



Berean Christian Fellowship

DEVOTIONAL 236.0

August 16
2019

The Societal Hedge of the Church—P1

“I broke the jaws of the wicked and snatched the prey from his teeth.” (Job 29:17)

As our society declines morally, Christians are increasingly finding themselves in the crosshairs of persecution. Why is that? We know *“our struggle is not against flesh and blood”* (Eph. 6:12a), but against spiritual forces. However, the earth was corrupted by these spiritual forces, *“for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth”* (Gen. 6:12b) and flesh and blood are employed in satan’s war against God. What does that look like on a practical level? How do spiritual forces entice flesh and blood to wage war on the Church? What makes Believers a target for attack?

There are many ways to answer that question. Let’s just look at one particular attribute of the Church that brings it into conflict with wicked powers in society. The Body of Believers is charged by Christ to love their neighbor as much as they love themselves (to want good for them) - even to love their enemies and do good to those who hate and abuse them. Additionally, the Church has always been a hedge around the most vulnerable and exploited in society. This is because the vulnerable and the unprotected can easily be made a prey by the wicked if no one stands up for them. Indeed, if they can get away with it, the wicked plunder the vulnerable. They *“remove the landmarks; They seize and devour flocks. They drive away the donkeys of the orphans; They take the widow’s ox for a pledge. They push the needy aside from the road...Others snatch the orphan from the breast, And against the poor they take a pledge. They cause the poor to go about naked without clothing, And they take away the sheaves from the hungry. Within the walls they produce oil; They tread wine presses but thirst. From the city men groan, And the souls of the wounded cry out”* (Job 24:2-12a). *“There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst like a roaring lion tear-*

ing the prey. They have devoured lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in the midst of her” (Ez. 22:25). *“Your tongue devises destruction...You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue”* (Ps. 52:1-4). The danger of wicked people devouring the weak, vulnerable, and innocent is ever present in any society—it is just below the surface.

And so, God constantly refers to the poor, the fatherless (orphan), and the widow in His Word as examples of the most vulnerable and helpless in society, who He demands justice concerning: *“You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow’s garment in pledge”* (Deut. 24:17). And He has charged His people to watch over and protect the “weak” who are preyed upon for their living, their labor, and their very lives. In obedience to God, the righteous man Job summarized his conduct thus: *“I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the orphan who had no helper. The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me, and I made the widow’s heart sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; My justice was like a robe and a turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy, and I investigated the case which I did not know. I broke the jaws of the wicked and snatched the prey from his teeth”* (Job 29:12-17).

The result was righteous respect and fear: *“When I went out to the gate of the city, when I took my seat in the square, the young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men arose and stood. The princes stopped talking and put their hands on their mouths; The voice of the nobles was hushed, and their tongue stuck to their palate. For when the ear heard, it called me blessed, and when the eye saw, it gave witness of me”* (Job 29:7-11). This is a human picture of the respect and fear righteous God inspires—and it is His Spirit in the Believer that inspires this fear in those around them.

In the face of this, what can the wicked do to get at the vulnerable? We’ll see in part 2.

Explore more devotionals, articles, sermons, and music from the Body of Christ—also sign up for the bi-monthly Newsletter and learn more about the Berean Christian Fellowship and its ministry, the Berean Lamp—by visiting us at www.bereanlamp.org