Nothing can separate us from Called to be God’s People

In other parts of Scripture there are frequent references to ‘fear’. In Psalm 23 the psalmist says he will ‘fear no evil’ because God is with him. Psalm 34:9 says: ‘Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.’ Psalm 47:2 reminds us that: ‘the Lord, the Most High, is to be feared.’ Reference after reference points to an appropriate fear of the Lord. Significantly, nowhere in Scripture are we told to fear the devil.

In James 4:7 we are urged to ‘resist the devil’ with the promise that he will then flee from us. In 1 Peter 5:8 we are reminded that our enemy the devil ‘prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour’. Again we are urged to resist him. But there is no advice to fear him. Although we must not be careless, flippant, unguarded or foolishly dismissive of the devil, we need never fear him. Neither should we attribute to him things which he does not have the power to accomplish. To be deceived into a fear of the devil undermines our spiritual effectiveness. Paul will have none of it. ‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?’ he asks. ‘Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?…No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us’ (Romans 8:37). Whatever our human difficulty, Christ is with us.

Paul then moves on to the spiritual world. His message is unequivocal. ‘For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Romans 8:38, 39).

Such confidence is at the heart of our faith. It is founded on the power of the Christ who has conquered the world. We are urged to claim it, to live by it, to prove it.