

Activating the Power of the Cross to Overcome Satanic Evil

The bad news is that we all have evil inside us. The good news is that Christ, in His goodness and mercy, overcame that evil for us by dying on the cross and then offering us His righteousness—a free gift that can only be received by faith. By His death and resurrection, Christ defeated all the “principalities . . . powers . . . rulers of the darkness . . . [and] spiritual hosts of evil” (Eph. 6:12). “And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (Col. 2:15).

Evil no longer has power over the one who is clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

The transaction of the cross is the most wonderful truth of the Bible. Here in 23 words, Paul gives us that message: “For [God] made [Christ] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

When Jesus died on the cross, He took on our identity as a sinner. When we believe in Him we take on His identity as the righteous Son of God. By this transactional death, Jesus accomplished two critical things. First, He took our sin upon Himself; He became sin for us. Second, when we put our trust in Jesus, He not only forgives our sin, He gives His righteousness to us. We receive this righteousness the moment we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, repent of our sin, and ask for forgiveness.

Pastor Erwin Lutzer has given us a good illustration of how evil is overcome in the heart of the Christian:

Imagine a book entitled *The Life and Times of Jesus Christ*. It contains all the perfections of Christ: the works He did, His holy obedience, His purity, His right motives. A beautiful book indeed.

Then imagine another book, *The Life and Times of [insert your name]*. It contains all of [your] sins, immorality, broken promises and betrayal of friends. It would contain sinful thoughts, mixed motives and acts of disobedience.

Finally, imagine Christ taking both books and stripping them of their covers. Then He takes the contents of His own book and slips it between the covers of [your] book. We pick up the book to examine it. The title reads, *The Life and Times of [insert your name]*. We open the book and turn the pages and find no sins listed. All that we see is a long list of perfections, obedience, moral purity and perfect love. The book is so beautiful that even God adores it.

That is how to overcome the evil within your heart! Put your trust in Christ, and He does the rest.

Having received the righteousness of Christ by faith, we can now put on His righteousness in practice. We can take on the obligation and determination to live as closely to God's Word, and as closely to Jesus' example, as we are able. If we live this way, our heart is unburdened. It sings with love and joy and is filled with the inexpressible wonder of Christ's love for us.

That is the kind of heart that can overcome evil. {eo}

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