

Driving to Intimidate

“He boldly preached about the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ, and no one tried to stop him” (Acts 28:31, NCV).

The church got underway to a powerful beginning in Acts 2. It moved down nearly every major road in the known world, with the Gospel spreading to city after city, town after town. It stormed the gates of hell and raced toward worldwide evangelism. Religious leaders tried to muffle its sound. Satanic roadblocks feebly tried to hinder its progress. Paul immersed on the road to Damascus. Got his senses knocked into him. He got a clear-cut map of his direction. He interacted with a certain disciple on Straight Street. Pulled onto the highway and never once looked back. He never succumbed to intimidation. He never stopped until he finished his course (2 Timothy 4:7).

After church one Sunday, as we made our way through the busy streets, someone noticed an advertisement for small vehicles, the type with three wheels. These little vehicles are such oddities in the midst of our city’s seemingly million cars always honking, dodging, and crowding. How could such a miniature means of transportation survive in the midst of such chaos? Humorously to me, the sign boasted what I refer to as signboard theology. It read, “Driving to intimidate.” Did the manufacturers really think that drivers of such cars, if you could call them that, could intimidate other vehicles two to five times in size? Everyone knows the road race belongs to the biggest, strongest, and riskiest. Who was this producer or advertiser trying to deceive? What a joke?

This twisted logic—or the lack of it—reminds me of the devil’s tactics and the message he often wields. Providentially for us, he can do little more than “driving to intimidate.” Two of his greatest weapons—in what he hopes we’ll think to be his unlimited, lethal, destructive arsenal—are fear and intimidation.

Fear: Satan authors dread, terror, fright, panic, and raises alarm. He brings chaos, confusion, contempt, constraint, and condemnation. He is an encourager; but encouraging such negative emotions as apprehension and fosters doubt and disbelief. Someone has said fear is the absence of faith. Fear is certainly something many of us contend with. Fear cripples. It immobilizes; bringing us to a halt. “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7, NKJV). Obviously, a spirit of fear doesn’t come from God. He is perfect love and drives out fear (1 John 4:8). So never fear. There is a medication for the fear-sickness. “Fear not” is an often quoted command or word of back-up in the Bible. It appears at least sixty-three times in the King James Version. It starts in Genesis and makes it drive all the way to the end of Revelation. “Fear not!” It never stands alone. It is usually accompanied with a promise. “I will help you.” “I am with you!” “I will not fail you!” “I will not forsake you.” “I will never leave you.” “Be strong!” Here’s an example: “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” “Behold, all those who were incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced; they shall be as nothing, and those who strive with you shall perish. You shall seek them and not find them — those who contended with you. Those who war against you shall be as nothing, as a nonexistent thing. For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you’” (Isaiah 41:10-13, NKJV).

No wonder the Psalmist David was able to proclaim, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh, my enemies and foes, they stumbled and fell. Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war may rise against me, in this I will be confident. One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock” (Psalm 27: 1-5, NKJV).

Intimidation: Satan determinedly drops threats into our mind, heart and spirit. He pressures us to do things we know are contrary to God’s Word. Detours are his specialty. He doesn’t hit us over the head. He doesn’t have to. He does his work in a subtle, delicate manner. He is the chief of craftiness. When that doesn’t work, he tries bullying. He has big talk; little action.

He is a master at coercion, oppression and persuasion dating back to the Garden of Eden. He poises as our friend. But, make no mistake about it. He is our adversary; our number one enemy. Scripture never describes him as a roaring lion. He is only “like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8, NASB). Watch out. The evil one is around. He is against you. He prowls. He is poised to pounce. He seeks to devour. Whether he achieves his target or not, is your choice. When he roars, our response is to resist him, stand firm in our faith, realizing that God will “confirm, strengthen and establish you” (1 Peter 5: 10). Satan roars toothlessly. He makes a lot of noise. Like they say about dogs and sometimes humans, “His bark is louder than his bite!” Remember that God has “dominion forever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 5:11, NASB). God always gets the last word. In keeping with our word picture, the little three-wheeled vehicle, it’s not the one that honks his horn the loudest that possesses the most strength.

We don’t ever want to give Satan an opening; a foot in the driver’s door. We know his sly, cunning, crafty ways. Scripture says, “For we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Corinthians 2:11, NKJV). He shouldn’t be able to outsmart us. We know his schemes and plans. Don’t allow him to win anything from you. Remember, like the song says, “Jesus is the winner Man.” “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37, NKJV). The devil is a thief coming to sneakily take away our original blessings and provides some sort of counterfeit. He comes to steal, kill, and destroy. Jesus comes to give more abundant, overflowing life! (John 10:10). He came to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8, NKJV).

When the devil comes around, there is only one clear-cut reaction. Submit to God. Resist the devil. Don’t give him a foothold (Ephesians 4:27). Stand up against him. Yell a big, “Get out of here!” Make war with your evil enemy (Ephesians 6:12). Draw close to God. God will come close to you. Watch the devil scamper. He’ll flee. You’ll win the battle, with God’s help (1 Samuel 17:47, Deuteronomy 1:30, 3:22; Nehemiah 4:20).

God is strong. He wants us to be strong as well. We are in a battle. It isn’t against flesh and blood. We fight spiritual wickedness (Ephesians 6:12); Satan’s strategies and schemes. God empowers us to withstand; to endure and hold out. He promises that we will stand, not fall, or sit down in exhaustion in

fear. And He provides us with a protective covering; a spiritual bullet-proof armored gear. With God's help, we can bring Satan's tiny vehicle to a complete stop, or a quick turn-a-round. We can quench any engine power he has left. God equips us with the best-made artillery. He knows that the devil's scheme is more than we can handle on our own. When we use every part God has issued, and it's over, we'll still be the one left on the narrow road and ahead in the life's traffic. God's Word is indispensable against Satan's assault. Defensive driving skills are not only recommended but pivotal. Prayer is essential for ongoing power. No need to fall behind or drop out of the pursuit.

We have strong support in our favor; a few weapons of God's own. There are many. I'll list only five. Five is enough!

1. Armor of God (Ephesians 6:12-17). Notice there isn't any part that is meant for our retreat. He didn't mean for us to have to use the "reverse" gear in our contact with the devil. It's full throttle ahead. One can demand, "Satan, move over, get out of my way, I'm coming through." I don't have a few horse-power but possess God's power.
2. Word of God. It's still quick moving and powerful (Hebrews 4:12). Quote it to our common enemy. Jesus did! He answered each temptation with "It is written" (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). Basically He was saying "Here are the road rules of what God has proclaimed in His life-driving manual." God's Word is crucial in propelling you forward and pushing the enemy out of sight. Through it, Jesus was able to say, "Get out of my way, Satan! Get out of here! Be gone!" (Matthew 4:10).
3. Baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8). Not only is the Spirit (Zechariah 4:6) the driving force propelling us down the road of life, it is an active necessary, ingredient in our salvation, and it will take us upward (Romans 8:11).
4. Prayer (Ephesians 6:18). Trusting God shows we are refusing to give in to the taunts of the devil. "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27, ESV).
5. Blood of Jesus. Speak it out, "Satan, the blood of Jesus is against you." Like the song says, "There is power, power, wonder-working power, in the blood, of the Lamb." Pleading the blood of Jesus isn't begging. It is a legal term. We have an accuser. He drives to intimidate and to force us off the road. "...The accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony..." (Revelation 12:10-11). When Satan, in his little three-wheeled vehicle sees the blood, he pulls over, and we pass by (Exodus 12:7, 13). The blood of the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:18). Judgment was and is legally avoided because of it. The blood applied stopped the destroyer. The blood of Jesus overcomes the devil. Believe it in your heart. Apply it through obedience to the Gospel; be baptized in Jesus name. Say it with your mouth. Thank God for the blood, the power of the Name, and the word of our testimony.

When the enemy in his little three-wheeled vehicle speeds up, threatening to intimidate us, God will come quickly in His fast-moving eighteen-wheeler, driven by the breath of the Lord (Isaiah 59:19). You see, our vehicle and armory is not carnal and weak like his. They are mighty. They cast down imaginations, for all Satan is doing is creating a delusion, in his feeble effort to intimidate. With God's equipment we knock down strongholds, destroy every proud hindrance, smash warped-thinking, tear down every barrier, and clear the road of every obstruction (2 Corinthians 10:4). "You better look out, Satan, look out...I come to you in the name of the Lord, so look out, Satan, look out!" We know his tricks. He is only driving to intimidate!