth toward maturity in our Christian lives, these skirmishes or battles with these enemies, whether it be doubt, fear, worry, anger, temptation, self, or something else, can actually play an essential role... it puts faith on the line, it may cause us to grow and mature in our faith walk, and it can actually create a greater reliance on the one who can truly handle the problems in our lives and cause us to grow closer to Him than we have ever been. In finding “VICTORY IN JESUS OVER ENEMIES THAT DEFEAT US” there is no better help to be given for facing these enemies and the problems they create in our lives than to point us to back to the great “Problem-solver,” the One who can provide help, and answers, and victory in our lives.

I. A STARK REALITY FOR CHRISTIANS

New Christians will quite often have misconceptions about God, the Christian life and other believers and the things we face in this life... namely the problems this life can hold. The problem with this is that, because of these misconceptions, they are often easily vulnerable and susceptible to defeat by the enemy and the enemies that are sure to come against us. But that is not only a reality for new Christians, many who have been Christians for years may carry these misconception tucked neatly in their back pocket and when problems, and trial, and difficulties, and hardships, and battles, and struggles come... when things don’t go as they expected in their tidy Christian world these misconceptions reveal themselves and set us up for sure defeat. This look at the common misconceptions of Christianity is designed to dispel some of the myths that typically hinder Christians from

experiencing the abundant and victorious life Jesus came to give us, and from growing and maturing in the faith even in the face of the enemies that come against them

7 Commonly Held Misconceptions Christians Often Make About the Christian Life:
(these misconceptions really contribute to our inability to deal with the enemies that threaten to defeat us, with problems and sometimes these misconceptions are themselves a catalyst for problems and defeat themselves)

- (1) **Misconception #1: Once you become a Christian, God will solve all of your problems (John 6:33, 1 Peter 4:12-13)** – In other words you won't have anymore enemies, not more battles to fight, not more problems with life struggles. Christians are shocked when the first trial or serious crisis hits. Here's a reality check -- get prepared - - the Christian life is not always easy! You will still face ups and downs, challenges and joys. You will have problems and troubles to overcome. The ultimate enemy (Satan) will attack and he will throw all kinds of fiery darts (anger, temptation, doubt, worry, fear, pride, lust, etc.) your way. Jesus said in John 6:33, *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* And 1 Peter 4:12-13 offers encouragement for Christians facing difficult situations, *"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful (NKJV/fiery) trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed."*
- (2) **Misconception #2: Becoming a Christian means giving up all fun and following a life of rules (John 10:10, 1 Corinthians 2:9)** – This age old idea seem to imply that becoming a Christian will just be one problem after another... that you will have to give up all your good times, all your friends, and that becoming a Christian is a problem itself... that you if you become a Christian it will be a battle itself. Like being a Christian is an "enemy" to overcome itself! A joyless existence of mere rule-following is not true Christianity and the abundant life God intends for you. Rather, this describes a man-made experience of legalism. God has amazing adventures planned for you... not problem free or enemy free, but amazing. Again, as a matter of fact, Jesus, Himself described the life a Christian has as "abundant" when He said in John 10:10, *"... I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."* (NKJV) This verses gives a description of what it means to experience real life, full life... the best life even in the midst of struggles with enemies and problems we may face.. 1 Corinthians 2:9 says it like this and reminds us that though not problem free the Christ life is truly a blessed life, *"However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"*
- (3) **Misconception #3: All Christians are loving, perfect people (Colossians 3:13, Philippians 3:12-13)** – In other words, "Christian never have their own demons to battle... their own enemies to fight!" This misconception can be a problem itself for a believer. It doesn't take very long to discover that Christians are not always loving and perfect people, that we too have our own issues... enemies to battle within ourselves if you will. This misconception about the "goody-goody" nature of Christians, can be a problem for any number of reasons. For one, it's just simply not true. Christians/believers are not perfect. They are just saved, and that by grace. But also this misconception is not helpful, because being prepared to meet the imperfections and

failures of your new family in Christ can spare you future problem of pain and disillusionment from the hands of others from whom you may be tempted to expect perfection. Although Christians strive to be like Christ, we will never obtain complete sanctification until we stand before the Lord. We are going to face battles with doubt, and worry, and selfishness, and temptation, and fear, and doubt and all the impending effects of those things. In fact, God uses our imperfections to "grow us" in the faith. If not, there would be no need to forgive one another. As we learn to live in harmony with our new family, we rub each other like sandpaper. It's painful at times, but the result brings about a smoothing and softening to our rough edges. Paul reminds us in **Colossians 3:13** that we are to *"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."* The very fact that he encourages us to have to do this *"bearing with one another"* implies that we are not always loving and perfect people, but rather a people who must be "beared" with due to our own struggles. Do you get it? And he reminds us in **Philippians 3:12-13** that we aren't there yet, but rather still a work in progress when he said, *"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead ..."* In other words, I am not perfect yet... I'm still working on it, or rather He is still working on me!

- (4) **Misconception #4: Bad things don't happen to truly godly Christians (2 Corinthians 11:24-26, 1 Peter 1:6-7)** - This point goes along with point number one, however, the focus is slightly different. Often Christians begin to wrongly believe that if they live a godly Christian life, God will protect them from pain and suffering... problems in this life... battles with enemies, etc. This just "ain't" so according to God's Word. Paul, a hero of the faith, suffered much. He lays out some of the bad things that happen to this truly godly Christian... just listen to it in **2 Corinthians 11:24-26**, *"Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers."* Listen, he battled some enemies in this life, both external (listen above) and internal (inside himself as he experienced these things... do you think he ever feared, or worried, or doubted, or was tempted, or got angry). Some faith groups believe the Bible promises health, wealth and prosperity for all who live a godly life. But this teaching is false. Jesus never taught this to his followers. You may experience these blessings in your life, but they are not a reward for godly living. At times we experience tragedy, pain and loss in life. This is not always a result of sin, as some would claim, but rather, for a greater purpose that we may not understand immediately. We may never understand, but we can trust God in these difficult times, and know he has a purpose. Rick Warren says in his popular book, "The Purpose Driven Life" says *"Jesus did not die on the cross just so we could live comfortable, well-adjusted lives. His purpose is far deeper: He wants to make us like himself before he takes us to heaven."* **1 Peter 1:6-7** says it like this, *"So be truly glad! There is wonderful joy ahead, even though it is necessary for you to endure many trials for a*

while. These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold--and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.” (NLT)

- (5) **Misconception #5: Christian ministers and missionaries are more spiritual than other believers (1 Timothy 1:15-16)** – Embedded in this misconception is also the idea that somehow ministers and such don’t struggles with the enemies that beset others. Can I just be transparent and honest here, “I struggle with the same enemies you struggle with. I worry! I doubt! I fear! I’m tempted! I get angry! I don’t like it, but I do” Just being honest! This misconception that Christian ministers and missionaries are more spiritual than other believer is a major “problem” in church and with many Christian. The problems associated with this misconception are varied, but deadly. This is a subtle but persistent misconception that we carry in our minds as believers sometimes. Because of this false notion, we end up putting ministers and missionaries on "spiritual pedestals" accompanied by unrealistic expectations. When one of these heroes falls from our self-constructed perch, it tends to make us fall too -- away from God. Don't let this happen in your life. You may have to continually guard yourself against this subtle deception. Paul, Timothy's spiritual father, taught him this truth - we are all sinners on an equal playing field with God and each other. **1 Timothy 1:15-16** , *“This is a true saying, and everyone should believe it: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--and I was the worst of them all. But that is why God had mercy on me, so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.” (NLT)*
- (6) **Misconception #6: Christian churches are always safe places, where you can trust everyone (1 Peter 5:8, Matthew 10:6)** - Although this should be true, it is not. Falling for this misconception can really set one up for defeat by the enemy! Unfortunately we live in a fallen world where evil resides. Not everyone who enters the church has honorable intentions, and even some who do come with good intentions can fall back into old patterns of sin. People get injured in church, and words said in a heated moment can cut deeply. Disagreements and squabbles can seem to hurts even deeper in a church leaving their victim feeling like the one place they felt was a holy separate place is suddenly a war zone. Problems happen in the church, and enemies (doubt, fear, anger, worry, pride, selfishness, temptation, etc.) rear their head at church because churches are made up of imperfect, problem-prone people, and the enemy likes to disrupt and cause division the body of Christ whenever and where he can. Peter warned us of this very thing in **1 Peter 5:8**, when he said, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (NKJV)* And Jesus, Himself, warned us in **Matthew 10:6**, *“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (KJV)*

**NOTE: This doesn’t mean that the church isn’t important, or that Christians/believers don’t need the church, or that Christians/believers shouldn’t be in church. Remember that Jesus loves the church and gave Himself for the church and that one day He is coming back to get the church... His bride. The church isn’t*

perfect, but it is important, it is His and it must not be neglected. As Hebrews 10:24-25 says it, “²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” The church is made up of imperfect people who perfectly need new each and service and worship together a perfect Savior that can save them and make them better, and one day whole and complete in Him. We are all a work in progress.

- (7) **Misconception #7:** As a Christian you should not associate with unbelievers (1 Corinthians 9:22-23) – In other words, “In order to guard yourself from the enemy and the enemies that war against your Christian life you need to cut yourself off from the rest of the world... don’t have anything to do with them!” What do you think about that one? I am always saddened when I hear so called "seasoned" believers teaching this false notion to other Christians. Yes, it is true that you may have to break off some of the unhealthy relationships you have had with people from your past life of sin if and when their pull and draw on you is so strong that it is leading back into that life of sin. At least for a while you may need to do this until you are strong enough to resist the temptations of your old lifestyle. However, Jesus, our example, made it his mission (and ours) to associate with sinners. How will we attract those who need a Savior, if we don't build relationships with them? Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:22-23, “*When I am with those who are oppressed, I share their oppression so that I might bring them to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone so that I might bring them to Christ. I do all this to spread the Good News, and in doing so I enjoy its blessings.* (NLT)

QUESTION: We stated that these misconceptions really contribute to our inability to deal successfully and victoriously with the enemies that threaten to defeat us and the problems we face and sometimes are themselves a catalyst for problems themselves. How do these misconception contribute to our inability to deal with enemies (doubt, fear, worry, anger, etc.) problems and sometimes serve as catalyst themselves?

II. THE PROBLEM OF ENEMIES APPRAISED

The words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 reveal four levels of the reality of the problem enemies that come against us and their ensuing problems that we “will” face. Paul doesn’t imply that these things might happen, he assumes they will! You can hear Paul affirming that attacks here! Here is the way he expresses it, “⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” The King James says it like this, “⁸ We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.” Do you see it? He is saying we are in a battle here folk! We are getting attacked! The assault is on! You can hear it in his language. The levels of problems and attacks in this life are indicated by four terms.

READ:
2 Cor. 4:8-9

4 Levels of Problems:

- (1) **Troubles** – “daily problems/attack” The NIV calls these being “hard pressed.” Other translations use the word “afflictions.” This is the actually the slightest level of attacks

or problems. It is mild or moderate, none the less an attack. The Greek word Paul uses is the one from which we get our word “pressure.” This type of problem is closely related to stress that comes from people, deadlines, interruptions, and delays. It is easily forgotten, but it attacks us on a daily basis. Daily problems! Listen, just this one leads to anger, fear, worry, doubt, temptation, frustration... enemies!

- (2) **Perplexities** – “**without a way**” This indicates a level of attack which is more intense than the former daily problems we face.. It is also less often experienced, therefore perhaps a little harder to deal with. The Greek term translated here means “*without a way*” and conveys the idea of not knowing where to go or to whom we can turn. This kind of attack would include not knowing how to handle the situation that may include unfair treatment from unfair people or circumstances that can lead to a whole host of bombardments from enemies such as doubt, or fear, or anger, or worry, etc. Do you see it?
- (3) **Persecutions** – “**tormentings**” This is an extreme level of attack. It can be either emotional or physical. This form of attack carries with it intense irritation and stress that has affected us on the deepest painful levels and it does not pass quickly, but is tormenting. This is a level of attack that extremely difficult to handle and sometimes cause one to lose hope or abandon all hope.
- (4) **Destructions** – “**loss**” This is the ultimate in attack, maximum stress is felt and experienced. It can include the loss of someone or something near and dear to us; a spouse to divorce, a mate, child or friend to death; something you consider valuable; a dream. This is an attack that we experience that is very final and there is really not way out of it except to accept it!

Now notice, once again that Paul does not deny the reality of these attacks and deepening levels of attack. Nor does he indicate that Christian will not face these enemy attacks. As a matter of fact he is affirming that we will face these things most certainly at every level. He does however tell us that the Christians... the believer finds something beyond himself or herself to give victory, hope, and help in the midst of these attacks. Notice his words again in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, “⁸ *We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.*”

4 Christian Promises in the Midst The Enemy Attacks:

- (1) **Not crushed in troubles** –
- (2) **Not despairing in perplexities** –
- (3) **Not abandoned in persecutions** –
- (4) **Not destroyed in destructions** –

**The promise is victory... that these enemy attacks won't destroy us or overtake us because we have something beyond ourselves to see us through and give us victory. What is that?*

III. ULTIMATE HELP FOR DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF ENEMIES

The enemies we face in this life and the problems associated are a reality and you and I will never escape that reality. They will come and sometimes they will be intense and beyond

our ability to handle them it seems. Paul tells us that he found a ways to not be crushed, despaired, abandoned or destroyed by them. He found victory and ultimately that comes only through Jesus Christ... you know “Victory in Jesus Over Enemies That Defeat Us.” So he closes out his words at the end of 2 Corinthians 4 in speaking of the reality of these attacks and problems he knew were certain with these words in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, ¹⁶“*Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.*” ¹⁷“*For our light and momentary troubles (problems) are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*” ¹⁸“*So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*”

READ:
2 Cor. 4:16-18

5 Sources of Help for You and Your Problems:

- (1) **Don't lose heart** – Verse 16 says, ¹⁶“*Therefore we do not lose heart...*” Literally “don't allow yourself to be disheartened by these enemies and attacks.” Don't lose all hope! No matter how bad it gets in this life, for a Christian all hope is never... never lost! Realize that everyone has problems. Everyone Christian experiences attacks from the enemy and enemies. It is a part of this life. It rains on the just and the unjust. Everyone has problems. Problems can be disheartening, but there is One who will guard your heart... One who is on your side.
- (2) **Be Renewed day by day** – Paul says in verse 16, “*...Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.*” Christians are to be renewed and be being renewed daily. That is one of the ways we are able to handle and do life with all of its associated challenges, and problems, and obstacles, and attacks. How are we “renewed” day by day? By being in a growing and increasingly intimate relationship with Him. That only comes about by spending time with Him and getting to know Him on an ever deepening level through the study of His word (Bible study), by spending time with him in conversation (prayer), but sitting under the teaching and proclaiming of His words, by fellowshiping with others who know Him (church), by loving and expressing that love to Him (worship), by serving and giving of our self to Him (giving), etc.
- (3) **Remember the attacks (problems associated with the enemy) are momentary** – Paul speak of “*...our light and momentary troubles (problems, attacks, afflictions)*...” in **verse 17**. He is giving us a right perspective of attacks from our enemy and the enemies that would defeat us, namely that they are momentary... temporary. Sometimes we get “tunnel vision” in the midst of our struggles and problems and can focus on nothing else, but for a Christian we would always remember that this life with all of it ups and downs, joys as well as sorrows, is only a temporary. His intention is not to sound callused by the real struggles we face, but to remind us that they really are only momentary blips on the screen of the bigger picture of all that God has in store for you. And that really leads us to the next one
- (4) **Keep in mind a better day is ahead** – Verse 17 says, “*For our light and momentary troubles (problems) are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*” For the believers, the weight of our light and momentary problems in this life will soon give way to a new day where all of our battles, and struggles, and problems, and heartaches, and trials of this life will be over forever and there will be no more crying,

no more suffering and no more pain. There is a better day coming when all our wrestling with the enemies of this world will be over for good! Yeah!

- (5) **Focus on Him who is unseen and holds our lives in the palm of His hand** - *So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.* One of my favorite verses is Hebrews 12:2-3, *“² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”* You get it! We must focus on Him and not our enemies that threaten to defeat us or there associated problems. He holds the key and is the “ultimate” source for victory over the struggles of this life. Focus on Him... The Victory.

*“O victory in Jesus, my Savior, forever
He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood
He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him
He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood”
-Eugene Bartlett*