

Lent, Day 21  
Friday, March 29, 2019

Revelation 12:1–17

I love an underdog story. Give me *Rocky* every time. The first *Rocky* movie was about a small time fighter who had potential, but little opportunity. As a result he used his ability for violence to shake down people for a local gangster. But, he also had a heart. Then the unthinkable happens. He gets an opportunity to fight the heavy weight boxing champion of the world, Apollo Creed, for the title. At first he doesn't want it. He knows he can't win. He knows it isn't a fair fight. He's afraid he'll embarrass himself in front of the world.

But then, he starts to take assessment of his life and realizes he's not very happy with it. He wants something more and he decides not to throw away the opportunity. He knows he can't win, but he has to try. So, he begins to train—hard. He develops a different goal. No one has ever gone the distance against Creed. When he gets to the twelfth round, if he's still standing, he'll have done something. Something he can be proud of. Something that says he's a somebody. It is that goal that keeps him on his feet against a superior opponent. It's that goal that keeps him getting up every time he is knocked down. It's that goal that enables him to take a beating that would have made most people quit. Rocky makes his goal through his heart, which is why he says to his love, Adrian, "Yo, Adrian, I did it!"

What keeps the church, which is accused and attacked, on its feet? John is given a cosmic drama to pass along that reveals the real nature of their hardship. There is a spiritual war. Satan, the accuser, is behind what is happening to them. But, the war has been won. Satan has been cast out of heaven and overcome by those who held on to the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony. Yes, Satan is still trouble, but his time is short. What keeps us on our feet, blow after blow, is that we know the twelfth round is coming and not only will we be there, but Satan has already lost the match. Jesus will be the undisputed heavy weight of the world.

We often use the language of the wilderness when we speak about lent. The early monastics of the church went into the wilderness, not to retreat from the world, but because that's where Satan is. They went out to do battle and take his territory in the name of Jesus. This is what we are doing in lent. We are meeting Satan on his ground and by the blood of Jesus taking his territory away.

Prayer

Lord, give us the heart to keep going, to keep fighting. Remind us that the victory is won already through the blood of the lamb. Help us to face the accusations, knowing that we can stand to the end. Amen.