

YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL



By
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Please open your Bibles to I Peter chapter five and verse eight. I would like to preach a message entitled "Your Adversary the Devil."

In I Peter 5:8, the Bible says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

Although the devil is a defeated foe, he is not powerless. He is not to be ignored. He is not to be treated lightly. In Ephesians 6:12, the Bible says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." That is not a minor thing folks. You don't wrestle against someone who is powerless. And if you are wrestling against the devil, it is because the devil has real power. The devil has tremendous strength.

You must not make fun of the devil. You must not minimize the devil. He is a real person. He is as real as any person in this room. And he is powerful. He is not the boogy man. He is not some thing that goes bump in the night. The devil is a real person. And you must not minimize his power. That is why Peter said "be sober" in our text. That simply means to have a disciplined mind. The word "vigilant" here simply means to be watchful.

What is the Bible saying? It is simply saying this. You ought to have a disciplined mind. You ought to be on the lookout for danger.

Do you realize the fact that you are in danger? You are in danger as long as the devil is free, as long as the devil exists. You are in danger!

Now, you are not without power. But you are in danger. You are in danger as a church. You are in danger as families. You are in danger as individuals. And you must never let your guard down until the day comes when the devil is chained in the bottomless pit.

We are going to notice three things about the devil: number one, the reality of the devil; number two, the character of the devil; and then number three, the aim of the devil.

Please notice number one, the reality of the devil. Peter presumes a genuine belief in the existence of the devil. He treats him as a real person. He treats him as real as the saints he opposes or the God he defies. The devil is real. The devil is a real person. I hope you believe that. He is not some force. He is not some made-up creature. He is not some monster. He is as real as God Almighty is, as anybody in this room is.

Satan is a real person. And his mind is set on your destruction. His heart is filled with cruel contempt. I am simply saying this: anytime you do something for God, the devil is filled with rage. He is filled with anger. He is filled with contempt. He loves sin. He loves wickedness. He despises righteousness. His will is that you might rebel against God.

Brethren! Jesus Christ never took the devil lightly. He spoke of the devil. In Luke 22:31, the Bible says, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."

Did you know that God does things to improve you? And that Satan does thing to destroy you? Do you realize the fact that Satan can bring circumstances, trials, and difficulties into your life? He has the power to do that. And the only purpose for these circumstances, trials, and difficulties is not to improve you but to destroy you. It is in his nature to destroy every thing he puts his hands to. He is deadly.

Did you know that the devil can affect your physical bodies? Do you remember the story of the Apostle Paul who spoke of his physical thorn in the flesh? And he called it the messenger of Satan.

In I Corinthians 5:5, Paul said that they could deliver the sinning brother in the church of Corinth to the devil "for the destruction of the flesh."

Did you know that the devil has the power to kill? You see that in the Old Testament. The devil had the power to control the elements and bring a great storm that caused the house to collapse and kill the family of Job.

Satan had the power to bring diseases to Job's body so that he was in pain. Whether he sat, stood, walked, or lay down, Job was in pain.

The devil had power over wicked men's minds so that they might steal Job's possessions.

Listen folks! All of those things that happened unto Job were masterminded by the devil himself. He has that kind of power over your physical bodies. He has that kind of power over your physical lives.

The devil is a real person with real power. However, his power is not limitless. The devil is not omnipotent. Omnipotent simply means all-powerful. I talked to you about the things he did to Job; but do you remember that he could not do one single thing until God gave him permission to do it? That simply means this. Satan does not have a free hand over you. Satan cannot operate against you independently of God. He does not have the ability. He does not have the power. He does not have the right to lay one finger on you without God's permission. He is not an omnipotent creature. Only God is all-powerful. Satan is limited in what he can do, rendered to the will of God.

Satan is not omniscient. He does not know all things. You say, "Preacher! Does the devil know my thoughts?" No, he cannot. The devil cannot read your mind or know the motives of your heart. He does not know what you are thinking. He does not know your motives. Only God knows your thoughts. Now, Satan can suggest thoughts to you just like I can suggest thoughts to you. Satan can do that but he cannot read your mind. He does not know your meditations. That is why the Bible talks about the importance of keeping your mind fastened on Christ and your meditations on the Word of God day and night.

Listen to the Bible. In Isaiah 26:3, the Bible says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." In Joshua 1:8, the Bible says, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

The devil does not know what you are thinking. He only knows what you say. He observes what you do. He must be informed. Since he does not know all things, the only thing he knows about you is by personal observation. Or else he is informed by one of his demons or he overhears what you say. Satan is not omniscient. Only God knows your thoughts.

Satan is not omnipresent. He cannot be everywhere at once. He is a created being. Now, he is a spirit so he can move rapidly, but he is localized.

God is omnipresent. God can be with us in this building, and God can be with His people all over the face of the earth.

The devil cannot. He is always in one place at a time. The Bible indicates that most usually he is in the presence of God seeking to accuse God's people or else he travels back and forth through all the earth seeking to find God's people that are not doing right. The devil cannot be everywhere at once. Only God is omnipresent.

Now, Satan does not grasp spiritual truth. He does not understand the basic character of the working of God.

Do you know why Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world? He thought he could deliver. Do you know why Satan devised in the mind of Herod to kill all the babies in Bethlehem? He thought he could get by with it. Do you know why Satan is going to gather an army at the Battle of Armageddon? He is not convinced that he is going to be defeated.

Did you know an unsaved man is just like the devil? He does not grasp spiritual truth. It would be absolutely impossible for him to do that because in I Corinthians 2:14, the Bible says, "But the natural man..." You could say "the unsaved man" here and do no harm to Scripture because the natural man is an unsaved man. And the Bible goes on to say that he "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."

The unsaved man could be the neighbor next door. He could be the family member that you live with. He could be the friend that you spend time with. He could be the guy that you work with. He may be a person who is religious. He may be a person who is morally good. He may be a person in this room tonight who does not grasp, comprehend, or understand spiritual truth. It would be absolutely impossible for him to do that because the Bible says the natural man, the unsaved man, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

What is the Bible saying? The Bible is saying this: The natural man does not grasp, comprehend, or understand spiritual truth because spiritual truth is spiritually discerned. That's the natural man. He needs to be saved; he needs to be born again in order to grasp, comprehend, and understand spiritual truth.

Let me ask you this. Are you saved? Are you born again? In John 3:7, Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." Ye must be born again in order to grasp, comprehend, and understand spiritual truth.

You say, "Preacher! What must I do to be saved?" The very first thing you must do is realize the fact that you are a sinner and in need of a Saviour. In Romans 3:23, the Bible says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Because you are a sinner, you are condemned to die. In Hebrews 9:27, the Bible says, "And it is appointed unto men once to die." In Romans 6:23, the Bible says, "For the wages of sin is death." That includes eternal separation from God and the people of God in an awful place called hell. You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven whereby He weighs good and bad works. In Ephesians 2:8-9, The Bible says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

God loved you so much that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to bear your sin and die in your place on the cross. He became your substitute. In II Corinthians 5:21, the Bible says, "For he hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And if man would simply believe on Christ, he could be saved. In John 6:47, the Bible says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." In Romans 10:9-10, the Bible says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." In Romans 10:13, the Scripture says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

If you have never been saved, if you have never been born again, you need to be saved. You need to be born again so that you can begin to grasp, comprehend, and understand spiritual truth; and, with that, you will receive forgiveness of all your sins, eternal life, and a home in heaven when you die.

Listen! A Christian who is filled with the spirit has greater insight into spiritual truth than the devil, as old as he is. The devil does not grasp spiritual truth. He does not understand the Bible. He does not understand the great principles of the Word of God.

Now, the devil is a defeatable foe. He is defeatable in the practical sense of your lives. In James 4:7, the Bible says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Question! Do you know how to resist the devil? You can resist the devil every time you are obedient to God. In James 4:7, the Bible says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God." Don't you see? You resist the devil by obedience. As a child of God, you are actively resisting the devil by being obedient to God.

Listen, folks! You don't resist the devil by engaging in temptation. You resist the devil only as you obey God. For example! You sit down and turn on the television set. Some sensual program comes on. Immediately you are tempted. What you could do is sit there and say, "I can handle it;" or you can say, "I know what I will do. I will obey the Word of God." In Psalm 101:3, the Bible says, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes." If you will obey, God says that is resistance. And, God says, the devil will flee. But that does not mean that he will flee forever. Mark it down! The devil will come back again. But he will flee in that moment.

Satan, though he is powerful, though he is strong, though he is real, though he is ferocious, though he is all of that, yet he is not omnipotent. He is not omniscient. He is not omnipresent. He does not grasp spiritual truth. And the child of God, in the energy of the Holy Spirit of God, can defeat the devil himself.

You must not ignore the reality of the devil because Jesus never did.

We have noticed, number one: the reality of the devil; but notice, number two: the character of the devil.

In I Peter 5:8, the Bible says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." When you read this text, there are three things that Peter calls the devil. He refers to him by three names or titles, and these names or titles indicate the character of the devil. He is called the devil. The word "devil" means "one who accuses."

If the devil could have his way in your life, he would discredit you. He will accuse you before God. And, by the way, that is part of his ministry today. He is constantly in the presence of God accusing you. In Revelation 12:10, the Bible says, "For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." If that be true, and it is, then don't do those things that he can pick up and hurdle in the face of God and thus accuse you of improper behavior. Don't do that.

In Ephesians 4:27, the Bible says, "Neither give place to the devil." What is the Bible saying? It is saying this. Don't allow there to be a spot from which he can launch a campaign against you. That simply means this: you need to be godly, not ungodly. You need to be pure, not impure. You need to be clean, not unclean. You need to be gracious, not ungracious. Let the devil's accusations be nothing but lies.

What a complement God paid to Job before Satan in Job 1:8, which says, "And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil." Here is God speaking of the practical righteousness of Job and saying there is not a single man on the earth that is like him. I wonder, when the devil comes and accuses you before God, I wonder if God says that about you. I wonder if there is a practical righteousness about your life. I wonder if there is a practical godliness about your life that so impresses God that He hurls your character in the face of the vile accusations of Satan.

We have noticed first, Peter calls him the devil; and second, he calls him your adversary. Satan is opposed to all you do for God. Do you realize that? Have you ever noticed that, as soon as you get ready to do something for God, as soon as you get ready to live for the Lord and do what is right, trouble comes? And you think, "What in the world is going on?" I will tell you what is going on. The devil is doing what is his character to do, what is his nature to do. He is opposing everything you do for God. You are not going to make one step forward for God for what the devil does not send some of his demons to do something to oppose what you are doing. He is going to oppose your decisions to repent of sin. He is going to oppose your decisions to live for God. He is going to oppose your decisions to pursue the will of God for your life. He is going to oppose the work of God on your life. Every time you do something for God, count on it, the devil is going to fight it.

If your church tries to launch out in some campaign, you can expect the opposition of the devil. It is his character to oppose. It is his nature to oppose. The devil by nature is an adversary. He is an opposer.

Mark it down! Living for God and opposition from the devil go hand in hand. The Son of God was opposed by the devil every step of the way. And you are not going to be exempt. Expect it! It is going to come! It may come in the form of persecution. It may come in the form of negative circumstances. It may come in the form of temptation to sin.

Listen folks! Not a Christian marriage has ever existed without opposition. Not a Christian child has ever been raised without opposition. Not a church has ever been built without opposition. Not a ministry has ever been launched without opposition.

The devil is an opposer. The devil is an adversary. He is against all that is good. He is against all that is right. He is against all that is godly. He is against all that is Christian the world over.

That simply means this: if you are on God's side, you have made yourself an enemy. He is against you. He is set on your destruction. He is a wicked enemy. He is the enemy of God. He is the enemy of Christ. He is the enemy of the child of God. He is the enemy of all truth.

We have noticed first, he is the devil; and second, he is your adversary; but notice number three, he is a roaring lion. In I Peter 5:8, the Bible says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

Can you see the devil sneaking up on you? Quietly stalking and suddenly pouncing on you? That's not what this is talking about. The devil is not sneaking up on you. The devil is coming at you like a lion roaring wildly. Can you imagine walking along minding your own business and all of a sudden out of the underbrush comes this lion roaring wildly? He is not sneaking up behind you. But he is walking boldly out of the underbrush with his eyes fixed on you, roaring at the top of his lungs.

Question! What would that do to you? It would scare you. That's the picture of this devil. He tries to scare you unto submission. He screams into your ears saying, "You cannot live for God. You cannot do what is right. You cannot serve God. You cannot memorize scripture. You cannot be a loving husband. You cannot be a submissive wife. You cannot be an obedient child in the home." He screams into your ears. He intimidates you by the volume of his voice.

We have noticed number one, the reality of the devil; and number two, the character of the devil; but notice number three, the aim of the devil.

Peter says he seeks whom he may devour. The word "devour" here simply means "to swallow up." Satan does not have as his goal to cause you a little bit of trouble down here. His goal is to devour you from off the face of the earth. His desire is to swallow you up, leaving no trace that you have ever been here. He will shatter your testimony by seducing you to sin. He will sew doubt in your mind. He will sew discord in your hearts. He will devour your testimony. He will devour your faith. He will devour your witness for Christ. He will devour your family. He will devour your children. He will devour your church. He will devour your joy. He will devour your peace. His goal is your destruction. And with that in mind the devil has devoured a many of Christians. The devil has devoured a many of ministries.

Brethren! When you allow sin in your life, that is, when you allow sin to go on in your life, you are playing right into the devil's hands. When you do not feed your mind upon the Word of God, you are playing right into the devil's hands. When you do not do what the Bible says to do and keep from doing what it says not to do, you are playing right into the devil's hands. That is, you are playing in the underbrush where this devil lives. Don't you see that?

We have noticed number one, the reality of the devil. He is a real person. He is as real as anyone in this room is real and he is powerful.

We have noticed number two, the character of the devil. He is an accuser. He is your adversary. He is a roaring lion.

We noticed number three, the aim of the devil. He wants to devour you. Satan does not have as his goal to cause you a little bit of trouble down here. His goal is to devour you from off the face of the earth.

How is a Person Saved?

Salvation is all of God. God does the saving. Just take God at His Word and claim His salvation by faith. You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven whereby He weighs your good and bad works. That is a lie of the Devil. (Romans 3:24; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18; Romans 5:8)

Salvation is as simple as believing on Christ as the one who bore your sin, who died in your place, who was buried, and whom God resurrected from the dead. (John 1:12, 3:16, 6:47; Acts 16:31; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13)

Simply admit that you are a sinner and believe on Christ as your crucified, buried, and risen Saviour. You will receive forgiveness for all of your sins. You will receive His free gift of eternal life by faith. (Romans 3:10, 23; I Corinthians 15:3-4)

Jesus did a wonderful thing for you some 2,000 years ago on Calvary's cross. He died for you. He was buried for you. He rose again the third day for you, and nothing would thrill Him more than to save you today.

Won't you go to Him right now in prayer and tell Him in your own words that you will trust Him as your Saviour? Or pray this simple prayer: Dear Lord, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for me and that He arose from the grave. Here and now I ask You to forgive me of my sin and save me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

If you prayed that simple prayer, I would like to hear from you. Please contact me by e-mail or phone.

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