

**April 22, 2012 - 11:00 a.m.**

**Pastor Jonathan Falwell**

## **Holy Wars: How Did This Happen?**

### **Scripture: Romans 5:12-20**

Summary: In the first in a six-part series entitled *Holy Wars*, Pastor Jonathan describes five realities about sin that we must understand in order to overcome it.

Today we start a brand-new sermon series that we've entitled *Holy Wars*. We have been talking a lot about wars these last few years here in America. It's on the front page of our newspapers each and every week, and every week we're reading about what happened in Afghanistan, what happened in Iraq, what is happening in Syria or Lebanon or Libya. All the places around the world, all the trials and the tribulations and these skirmishes, these battles that are going on.

We read about it all the time. We talk about wars constantly. In fact, here in America we look back at our history and we talk about wars in our history. We go all the way back to the Revolutionary War. Thirsty-five thousand people lost their lives during the Revolutionary War here in the United States. We move forward almost 100 years and the Civil War. Brother against brother, 600,000 lost their lives during that war. We move forward even a few more years after that to World War I. Thirty-five million people worldwide lost their lives.

In World War II, over 60 million people lost their lives. In the 1950s, in the Korean conflict, about 10 million people died during that time. In the Vietnam War about 5 or 6 million lost their lives. We move up in the present day, 1991 and the first Gulf War over in Iraq and we saw about 200,000 people that died during that time, and the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that we know that we are approaching right now over 1 million people that have died.

We look back over this horrendous loss of life in all of these wars that go back in our nation's history—which, by the way, no one wins in war. When people die, when people lose their lives, it's a horrendous thing. It's a tragic thing—and we look back and we see all of this loss of life and these tragedies, these conflicts, these crises.

But today what we begin talking about is a battle, a war that eclipses all of those other battles that we've just talked about put together. It's a battle that is raging in every street corner of every city around the world. There is not one home on the face of the earth today that is not in the midst of this battle, that is not in the midst of this war.

The battle that I'm talking about today is the battle for our very souls. John 10:10, you've heard me quote that verse many times here at Thomas Road. It says, "The thief [Satan] comes to steal

and to kill and to destroy.” That is his job and that’s what he wants to do. That is what he’s out to do on each and every one of us today is he wants to steal our joy and to kill our spirits, to destroy our families, to destroy and decimate our futures. That is what Satan wants to do.

There are people in today’s world, there are people in today’s church, there are pastors who stand on pulpits much like this one all over the world today that don’t believe what I’m telling you today. They say that hell is not a real place, that Satan doesn’t really exist. But you see the Bible, which I believe is inerrant and inspired and infallible, that there is not one mistake within all of its pages, tells me differently. It tells me that the thief, Satan, is out to get me and he’s out to get my family and he wants to rip us apart. He wants to stop us in our tracks.

But I am here today to give you hope and to let us celebrate because that verse goes on to say Jesus said, “I have come to give them life and to give it more abundantly.” That’s something to celebrate, don’t you think, that the battle that is raging all around is, the people that are attacking us, that Satan wants to destroy us, that we can stand today in victory not because of who we are, not because of our circumstances, not because of the size of our bank accounts, but we can stand in victory today because Jesus came to give us life, to give it to us over the top, to give it to us more than we could ever possibly imagine. That’s what that Greek word *abundantly* really means—over the top.

But you see today we live on a battlefield. We’ve all seen the war movies, we’ve all seen those historic films that chronicle the wars of the past. We’ve watched those films and we’ve seen the burned-out buildings, we’ve seen the destroyed equipment, we’ve seen the damage that the bombs can do. We’ve seen all the areas where people have gotten down behind the rocks and they’ve fired their weapons. We’ve seen the memorials that are placed out all over the world where men and women who left this nation to go to a foreign land and to fight for our freedoms, they died there, they shed their blood there, and because they weren’t able to come home, they are buried in places all over the world. We have seen that and we have watched that and we know that is real in the context of the war. But that same scene, that same visual, that same imagery is going on inside of our lives.

And so over these next six weeks we are going to be talking about how sin is trying to destroy us, but how through Jesus Christ we can win, that we will have victory because of who Christ is. But in order for us to understand that, in order for us to really get the idea of life abundant, of life over the top, we have to go back to the very beginning. We have to look back at where it all started, and that goes back to Genesis 1.

In Genesis 1:27 and following it says,

*So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

*And God said, “See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to*

*every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food”; and it was so.*

And then in verse 31 we get the statement of what God said when it all began, “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

You see God created all that there was. He created everything that there is, He created everything that exists, and then He created man and woman, and when He created man and woman, the only thing that He ever created that is in His image are you and me. He created us in His image, in the very image of God, and when He saw what He had done, when He saw what He had created, when He saw God’s creation come to fruition and man and woman were walking the face of the earth and there in the Garden of Eden, He looked at them and said, “It is very good.” God’s plan for us was a great plan.

But as often is the case, man messed it up. Man blew it. What God’s plan was, man decided to change it because of our desires, because of our wants, because we wanted something that we were told we could not have. And the reason that happened is because indeed we were created in God’s image, with emotion and intellect and will. We are the only creatures on the face of the earth that have those three things—emotion, intellect and will. We are able to make decisions for ourselves. We are able to actually feel the decisions and feel the things that are going on in our minds, and because of that, we thought we didn’t need God anymore. We thought that we could do what we wanted. In fact, Adam and Eve, when they took of that fruit, what does the Bible tell us they actually wanted when Satan told them they could have? That they could be like God.

You see, what happens in today’s life, what happens in our world today in each and every one of us is we feel like we don’t need God because we are good enough, we’re strong enough, we’re smart enough, and doggone it people like us; that we are just good people and that we don’t need God. But I’m telling you today that we’ve got to begin to understand and realize that without God, even though we feel so often that we don’t need Him, without God there is no hope.

Look what it says in Ephesians 2:1-3, “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [that’s Satan, who is trying to steal and to kill and destroy], the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”

In this passage, this is what we’re going to be talking about over these next six weeks. That is what we all do, every single one of us. We are seeking out the desires and the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, and over the next six weeks we are going to be talking about a lot of those things. And we’re going to do what a lot of pastors today are afraid to do: We’re going to call sin by its right name, and we’re going to actually shake our finger in the face of Satan and say, “you know what? We know this is wrong and we know what the Word of God says.”

In the next few weeks we're going to be talking about addictions, we're going to be talking about sexual sin, we're going to be talking about pornography, we're going to be talking about drug and alcohol, we're going to be talking about our integrity. We're going to talk about lying. We're going to talk about our character. We're going to talk about honoring our mother and our father. We're going to be talking about the things that every single one of us deal with at some point in our lives, and we're going to talk about how we can be victorious over that. How we can be victorious over sin and Satan.

And so today what I want to do as we begin this series talking about holy wars, talking about the battle that is raging today in every one of our lives, is we have to understand five realities about sin. Before we can talk about the victory that comes through Christ, we have to talk about what it is that we need victory over. We have to talk about the realities of what sin is, so what I want you to do is turn with me to Romans 5, and over the next few moments we're going to read through this passage and I'm going to share with you from this passage five realities that I hope you walk out of here today with them ingrained in your mind, because if you understand these truths, these principles that come from Romans 5, then what will happen is over these next few weeks and for the rest of your life you will have the groundwork, the framework that you will need in order to find the victory that you are going to need in everyday life.

It says in Romans 5, verses 12 and following,

*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)*

*Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act [His death on the cross, His death, burial and resurrection] the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Five realities about sin. First, sin entered through one person, and that is Adam. There is such a thing as original sin. Sin started in the Garden of Eden, just like you were taught in Sunday school. When Adam and Eve were there in a perfect setting, a setting that God had created and

literally said, “It is very good,” and He had given them everything that they could ever desire, everything that they could ever want, anything that you can ever possibly imagine, they had it right there—they had all the food they could ever want, they had all the beauty that they could ever take in, they had each other—everything that they needed to live out an incredible, amazing life, God gave to them right there in the Garden of Eden, except He said one thing, “All these things are for you, but that one tree over there, do not eat of its fruit.”

Now what happened in the Garden of Eden? What happened in the Garden of Eden is what happens in every one of our households when we’re growing up. It happens in every one of our lives. We might have everything in the world, but that one thing that we are told we can’t have, guess what? That’s what we want. You see, they had all that God could ever have created, all that God could ever imagine, all that God could ever give; everything they could ever desire, everything that they could ever want, but they wanted the one thing that God restricted, and that is the true story in all of our lives. God pours out blessing after blessing after blessing, but you know what? In our lives, we want that one thing.

Sin entered through one person. We talk about battles and we talk about wars. We look back through history, and wars are always kind of centered around one person. We can look back through history and we can name off the names like World War II, Hitler, and we can look at Benito Mussolini. We can look at those names. We can go further on and look at Saddam Hussein. We can look at Osama bin Laden. In my house, we can look at my kids. You can come home some days and you can be in a great mood and everything is awesome, things are perfect, you’ve got a smile on your face, the day at work, the day at school is great and you come home, you walk in the house with Shari and the four kids and I, everybody can be in a good mood, but if one person has had a bad day, if one person is in a bad mood, guess what happens? It gets everybody else in a bad mood. You see, one person can change the entire day. It can change the mood of everything that is going on. One person can change it all.

That’s exactly what happened in God’s perfect creation, that one man, one person, because of his desire, because of his desire to have that which God said they could not have, changed the mood of eternity on the face of the earth. Sin entered through one man.

The second reality that I want to talk about is that death is proof positive that sin is active in our lives. We read that passage a few moments ago from Romans 5 and it says in verse 12, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because all sinned.” If you want proof that sin is active in today’s world; if you want proof that sin is affecting your life; if you want proof that sin is harming you and hurting you, go home today and look in the mirror. Look at what you look like. I can promise you this: You look a lot different than you did when you were younger.

You know what happens? The hair begins to get a little grayer, and in some begins to disappear. Wrinkles show up. We begin dying the moment we take our first breath. You know why that is? It’s not because of what we eat, thank God; it’s not because we don’t exercise, thank God; it’s because sin entered into the world. Because sin entered through one man, death entered, and when death entered, death affects all of us because all of us have sinned.

The Bible tells us in Hebrews 9:27, “It is appointed to man to die once, but after this the judgment.” Ezekiel 18:4, “The soul who sins shall die.” Now let me ask you a question: Who sins? Everybody, right? We all sin. And because we all sin, it says here the soul that sins shall die. Romans 6:23, a verse you’re familiar with, “The wages of sin is death.” We have proof that what God said in His Word, that sin entered through one man and through that one man death entered and that death affects all of us, we have the proof because we are all dying. The reality of sin is this: Sin entered through one man. Because of that, we all have no hope and no future. We are all going to die because of sin.

The third reality that I want to share with you today is that every person since Adam has been affected by sin. We continue reading in verse 13, “(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam.” Now you read that passage and you say, “Wait a minute, that passage says that there were those that had not sinned.” But you’ve got to read it in the context in which it was written. It says that those who had not sinned in the likeness of or in the way that Adam sinned. Adam sinned in direct disobedience to God. He did exactly what God told him not to do.

Some of us live pretty decent lives. Some of us show up at church every time we’re supposed to. Some of us treat our neighbors well. Some of us treat our families well. Some of us don’t sin the way that Adam sinned. That’s what this passage is talking about. But what this passage also tells us is this: Even before the law came into place, before the Ten Commandments were written, sin existed, and after the Ten Commandments sin existed, and until the moment that Christ returns and gathers us to our heavenly home to spend eternity with Christ in heaven, sin will always exist. Every person who has ever taken a breath on the face of the earth—except Jesus Christ, who walked among us—every single one of us are sinners. Every single one of us have been affected by sin.

And the fourth reality is this: Every person who has been affected by sin, which is all of us, is in desperate need of a savior. Now this is where things change. Up to this point, everybody agrees with what I’ve said because it’s easy to read in the scriptures, it’s easy to understand, but when we get to this point, that’s where we have a problem, because there are lots of people in the world today that don’t necessarily think that they need a savior, because life is pretty good, because you are walking through life and everything is going perfectly and life is good and you’re having a great time and you’re having fun and you’re having an awesome experience, and you are just partying through life and you’re saying, “Why do I need to be saved? Why do I desperately need a savior when I’m having a blast?”

Let me give you an illustration of why that is. A couple of weeks ago we marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Titanic*. Now if you remember the story—you’ve probably seen documentaries or movies about what took place on the *Titanic*—this is a ship that was built and literally they said it would never sink. It was the greatest ship that had ever been built. Fifteen air locks were in its hull, which would make sure that whatever it faced, no matter what kind of storm, no matter what kind of problem that it experienced, that ship would never sink.

So in 1912 thousands of people showed up in the docks there in Southampton, England, and they walked onto that ship expecting to have an incredible experience. They did. They walked onto that ship, and for the first few days it was great. If you've seen the movies and documentaries, you've seen what that ship looked like. They were walking through the place, and man, it was luxury, and they were having fun and the music played and the food was there and they were having an incredible experience and all was well because this is the ship that could not sink. Until that night when it hit that iceberg and 1,500 people died on the ship that could not sink.

That is a picture of your life when you think that you don't need a savior, when you think that everything is good, when you think that there are no problems, when you think that you've got it all under control and you're going through life and everything is awesome and amazing experiences. Man, the smile on your face, nothing is going wrong—until the ship begins to sink. And the Bible tells us the ship always sinks. The ship always sinks.

Every person desperately needs to be saved. Every person desperately needs to find a savior, but the fifth reality is this—and I want you to understand this—that where sin exists, which is everywhere, where sin exists, which is in all of our hearts, God's grace rules. Look at what it says in Romans 5:15 and following,

*But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.*

*Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.*

*Lord's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, Lord's wonderful grace became more abundant. So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now Lord's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with Lord and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Lord our Lord.*

Through Adam we were all made sinners; through Christ we were all made righteous. Through Adam we were all given death; through Jesus Christ we were all given eternal life. Through Adam we were given no hope; through Jesus we are given all the hope that there is in the world. Through Adam we were given defeat; through Jesus Christ we have been given victory. The great message of the whole idea and the concept and the reality of sin is this: that even though sin exists in every single one of us, even though sin has gripped us, and even though Satan wants to destroy us through sin, where sin exists, my God reigns and rules and is victorious. We can win!

The battle that we are in, the battlefield that we are fighting on, the enemy that we are up against, the bullets that are aimed at us, the bombs that are going off all around us, the damage that Satan wants to do to us, we can stand today in victory because we know that Christ has already won the battle, and yet here we are living in defeat.

As we begin talking about sin, as we begin calling sin by its right name, I couldn't begin to do that without starting here, to say quite simply this: Sin kills. Sin brings death. Sin destroys. But Jesus came to give us life, and if we will stand in Him, if we will accept that victory, where Adam's sin will stop us, in Jesus Christ we cannot lose. Would you pray with me today?

[Praying] Father, today we thank you for the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that in you and through you we have been given all that we need, that we have been given the victory, that we have been given life, that we have been given hope, that we have been given joy, that we have been given the ability to step out of what is a futile life, a sinful life, a sinful nature where there is no hope and there is no future and because of what you have done, we can live in victory. God, help each of us to believe that and to live in that and to experience that, to walk in that.

Keywords: Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, original sin, plan of salvation, deliverance from sin, Satan, sinful nature, spiritual battle, victory over sin, overcoming sin