

The Devil

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[0 : 00] We might read, first of all, in the chapter which we read in Luke's Gospel, reading at verse 31.

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired you to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, that I have prayed the Father for you.

And in Ephesians you read these words, put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wile of the devil.

This morning I want to look with you at this truth of Jesus which is fundamental.

To real Christianity. When we look around at the world we live in, most of us will admit that in some measure, that there is a development in this world that we live in today that is not a happy one.

[1 : 44] That evil seems to be greatly in the ascendancy.

Lawlessness and viciousness seem to be the order of the day.

Faithfulness and faithfulness and deceit seem to be the pattern of family living.

Divorce and happiness seem to be the companion of most of our friends and many in our society.

And we ask ourselves, what's going wrong? Where is it all coming from? Where is it all going to end?

[2 : 47] But the tragedy with many people is when they say, where is it going to end? They seem to put it away from themselves until it reaches up with us in our own homes, in our own lives, and with our own loved ones.

And what I want to suggest this morning is the teaching of Jesus. The teaching of Jesus is that evil is a reality and that it has a source.

And that we, who become contaminated with it, and become the instruments of it, also become part and parcel of it.

And so at the end, when God deals with evil at its source, he will deal with evil at its contamination.

And therefore he will deal with us. There is no distinction in the scriptures from the source of evil and the practicers of evil.

[4 : 12] They are linked together by an umbilical cord, never to be separated in the next world unless cut in this world.

And so we find that the evil that we do, the evil that lies within our breasts, we are part of it.

But it comes from a source. And so we must turn to the teaching of Jesus for the problems of our day and for the problems of our own lives.

We either accept his teaching or reject it. But I do suggest that the only answer to the tide of evil is the answer that Christ gives.

A greater power possessing men and women than the power of evil. And so we come to listen to Jesus this morning as he tells us about this problem.

[5 : 33] Here I am speaking to Peter on two occasions. He speaks to Peter first of all when he tells Peter that he is going to the cross.

He tells Peter that they are going to come now and take him and capture him and then crucify him. He's tried for three years to tell the disciples that God will only deal with evil in two places.

Either in hell where he banishes it or on the cross where he punishes it. He's told them for three years that he's going to the cross to die in punishment for the evil that they have done.

And yet they've not grasped it. Peter's eyes are still blind and he says, Far be it from you, Lord, a voice of Peter.

Peter, the thought induced by Satan. And Jesus turns to Peter then and he says, Get thee behind me, Satan.

[7 : 02] Jesus spoke to a real being. He spoke to a tempting being. He spoke to a fallen spirit.

He saw what lay behind Peter's statement. Anything to prevent him going to the cross. Even the love of his friends.

Jesus takes Peter aside. And he said, Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you his feet, that he may make a mess of you, that he may destroy you, that he may take you to pieces.

But I've prayed the Father for you, that your faith fail not. Jesus in that statement to Peter, didn't say to Peter, I've prayed the Father for you, that you might never fall.

Because Peter did fall. But even when he fell, his faith in Christ did not fall. And he turned again in tears and in sorrow, realizing that he had been in the grip and under the power of an alien force.

[8 : 44] But when Jesus speaks to Satan, and he says to Peter, Satan has desired to have you, we notice that Satan is real to Jesus.

Satan is malignant to Jesus. Satan is active to Jesus. And so when Peter then, after learning, speaks to the church at Cappadocia and Bithynia, he says these words.

He says, Your adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Satan is real to Peter, your adversary. Satan is active to Peter. He goeth about.

Satan is fearful to Peter, seeking whom he may devour. Now my friends, one more scriptural illustration.

[9 : 58] Jesus once spoke to the Pharisees, those religious people who were never out of church. And he says these solemn words to them. He says, You are of your father, the devil, and his works you will do.

Their spiritual parenthood was declared. Your father is the devil. They thought it was God. Their spiritual life pattern was described.

His works you do. Their spiritual future was deduced. You are of the devil.

Now, satanic power is humanly incalculable. You can't calculate it.

And recognition of it is vital. Satan has access to the human mind.

[11 : 14] He speaks with a voice tone that is similar to your own. He has access to your thought thought producing chamber.

And he can induce thought into your mind as clear as your own mind can induce thought. And to Jesus and to Peter and to anyone who knows the powers of evil, Satan is a fact to be accepted.

Satan is a reality to be faced. The whole world lieth in the wicked one. And Satan is an enemy never to be underestimated.

And so I say to you and I say to myself this morning, we are not masters of our own destiny. we are not in complete control of our own minds.

Our conclusions are not necessarily wise ones. When you turn to the scriptures and you find Jesus declaring the source from which all evil originates, you find that source in a spirit malignant and fearful and destructive.

[12 : 54] And we are either in his grip or fighting against him. If we are children of God and Christian, we have a fight on our hands every day.

If we are not, we will have comparative ease from the struggle. We will drift along. We will have life patterns set before us that are not too holy but will not be too good.

We will live a life of selfish pleasing. it will be within our own little house and our own little home and our own little thoughts and what we have.

But we will be in the grip of the one who refuses to let us go. Now the scriptures in order to describe this foe use many names.

in fact the devil is mentioned in one name or another ninety times in the scriptures.

[14 : 23] And as you look at the names that the Spirit of God has given him you see in the names the character and the fearfulness of the one that we deal with.

The one who possesses us if we're not Christian. The one who controls us yet letting us think that we're in control. Oh it's terrible to be deceived to think you're in control of your life and you're not really in control of it at all.

you're a puppet on a string and yet a puppet with responsibility for every action.

Let's look at the names just for a moment that the scriptures give to this fearful foe. The first name of course is Satan and it has two meanings adversary and antagonist.

He's the adversary of God the adversary of everything that's pure the antagonist to everything that's lovely everything that's godly and all opponents of God are his instruments.

[15 : 56] You know I've seen in some of these science fiction books sometimes I've seen on television a man or a woman apparently been taken over and it's obvious when they're taken over they do things outside their own control but the subtlety of the takeover of Satan is that you don't believe you've been taken over it's gradual yet real and it makes the person who's taken over antagonistic to certain things of God antagonistic to certain things in God's word antagonistic to certain commands that God gives for living antagonistic to certain laws that we don't want to keep if you want to see your own antagonism as it's linked to the antagonism of the pit you'll find it coming out against the word of God and the demands of Jesus as a

Christian disciple and so the first name is Satan the adversary or the antagonist the next name of course is the devil the meaning of that word is the accuser or the informer the devil is most subtle he accuses the children of God of the very things he tempts them to do for instance he could put a thought of lust into a person's mind the person immediately has no control over the injection of a thought the person rejects it it might be jealousy it might be envy it might be a selfish thought and there's a thought comes into the mind that's not Christian and it's not good and so the Christian ejects it but just as it's being ejected the devil the accuser comes and whispers with all holy solemnity if you were a Christian you wouldn't have a thought like that how much rubbish how much fear he induces into the minds of the people of God the word of God doesn't say that a good person can't have a bad thought the word of God says that a good person will eject bad thoughts wherever they come from but then the devil is the accuser or the informer and the scriptures tell us that he informs

God and he accuses the person concerned as we go on to the scriptures we find too that the devil is not only the accuser and the informer but he is called the evil one you know the Lord's prayer the Lord's prayer deliver us from evil well the literal translation of that is not deliver us from evil but deliver us from the evil one that's what the scriptures say everything wicked injurious and offensive owes its origins to him the evil one and everything finds their seat and center in him he is the evil one the controller another name for him in the scriptures is graphic it's called the great dragon the hideous one the destructive one the fearful one another name is Apollon which is the destroyer the author of destruction to all who perish he destroys hope he destroys families he destroys the future he destroys love he destroys family life wherever he is given full sway and in the measure that he's given full sway he destroys he destroys my friends we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and against powers that's what the scriptures tell us he destroys that which he controls he's then called that old serpent the devil and this takes us back to the mourning of our humanity to the beginning of our history when in innocency we had fellowship with God in the garden when it speaks of that old serpent it reminds us of three things it reminds us of the cunning of Eden when pure evil met innocency and innocency went under it reminds us of the conquest of Eden when the human race were conquered when people were conquered when humanity was conquered it reminds us of the conquest of Eden and then it reminds us of the catastrophe of Eden because when man went out of fellowship with God he went out of fellowship with himself he became the depraved destructive creature that he is when you look at

Buchenwald and the concentration camp it was man who brought that into being but man who was in the grip of something more fearful more hellish more vile and when you see selfishness in your family when you see unkindness when you see self and greed and shame and uncleanness in all its forms you can trace it back to that old serpent and you and me if we're out of Christ attached to him with a spiritual umbilical cord so that when he ultimately is dragged down so will be his offspring so will be his children we're told then in the scriptures that he is also called the angel of the bottomless pit and this suggests him as the author of evil and suggests the abode of evil the angel the author the abode the bottomless pit a picture of war graphic and fearful the strongest in known language where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched and that spiritual father and mother rolled into one and his offspring his progeny joined to him by that umbilical cord both dragged down to everlasting darkness my friends that is where God banishes evil to that's where God punishes evil in whether we like to accept it or not we're then told he's called the prince of this world he's obeyed he's worshipped he influences ideas intellect and even worship in our land today there's a developing moral darkness there is worship there's evil influences he affects ideas and thought he affects parliament and law so we have divorce divorce in Russia today is one in every two it's coming that way with us licentiousness uncleanness homosexuality all the fearful things they're not only in our doorstep they're in our home and in our country but we are part of it if we're out of

Christ and then he's known as the prince of darkness he plots the ruin he rules fearfully he's a prince evil and nothing but evil is his nature the head of one empire while Jehovah is the head of the other but my friends his power is permissive now then you have this evil malignant vicious horrible hellish vile soul and if you're out of Christ this morning he is your father that's what Jesus teaching was if you're not saved by the Lord Jesus if you're not a Christian I was