

THE REDTHREAD

THE STRONG MAN, PT. 2

This is the final installment of a two-part sermon by Red Thread publisher and pastor John Pace

THE GIFT OF SALVATION

Acknowledge to yourself and to God that you have sinned (Romans 3:23).

In sorrow for your sins, turn from them to God and ask His forgiveness (Isaiah 55:7).

By faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, believing that He died in your place on the cross (John 3:16).

WHY & HOW

THE RED THREAD exists to be an encouragement to the men and women currently separated from family and friends in correctional institutions. It is published on the 15th of each month by **Crimson House Ministries** at **1616 North Robberson, Springfield, Missouri, 65803**. Please send all correspondence to that address. Subscription information is available online at: <http://readingroom.crimsonhouseministries.org/>



IN CHRIST'S DAY

But Israel's deliverance from Pharaoh by the hand of Moses was a type of a greater deliverance for us today as Pharaoh typified satan, the prince of this world; and Moses would give way to the Prophet "raised up by God" who would set whomsoever will free. In his first letter to the church the Apostle John said it this way: "For this purpose the son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). In fact, satan's minions said so themselves when cried out to the

Lord, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God."

Let's return to the principle. "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil."

The first realization we must come to is that the New Testament sets before us two opposing kingdoms which exercise absolute sway over man. Just as Pharaoh had a kingdom and a rule so too does satan have a kingdom and a rule. The battle is kingdom versus

kingdom, Pharaoh versus Moses, satan versus Christ.

In eternity past there was one kingdom, that of our God and one rule—righteousness. But a second kingdom developed as Lucifer rebelled against God, took a third part of the angels with him and acquired his own kingdom and a rule—unrighteousness. When God created Adam and Eve they were part of His kingdom of righteousness and obedience, but through the Fall they moved mankind out from under God's kingdom and into the kingdom of this world; hence, the word of Isaiah, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).

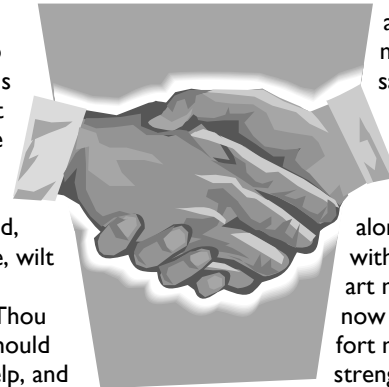
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MY HEAVENLY FRIEND

The precious Lord Jesus Christ is our friend. Oh, let us seek to realize this! It is not merely a religious phrase or statement, but truly He is our friend. He is the Brother "born for adversity," the one who "sticks closer than a brother." Who will never leave and never forsake us.

How precious even on earth to have a heavenly friend, for this brings the joys of heaven in a little degree into our hearts now. This is just what our heavenly Father desires regarding His children, that they might be as happy as they are capable of being while here in the body. Have we entered into this, that the One who is "altogether lovely" is ready hour by hour, to be our Friend?

When we cannot sleep at night, say to Christ, "My precious heavenly Friend, wilt Thou give me a little sleep?" When in pain, say, "My precious heavenly Friend, if it may please Thee, wilt Thou take away this pain? But if not, if Thou sees better that it should continue, sustain, help, and strengthen me, my precious heavenly friend!" When we feel lonely and tired, turn to the precious Lord Jesus; He is willing to be our friend in our loneliness. For sixty-two years and five months I had a beloved wife, and now in my ninety-second year I am left alone. But I turn to my precious Lord Jesus as I walk up



and down in my room, and say, "My precious Lord Jesus, I am alone, and yet not alone, Thou art with me; Thou art my friend; now Lord, comfort me and strengthen me,

give to Thy poor servant everything Thou sees he needs."

Oh, this is a reality, not a fable, that the Lord Jesus Christ is our friend. We should not be satisfied till we are brought to this, that we know the Lord Jesus Christ experientially to be our friend and

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MY HEAVENLY FRIEND

habitually to be our friend. Just ponder this. Habitually, never leaving, never forsaking us, at all times and under all circumstances ready to prove Himself to be our friend.

He is willing not merely to grant this for a few months, or a year or two, but to the very end of our earthly pilgrimage. David, in Psalm 23 says: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." Oh, how precious this is. For this "Lovely One" is coming again,

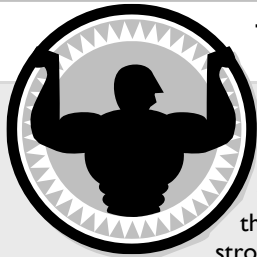
and soon. Soon He will come again; and then He will take us home and there we shall be forever with Him. Oh, how precious is that bright and glorious prospect. Here again the practical point is to appropriate this to ourselves. "He is coming to take me-poor, guilty, worthless, hell-deserving me-He is coming to take me to Himself." And to the degree in which we enter into these glorious things, the joys of heaven have already commenced!

—George Müller

THE MYSTERY OF UNANSWERED PRAYER

*I asked God for strength, that I might achieve;
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for health, that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.
I asked for riches, that I might be happy;
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.
I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men;
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing I asked for but everything I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.
I am, among men, most richly blessed.*

(At the end of the Civil War, this prayer was found folded in the pocket of a Confederate soldier.)



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Thus, in the illustration, the strong man's goods (satan's goods) are the souls of men, who through the Fall of Adam, are locked in Pharaoh's palace, many being slaves without knowledge of true freedom, many chained in gross sin and multitudes shackled by the unassuming sin of morality outside of God's righteousness. Satan lives safe and his goods in temporal peace free from the convicting power of the Spirit of Righteousness.

But after centuries of bondage and as the devil's goods multiplied within his palace, as the oppressed souls of men increased, just as Pharaoh was confronted by Moses, so satan was warned by the forerunner: "There cometh one mightier than me after me..." until the words of that One echoed throughout the domain of the strong man's kingdom, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." The word was finally coming, 'Let my people go.'

Satan, the strong man, dons his armor in which he trusts with the iron plates of temptation, captivation (to lead astray), and accusation. Remember he defeated the first Adam now it is time to defeat the second one. After all, he is the strong man. But thanks be to God, a stronger man is here!

As Moses stood in Pharaoh's court a humble shepherd, so Jesus entered satan's kingdom making himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. And as the son of man, he took each piece of satan's beloved and trusted armor from him:

The iron plates...

...of temptation were removed by the words, "It is written..."

- Man shall not live by bread alone
- Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God
- Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God;

...of captivation seen in the crowd's cries of "crucify him, crucify him" in trying

to lead the people astray was lost in the hidden wisdom of God, "which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

...of accusation at the foot of the cross as they mocked him, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

But the stronger man stayed on the cross, and in the kingdom of obedience became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of

God the Father. And in so doing the stronger man has removed the armor that satan has trusted and set the way for captives to be free.

TODAY

The stronger man has divided the spoil by setting a door that divides the kingdoms. A door that is, in actuality Him, with His blood applied to its two side posts and upper post. And just as God's sovereignty was exercised throughout the land of Egypt in Moses day, today His Spirit fills the earth convicting men of sin and righteousness and judgment, all the while offering them the opportunity to move out of sin's bondage in Egypt and into the promised land of liberty.

Once we get through the door the strong man's chains that bound us down are removed and replaced with armor...not satan's armor, because that has been defeated; not Saul's armor, because that hasn't been proven; but our chains are replaced with the armor that has been victorious, the armor of God! ▪

YOU SAID IT! *We love hearing from you and so do our readers. Please send your articles, poems, praise reports, testimonies, etc..., to The Red Thread, Crimson House Ministries, 1616 North Robberson, Springfield, MO, 65803.*

I AM A SOLDIER

I am a soldier, a prayer warrior, of the army of God. The Lord Jesus Christ is my commanding officer. The Holy Bible is my code of conduct. I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity, and tested by fire.

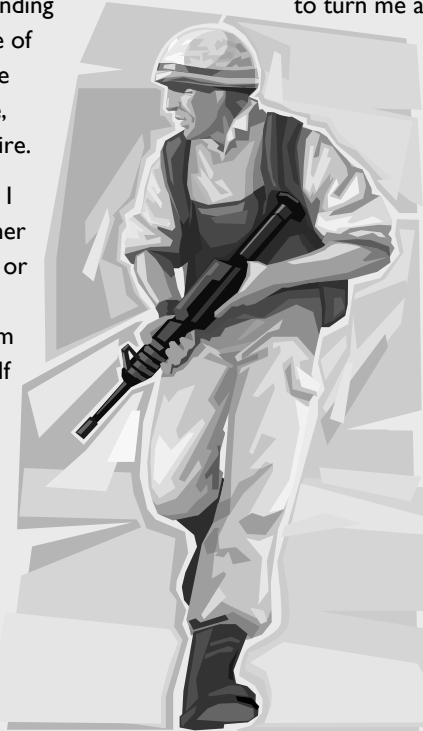
I am a volunteer in this army, and I am enlisted for eternity. I will either retire in this army at the Rapture or die in this army; but I will not get out, sell out, or be talked out. I am faithful, capable, and dependable. If my God needs me, I am there.

I am a soldier, a prayer warrior. I am not a baby. I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, picked up, or pepped up.

I am a soldier, a prayer warrior. No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me, or lure me.

I am a soldier, a prayer warrior. I am not weak. I am in place, saluting my King, obeying his orders, praising his name, and building his Kingdom!

I am a soldier, a prayer warrior. No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards, candy or give me handouts. I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for, or catered to.



I am committed. I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around. I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me around. I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside. I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit.

When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing. So if I end with nothing, I will still come out even. I will win. My God will supply all my needs. I am more than a conqueror. I will always triumph. I can do all things through Christ.

I am a soldier, a prayer warrior. The devil cannot defeat me. People cannot disillusion me. Weather cannot weary me. Sickness cannot stop me. Battles cannot beat me. Money cannot buy me. Governments cannot silence me and hell cannot hold me.

I am a soldier, a prayer warrior. Even death cannot destroy me, for when my commander calls me from this battlefield, he will promote me to Captain and then bring me back to rule this world with him.

I am a soldier, a prayer warrior, in the army, and I am marching, claiming victory. I will not give up. I will not turn around.

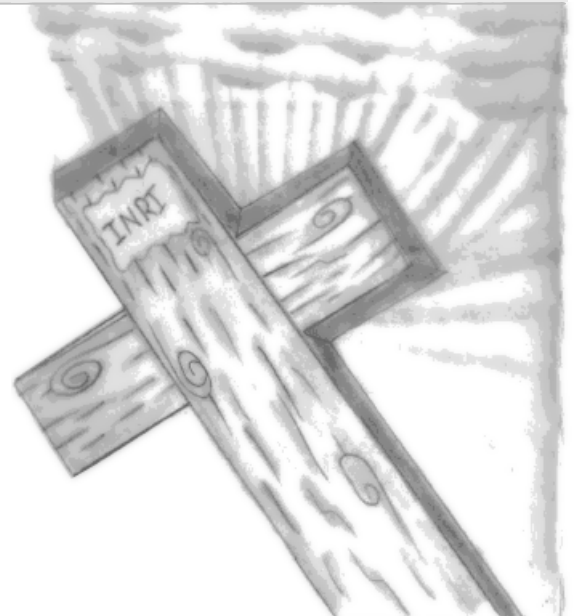
I am a soldier, a prayer warrior, marching Heaven-bound. Here I stand! Will you stand with me?

--KB, inmate Missouri

WISE SAYINGS FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

1. Wise men store up knowledge. But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand (10:14)
2. When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable. But he who restrains his lips is wise (10:19)
3. He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets. But he who is trustworthy conceals a matter (11:13)
4. The one who guards his mouth preserves his life. The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin (13:3)
5. He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip (20:19)
6. Like a bad tooth and an unsteady foot. Is confidence in a faithless man in time of trouble (25:19)
7. Like a city that is broken into and without walls. Is a man who has no control over his spirit (25:28)

—Charles R. Swindoll
From "Come Before Winter"



[Original envelope art by inmate Casey Nañez, Oklahoma



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MENTAL OR SPIRITUAL

There is a vast amount of intellectual comprehension of truth and doctrine which is not touching the situation, not meeting the need. A person may know Scripture most thoroughly and yet be the most awkward, cantankerous and peevish person in daily life; or go into business relationships, drive a hard bargain and send another man to the wall for his own ends. You may have all knowledge and yet profit nothing. It is the natural man receiving on the plane of the natural man. It is mental apprehension of Divine truth, and it is not alive, it is not the 'water of Life, clear as crystal.'

Services may be very beautiful but dead.... You may have very high ideals, sublime thoughts, and yet there may be just something that renders it all ineffective and you get nowhere. The modern pulpit goes as far as it can, with its own human mental outfit. If a man happens to be more scholarly and better educated than another, his interpretation is thought to be nearer the truth than that of anyone else. If he can put a construction upon the Word of God which is fresh, interesting, and fascinating and just satisfies the inquiring minds of his hearers, they go away with the idea that that is truth. That is no argument at all - no criterion whatever. To make the whole thing a matter of scholarship is to get off the road.

Moses was learned in all the knowledge of the Egyptians, and yet he had to have forty years of isolation and discipline. At the end, Moses had to say, 'I cannot,' and then God was able to say 'Now I have got you down to a level where I can say, 'I can.' Before Saul of Tarsus could go anywhere for God, he had to talk like this: 'Sinners, of whom I am chief; 'I am the least of all the apostles and not meet to be called an apostle'; 'the things that I counted gain, I now count but loss'; 'I received it not from men, it was made known to me by revelation'; 'it pleased God to reveal His Son in me.' That is not objective achievement; that is subjective experience, and between the two there is all the difference that there is between life and death....

The man who brags of scholarships and argues that because he has a higher brow than anybody else and is therefore nearer the truth is probably the most blind of all men... The moment you introduce the element of the natural man into the ministry you kill it. The river of the water of Life clear as crystal will not flow through the channel of the flesh.

What you minister must be born of the Spirit of God in your spirit, and it must not be interfered with by the flesh. God will not let the stream of living ministry flow until the flesh is laid forever in death and it is no longer I but Christ.

—T. Austin-Sparks
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