

The Enemy Without and Within (Slide 1)
Psalm 22

Reading: Hebrews 12:1-17

Psalm 22:12-13 (Slide 2)

***¹² Many bulls have surrounded Me;
Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me.***

***¹³ They gape at Me with their mouths,
Like a raging and roaring lion.***

I worked with a man named Kenny for a short while when I was around 19 who raised and trained border collies. He would talk about them quite often and I really had a desire to watch them work.

Border collies are a working breed used to herd animals into another part of a pasture or to round them up into a corral or a stock trailer. They were primarily bred around the anglo-scottish border areas which is probably how they derived their name.

They are fiercely loyal and very intelligent and in my opinion, from what I witnessed, fearless. They are very athletic and often participate in canine contests and are quite successful.

Border Collies were primarily bred for herding sheep in the Scottish hills and pastures. However, I found out they are very good at herding large livestock such as cattle.

The first time that I came to observe these magnificent animals work, Kenny had me stand several feet inside the fence that surrounded the cattle pasture. Then he sent just one of his border collies out to bring a small (but not small in size) herd of cattle toward us.

That dog worked until he got them into a tight formation and then brought them on the run. It was an amazing sight to see. He brought them close and then stopped them right in front us.

Then we moved over to another fenced in pasture and again we stood several feet in front of the fence. Once again, Kenny sent one dog out into

the containment area and soon it disappeared from sight as it went down a hill toward its target.

Suddenly here it came bringing in a 1400-1500 lb or more bull right at us. I am not ashamed to say it, I got very nervous seeing that massive beast head my way. I don't know much about bulls but it seemed quite docile when his Border Collie was in the enclosure with us.

That's the picture I get when I read:

***Many bulls have surrounded Me;
Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me.***

David describes the overwhelming size and strength of his enemies.

They gape at Me with their mouths

In my mind I picture these large beasts bearing down with their mouths open, heavy saliva teaming from their mouth and running down their fatty lips as they fiercely snort with vitriol in their eyes as they spew out absolute hatred toward David.

David describes enemies that would have ripped his flesh with their teeth because of their anger toward him.

What did our Lord endure but the same kind of intense hatred and hostility as He bore our sins on the cross.

Every person in their lives searches for someone or a group of friends who in your darkest hour will be a relief and bring comfort. But even those closest to you in their words which are meant to bring comfort or clarity sometimes bring about sorrow and despair only to make matters worse.

Proven in the story of Job whose friends brought discouragement when they tried through their worldview to bring an explanation to the trouble that had come upon Job:

Job 16:1-11 (Slide 3)

¹ Then Job answered and said:

**² "I have heard many such things;
Miserable comforters are you all!**

**³ Shall words of wind have an end?
Or what provokes you that you answer?
(Slide 4) ⁴ I also could speak as you do,
If your soul were in my soul's place.
I could heap up words against you,
And shake my head at you;**

**(Slide 5) ⁵ But I would strengthen you with my mouth,
And the comfort of my lips would relieve your grief.**

**⁶ "Though I speak, my grief is not relieved;
And if I remain silent, how am I eased?**

**(Slide 6) ⁷ But now He has worn me out;
You have made desolate all my company.**

**⁸ You have shriveled me up,
And it is a witness against me;
My leanness rises up against me
And bears witness to my face.**

**(Slide 7) ⁹ He tears me in His wrath, and hates me;
He gnashes at me with His teeth;
My adversary sharpens His gaze on me.**

**¹⁰ They gape at me with their mouth,
(Slide 8) They strike me reproachfully on the cheek,
They gather together against me.**

**¹¹ God has delivered me to the ungodly,
And turned me over to the hands of the wicked.**

A very solemn warning seems to fit very well when we consider the words we may use to comfort or to chastise:

(Slide 9) *"Be careful of the trouble you brew today for on the 'morrow' you shall drink of it."*

Our words and our actions cannot be aligned with those who bring reproach on the harmony God expects.

Hebrews 12:14-15 (Slide 10)

¹⁴ Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵ looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled

"We can anticipate trouble from without but it is heartwrenching when it comes from within!"

David was surrounded by his enemies and at the same time had major concerns of the enemies within.

Our Lord traveled all about and all the while knowing that the enemy within His close knit group would betray Him and lead Him into the hands of those with their mouths open waited to devour Him with their wickedness.

Invitation

At times the Lord allows the enemy to surround us because of the trouble we have brewed. We reap what we sow and we drink the consequence of our rebellion.

It is God's method of correction. Perhaps, it is a bitter taste nevertheless its bitterness makes His salvation taste all the more sweet.

But why suffer the consequence and not taste of God's goodness? His goodness is in His loving free gift of His only begotten Son's sacrifice on the cross.

***They gape at Me with their mouths,
Like a raging and roaring lion.***

God's strength is no match for a raging lion! Samson brings truth to God's unmatched power.

Judges 14:5-6 (Slide 11)

⁵ So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah.

Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him. (Slide 12) ⁶ And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand.

God will unlikely give us the physical strength to slay a lion as He did Samson, but I believe His word gives us Spiritual strength to slay our enemy even if the enemy puts us to death. But just as Samson found out, without the Lord he was weak and was overcome by his enemies.

Friends without the strength and power of our obedience to the Gospel we are weak and will be overwhelmed by our enemy. Why not put on Christ through baptism and stand with Him by His side and win the battle?

Psalms 121:7-8 (Slide 13)

The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore.

If you are in Christ but need prayer to help overcome whatever it is that besets you, please let us know and we will lift up your petition to God.

Please let us know how we may assist you.....

Reading

Hebrews 12:1-17

¹ Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²

looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. ⁴ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. ⁵ And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

***"My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;***

***⁶ For whom the LORD loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives."***

⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

¹² Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

¹⁴ Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵ looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; ¹⁶ lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. ¹⁷ For you know that afterward, when

he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

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