

Mortal Combat!

Prayer for illumination- please join me in prayer!

Opening illustration- When you hear the words, “famous warriors” who do you think of?

Maybe you think of Alexander the Great, Ganges khan, Charles Martel, Napoleon, Ulysses S. Grant, Stonewall Jackson, or General Patton.

If you're thinking of Biblical characters maybe Samson comes to mind. Samson killed a thousand men with a bone. Joshua won the battle of Jericho. Or maybe you are thinking of David, as a teenage boy he killed Goliath with his sling. The people said of him “Saul his killed his thousands, but David has killed tens of thousands.”

These are all great warriors, but the greatest warrior of all is often overlooked! Why? Because he was born in a manger, lived a lived in poverty, never raised an army, and died in obscurity! Of course I'm referring to baby Jesus. Baby Jesus is the greatest warrior to ever live. And the battle that he fought was the most important battle in human history.

So this morning I want to spend some time thinking about the warrior child. We will look at four things-

the needed warrior,
the promised warrior,
the surprising warrior,
the victorious warrior.

First, the needed warrior

Why do we need a warrior? Because we have a mortal enemy!

Look with me at Gen 3:8-19. The author explained in the previous chapters that God created all things out of nothing. And everything he made was very good. Then he placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

In chapter three of Genesis the serpent (who is referred to as the Devil twice in the NT) tricks Adam and Eve into eating the forbidden fruit from the forbidden tree.

Now we can pick up at 3:13. *“Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” (14) The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. (15) I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” (16) To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” (17) And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; (18) thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. (19) By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”*

The Devil was too much of a match for Adam and Eve! He convinced them to sin. Because of their sin there will be pain in childbearing, dysfunctional marriages, hard labor, and death. When sin entered the world, everything in creation was affected. Now there is war, child abuse, car accidents, cancer, heart disease, police

officers, starvation, hurricanes, floods, loneliness, theft, prisons, rape, hell, and divorce. Sin is the reason the world is so broken.

Not only was the Devil too much of a match for Adam and Eve...

The Devil is too much of a match for us!

The bible says-

1. The Devil is the father of lies. (John 8:44)
2. The Devil a murderer of men's souls (John 8:44).
3. The Devil tempts us to sin (Matt 4:3)
4. The Devil rages against man and woman (Rev 12:12)
5. The Devil prowls around like a lion looking for souls to devour (1 Pe 5:8)
6. The Devil makes war on the saints (rev 12:17)
7. The Devil oppresses with physical and mental illness (Acts 10:38)
8. The Devil has the power of death (Heb 2:14-15)

We are outmatched...

Illustration:

My son played on a flag football team this fall... all 9 of them (if they all showed up) would not be able to move one Seahawk, especially if it was DJ Fluker (6,5... 350). **Show image**... He is a massive human being...

We need help? We need a warrior. That brings us to our next point...

First, the needed warrior.

Second, the promised warrior

Look with me again at Genesis 3:14-15.

All hope is not lost... a warrior is promised.

"The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. (15) I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:14-15)

Genesis 3:15 is called "the first gospel". It is the first promise of good news for the human race.

In the end of verse 15 God tells the Devil that a descendent of Eve is going to come and crush his head (some translations say bruise).

Notice that the end of verse 15 says "He," singular, one person, one particular, specific offspring of Eve, will crush the Devil's head.

When would the promised warrior come and what will he be like?

When Joshua was in his prime some may have wondered if he was the promised one...

Or Samson

Or Gideon

Or David... surely it was David, Israel's greatest warrior to date!!!

Maybe his son Solomon??? No!!!

None of these men had the power to crush the head of Satan....

Israel waited, and waited, and waited...

Illustration:

Have you ever had to wait for something you really, really, really wanted?

Getting your drivers license.

Graduating from high school.

Graduating from college.

Waiting to play in your first Tennis tournament....

Getting married

The birth of your first child

The birth of your first grand-child

Retirement...

The Israelites eagerly waited for the promised warrior, but when he finally came most of the Jews missed him! This brings us to our next point...

First, the needed warrior.

Second, the promised warrior.

Third, the surprising warrior

Who is the surprising warrior? Baby Jesus!

Mat 1:18-21 *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. (19) And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. (20) But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. (21) She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."*

After thousands of years the warrior finally came. He was born into a poor, insignificant, and oppressed people group in a small and ignored region on the fringes of the Roman Empire. Why did he come? Why did God take on flesh? To wage war on the serpent. This was no ordinary child. This was a great warrior!

Satan knew who baby Jesus was...

He was not about to surrender!

He fought back...

In the last book of the bible we see what happened behind the seen when Christ was born.

Rev 12:1-5 “And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. (2) She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. (3) And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. (4) His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. (5) She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne...”

Rev 12:9 “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world--he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

The women spoken of in verses 1-2 is either the virgin Mary or the Nation of Israel that produces the promised seed. The child to be born is the Messiah who will rule the nations with a rod of Iron (psalm 2).

The great red dragon who is also called the serpent in verse 9 stands in front of the mother ready to devour the new born. He uses king Herod to do his dirty work.

Matthew 2:13–14 (ESV) — **13** Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” **14** And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt

Isn't this what we read would happen back in Genesis 3:15.

The offspring of Eve would do battle with the great serpent.

This little baby was on a mission. This small child would grow to be the most important warrior in human history. But how would he wage war? This brings us to the last point....

*the needed warrior,
the promised warrior,
the surprising warrior...*

Fourth, the victorious warrior

How would Christ defeat his enemy?

By raising an army?

With Tanks?

With jets?

With submarines?

No...

Christ defeats his enemy by dying! No one saw this coming!!! When he died a few things happened.

When Jesus died, he destroyed the power of the devil.

Hebrews 2:14–15 (ESV) — **14** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, **15** and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Our texts say that Christ death destroyed the devil. The Greek word for destroy means “to put out of Action” or to “render inoperative.”

The cross put Satan out of Action. Satan has been fatally wounded. His head has been violently bruised. He has a massive concussion. He is flailing around wildly.

When Christ destroyed Satan, he destroyed his power over death.

What does it mean that Satan had the power of death? Satan does not have the power to damn anyone. People go to hell because they are guilty of sinning against a holy God. But he does have one lethal weapon. His weapon is deception. He tries to deceive the human race into thinking that sin satisfies and leads to life. When people believe this lie, they will die. If we chose sin over righteousness we will die. In this sense he has the power of death. If he convinces you to not repent of your sins, you will die.

Christ came to solve this problem. When he died on the cross, he dealt decisively with our sins. When we are forgiven death and Satan have no power over us.

If you are a Christian, you don't have to be enslaved to the fear of death. Unfortunately many people around us are terrified of death.

Listen to this story-

“Alfred Krupp, the Prussian manufacturer of death (who worked for Hitler), was so in dread of death himself that it is said he never forgave anyone who brought up the subject in his presence. All his employees were strictly forbidden, under fear of discharge to speak of death when he was about. A relative of his wife, who was visiting with them, died suddenly, and Krupp fled from the house in terror.

Later, when his wife spoke with him about his act, he forsook her and never lived with her again. As he sensed age taking its toll, he offered his physician a sum amounting to one million dollars if he would prolong his life ten years. Of Course no doctor can guarantee life to anyone, and Krupp died.”

Are you afraid of death?

If you have trusted Christ, you have nothing to fear. When you die you will be ushered into God's glorious presence with millions of Angels and saints.

If Christ destroyed death, why do we still die? Because our salvation is an already and not yet. When Christ returns, he will complete our salvation and do away with death forever.

When Jesus died, he destroyed the power of the devil. In addition...

When Jesus died, he disarmed the devil.

Colossians 2:13–15 (ESV) — 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, **14** by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. **15** He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

According to verse 14, we were in debt to God.

Have you ever been in debt with someone? Imagine being in debt to the tune of 500 billion dollars. There is no way you could pay it.

We are in massive debt to God. We owe him perfect obedience, and we can never ever pay it. We have sinned too much.

But Christ in his incredible mercy canceled our debt but nailing it to the cross. In other words, God's law no longer condemns us. Why? Because Christ obeyed God's law perfectly on our behalf and then he died for our law breaking on the cross.

As a result, we are seen as perfect law keepers. Our debts have been paid, paid in full.

According to verse 15, Christ has disarmed Satan. In other words, he has taken away his weapon. What are his weapons? Accusations, condemnation, lies... Since Christ died for us, Satan can no longer accuse us of anything.

Revelation 12:10 (ESV) — 10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

Romans 8:33 "who can bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies."

Application-

When does Satan tempt you to despair?

After a fight with your spouse?

After a fight with a roommate?

After you drank too much?

After the harsh words you spoke to a sibling, child, or spouse?

After you looked at porn?

After years of not being generous?

After weeks of not reading the bible?

When this happens what should you do?

You should preach to yourself... you should say something like???

"Satan, Jesus Christ lived, died, and rose again on my behalf. He died in my place as my substitute! When he died, he destroyed your ability to accuse me! All my sins were placed on him and he gave me all of his righteousness. Yes, I'm a sinner. Yes, I deserve God's judgment, but I'm clothed in Christ's righteousness. My good works can't add to Christ's work and my bad works won't diminish Christ's work. So, Satan, take a hike, your accusations won't stick. You have been defeated by Christ and your days are numbered."

Baby Jesus grew up to be a great warrior. He fought Satan on your behalf.

We looked at...

the needed warrior,

the promised warrior,

the surprising warrior,

the victorious warrior.

Conclusion- Over the next few weeks don't be fooled by nativity sets. When you see the babe in the manger you may be tempted to think that he looks so cute, harmless, weak, and non-threatening. He may be cute but was not harmless. This little baby became the greatest warrior the world has ever seen. He grew up to die on a cross and defeat our greatest enemy.

We are going to close by singing a great Christmas hymn. The fourth verse captures the essence of this sermon.

Come Desire of nations come
Fix in us Thy humble home
Rise the woman's conqu'ring seed
Bruise in us the serpent's head

Hark the Herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King

Lets pray...