

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. Amen.

There is a detectable heaviness in the air. Some of you feel like there is pressure, unexplained pressure on your very being. Yes, you are breathing normally, but the air is heavier, and your breathing is more labored, not in your lungs, but in your spirit, your soul, the part of you that is connected to God. You can call it an outpouring of evil and you can literally see it when you hear about Nancy Pelosi's husband being assaulted by a man with a hammer. Obviously the man is mentally ill and probably should have been institutionalized. The evil assault is so unnerving, as are the news people who take the occurrence and use it as an opportunity to hammer the people with whom they disagree politically. Watch the news and the hammers are out, beating one another up, and they get paid to hammer, evil in the air.

There are some of you who can detect evil by what you see and hear. There are others who can detect evil by what you discern, by what you feel, by what God's Spirit reveals to you. It is called having the spiritual gift of discernment, the ability to detect truth from lies, whether a spirit is of God or demonic, the ability to grasp the difference between good and evil. The heaviness in the air is what is called spiritual warfare, that which we cannot see and takes place in the spirit world, visibly described in Revelation, Daniel, and Ezekiel. 1. **Spiritual oppression is when the enemy presses against you, puts pressure on you to do the wrong thing, to cave into discouragement, to tire of doing good, to lower the place you give Jesus in your life.** 2. **Spiritual oppression presses in on you to destroy lifelong Christian friendships, marriages, children from their parents, parents from their children, and turn you away from the study of Scripture and the church.** Spiritual oppression comes from forces outside of you, forces you cannot see but are there. One's discernment can be somewhat subjective and is not always accurate. This is where prayer plays such a key role. "Lord, what you are trying to say to me?" Please make what I am sensing in my spirit very clear to me."

3. Spiritual oppression is not the same as demon possession. A Christian cannot be demonized for God has no roommates in your soul. Oppression comes from outside of you. It is in the air. Possession takes place in a person's life who has opened themselves up to the demonic realm purposefully, willingly, on purpose, and that demonic spirit rules in a person's life.

Last week I went through the entire book of Revelation. I do not claim to have special understanding of the book, but there are specifics that are most encouraging especially when it looks like all hell is breaking loose and evil is winning the day. **4. Revelation 5:1-4 (NLT2) ¹ Then I saw a scroll in the right hand of the one who was sitting on the throne. There was writing on the inside and the outside of the scroll, and it was sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a strong angel, who shouted with a loud voice: "Who is worthy to break the seals on this scroll and open it?" ³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll and read it. ⁴ Then I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll and read it.**

Personally, when John saw that no one was worthy to open the scroll, it broke his heart. It looked like evil had won the battle and good was no more. Heaven itself was silent but for a time. I think an ominous, horrible feeling came over John. When heaven is silent, boy are we in trouble. God's plan for human history could not unfold unless someone was worthy to open the scroll. "And John wept bitterly."

Friends, have you ever been through a period of time in your life when God seems silent? You are facing one of the most difficult periods of your life and your ear to hear God's voice, your ear to hear God's word has gone deaf. That is a frightening time indeed. Notice what John did. He cried and cried and cried, until heaven took notice of his tears. John felt all was lost. Listen to what God says. **5. Psalm 34:15 (NLT2) ¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right; his ears are open to their cries for help. 6. Psalm 140:6 (NLT2) ⁶ I said to the**

LORD, “You are my God!” Listen, O LORD, to my cries for mercy! 7. Psalm 145:19 (NLT2)**19 He grants the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cries for help and rescues them.**

God hears the cries of your heart. God’s Word runs to you and your sadness can turn into joy as God has a personal meeting with you. God’s Word has a way of wiping away your tears. **Revelation 5:5-9 (NLT2)** ⁵ *But one of the twenty-four elders said to me, “Stop weeping! Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir to David’s throne, has won the victory. He is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals.”* ⁷ *He stepped forward and took the scroll from the right hand of the one sitting on the throne.* ⁹ *And they sang a new song with these words:* **8. “You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.**

When it looked as if all was lost, Jesus stepped up to the plate, opened the seals, and God’s plan for human history was unfolded. All that is happening today was predicted long ago. Our focus is not to be on the evil of our day but on the Lord Jesus reigning over the entire universe who is worthy of our praise. It is more important for us to listen to God more than ever, daily, and asking God to give us ears to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches. When it looks as if evil is winning, Jesus steps in and lets us know that no matter what is happening, Jesus is always worthy of living for and yes, even dying for.

The enemy wishes to silence us Christians today. Back in the 70’s my father said that as a Christian dentist he would one day be arrested for sharing the Christian faith in his office. And then he said, “I hope there is enough evidence to convict me.” This past week I read an article about a Christian dentist who was forced to attend sensitivity training because he holds to a Biblical view of marriage, one man and one woman for a lifetime, and a Biblical view of gender identity that God created us male and female. Free speech and freedom of religion us under

attack big time. The world wants to silence us who hold particular views found in God's word. When the world refuses to listen to God, chaos occurs and there is no end to how far a society can fall. It is up to us Bible-believing Christians to not grow weary or tired of following Jesus, the only One who is worthy to live for. Worthy is the lamb. His Word abides forever no matter what the critics try to do to it and silence us from speaking truth in love.

The Apostle John calls us Bible-believing Christians, "the overcomers." In no way do we have to cave into the assaults of godlessness from the world, the sinful flesh, or the devil.

9. John 16:33 (NLT2) ³³ I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world. **10. 1 John 4:4 (NIV) ⁴ You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.** **11. 1 John 5:4 (ESV) ⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith.** **12. Revelation 12:11 (NIV) ¹¹ They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.**

Jesus overcame the world. He is our Lord and King. He is to be supreme in all things. To cave into the sins of the world is dangerous indeed. The good news is even as Jesus overcame, we too can overcome in and only through Christ. This is the victory brought about by faith in Christ. It is brought about by the One who resides within you, the Presence of Christ, is stronger than the power outside of you, Satan, and his demons. The cross is the sign of victory over sin, death, and the devil. God's word has a way of racing to us, getting inside of us and delivering us from that which is evil. To go against the Word of God is to deny the worthiness of Jesus and that put's one's soul in dangerous territory. The enemy has declared war against God's people. The Good News is Jesus is always worthy of our obedience, saying no to sin and yes to Jesus.

It is taking up our cross and following every step, every word of Jesus. Oh, God, please give us ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

Revelation 21:1-7 (NIV) ¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ To each who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my sons and daughters.

I close with this one application. Please pray for your children, grandchildren, don't let a day go by without presenting them to the Lord Jesus. Pray against confusion. The Bible says Satan is the author of confusion. When young people are making such important decisions that impact the rest of their lives, they need to first have their identity in Christ. When Christ is your foundation, you have a basis, a foundation from which to make your decisions. It is so much better to make your decisions based on the truth of Scripture and not one's emotions that change every 30 seconds. There is a battle for their souls, please believe me. We want every soul won to Christ. This past week I felt so convicted that I need to be praying more for my children and granddaughter, more than I have in the past. I literally got on my knees to pray and within one minute's time I received a phone call from one of my children. I felt the phone call was one of God's ways of affirming the inner prompting to pray continually for them, for God's

protection from the evil one, for God's word to continually come to them, and for them to stand strongly for Jesus and more which is personal. I want the Lord Jesus to be victorious in all of their lives and I do not want to hinder God's work in them at all.

On this All Saints Sunday (weekend) we stand for Jesus and the cross on which he died. As a church we believe it is only by the grace of God, purchased with the blood of Jesus on the cross, that saves you for eternity by faith. The Good News is God is 100% for you and not against you. God's word is truth. Amen and Amen.