

The World, The Devil

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[0:00] Name that face. Make sure you're awake. Alright? So I'm going to show you three faces. Please keep the answers to yourself. I want to see how many of you can go three for free. Alright?

And I'm very uncomfortable with this setting. I'm used to having 20 teenagers and two rows right in front of me are in a circle. Alright? Here we go with the first one. Sorry, I don't have these on overhead. Can you name that face? Alright? Here's the second one.

Name that face. Keep the answers to yourself. Any relation to the first picture? Alright? Here's our last one.

Name that face. Any relation to the previous one? I don't understand why you're laughing. Because whether you knew the first two is immaterial. Sorry, Chuck. But how many of you, excuse me, thought of the name Satan or devil on the last picture?

[1:14] And that's exactly what Satan wants you to think. And Packer says nothing could be further from the truth. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Our word studies on the devil. To most, he's just this secular figure of fun. You often hear people use him as an excuse for their sin. The devil made me do it.

I mention Satan in a serious manner. And you'll see people look at you a little differently. When was the last time that you begged God to deliver you from Satan?

And yet Jesus included this needed request in his brief model for how we should be praying. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Matthew 6.13 In your battle with temptation, does the reality of this enemy grip you?

[2:28] When your teenager or child disappointed you and responded with an unkind word toward you or his sibling, Did the thought ever occur to you that Satan was behind the scenes stirring the pot, so to speak?

We talk about the Christian's three enemies. The world, the flesh, and the devil. And Packer suggests that normally Satan keeps out of sight, manipulating the world, the external stimuli, and the flesh, those inordinate desires in us, as his tools of seduction.

He manipulates the world and our evil desires as his tools of seduction. So Satan is intrinsically involved in our temptations.

The first rule of success in war is to know your enemy. And while most of the information that I will be sharing with you, you already know, I'm praying that it will help sharpen our senses and make us more keenly aware as to how serious a foe we face in this spiritual and all-important war that we're engaged in.

Now, Packer starts by talking about the necessity of a proper balance on this issue. And he calls it the knife edge. It's like many things in our Christian life.

[4:08] We've got to have that balance. But this is a careful one because we must be careful about overreaction where we're looking for Satan behind every bush.

Packer says, We don't want to err into a negative view of the Christian life where we become preoccupied with the devil. He is not the main theme of our Bibles.

And by virtue of Christ's cross, he is now a defeated foe. He also urges us that we refrain from speculating on things about Satan that the Bible does not make clear.

And so he says, Stick close to the Scriptures. Well, who is Satan? How does God refer to him in the Scriptures? Because the names that God gives him tells us something about him.

What are some of the names that God gives him? The deceiver. Very good. He's a liar. John 8 says, When he lies, he speaks his native language.

[5:17] It's not English or Spanish. Good. What else is he called? A wolf in sheep's clothing.

The evil one. The destroyer. The destroyer. The prince of darkness.

And while he is the ruler over the powers of darkness, he's also referred to as an angel of light. Cindy mentioned the evil one.

And Packer says that we cannot conceive what pure evil is like. He is full of unimaginable badness. No one else is more cruel, more malicious, more perverted, more destructive. He is more despicable than our minds can even conceive.

[6:23] Are you starting to get a different picture in your mind from the one you saw a few minutes ago? Dare I say that if I told you that this kind of person was sighted roaming the halls of the school that your child attends, that some of you parents would think twice about sending your school to your child to school tomorrow.

Yet how equipped are they when they go out the door of your home to face this foe? Turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 2. We want to look at Satan's schemes.

2 Corinthians 2. And I apologize. We're going to have to move quickly through the scriptures. But I want to stick to Packer's admonishment to stick closely to the scriptures.

And the Bible repeatedly cautions us on the other side of this knife edge against ignoring Satan. The apostle Paul refused to fall into this trap.

2 Corinthians 2. Jason. In order that Satan might not outwit us, for we are not unaware of his schemes. Paul says, I'm up to his tricks.

[7:44] Are you? Did he even enter your mind this past week in what he was trying to do in your life to get you to fall?

And here's that balance. Packer says that to not take Satan seriously dishonors Christ by robbing the cross of its significance as a conquest of Satan and his host.

Over to 2 Corinthians chapter 11. We want to examine a few of his schemes in history. And that's the beauty of this book.

This history book reveals unseen details that no other history book could tell us about. And we want to see Satan's first encounter with Eve.

And we're going to read about this encounter back in the garden from Paul's commentary. 2 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 3. Lou.

[8:49] I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the Spirit's cunning, your mind may somehow be left straight from sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

The mind. That's where our battleground is. And that's why we're constantly charged. Don't be deceived. Don't be deceived. This serpent is cunning.

And you remember how he sought to get Eve to question God's word and to question God's goodness. He's a professional liar. He's a professional at brainwashing techniques.

And then while we're in this chapter, verse 14, Mark. And no wonder, who Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

He transforms, or the NIV says he masquerades as an angel of light. I tell the kids, he loves to go trick-or-treating.

[9:48] It allows him to operate without being detected or opposed. And he doesn't go as the witch or the goblin. He portrays himself as someone good.

He's dressed up today like a priest or a rabbi or a TV evangelist. And he's happy if Jesus is preached, as long as it's not a Jesus who saves.

And that's why Paul said back in verse 4, For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we have preached, he comes as an angel of light.

Let's back up to 1 Chronicles 21 now. And we'll just go from left to right in our Bibles. I would appreciate if you'd try to keep up with us.

If not, men, read loudly so we can keep on moving. Chuck, 1 Chronicles 21, this is where David's pride led him to the sin of taking a census.

[10:51] And this seemingly innocent sin led to the death of thousands. But we see that David's pride had some help. Verse 1.

Go ahead. Satan incited David. He was stirring David's pride and using it to commit this sin.

And over to Job chapter 1. Did you know that Satan has the power to cause a tornado? The ability to incite theft and even cause murder?

Job chapter 1 is one of the most fascinating and yet comforting passages on the devil. In chapter 1, verse 6, we see, One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.

And down in verse 10, he complains to the Lord that you've put this hedge around Job. And it's the same hedge that the Scripture instructs us is around every one of God's children.

[12:03] And that's why God's promise in 1 Corinthians 10, 13 is true, that God will not let you to be tempted beyond what you can bear.

Because as powerful as Satan is, he has no power independent of God. And that's why Packer says, God keeps Satan on a chain.

It may be a long chain, but it is a real one. And as he concludes this discussion with Satan, notice what the Lord says.

And catch the language in verse 12. The Lord said to Satan, Very well then, everything Job has is in your hand. And if you read the rest of the chapter, you see how he incited theft and murder and caused this mighty wind that killed Job's children.

And chapter 2 comes to another day that Satan has a discussion with the Lord. And again, notice the language. Verses 6 and 7 of chapter 2.

[13:11] The Lord said to Satan, Very well then, he is in your hands, but you must spare his life. So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores, from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.

Okay. Now down in verse 10, Job says, Shall we accept good from God and not trouble? Job rightly saw God as the ultimate cause.

But while God tests us to strengthen us, we need to see Satan's activity in seeking to destroy Job's soul.

Over to Matthew chapter 16. Matthew chapter 16. Look at the last paragraph in Matthew 16.

Have you ever imagined that one of Satan's schemes may be to use the advice of one of your closest friends, even your Christian spouse, in order to tempt you to do wrong?

[14:21] Here at the end of Matthew 16, Jesus is teaching his 12 disciples about his upcoming death and resurrection. And his best friend Peter pulls him to the side and offers Jesus some advice.

And listen to Jesus' response in verse 23. Jesus turned and said to Peter, Out of my sight, Savior. Whoa. What if your friend said that to you?

After you offered advice and they turned and said, Get out of my sight, Satan. But Jesus was teaching Peter truth. Over to Luke chapter 8.

Luke chapter 8. Satan not only visits heaven, but he's a faithful attender at church. The problem is, he's not very good at sitting still and behaving.

We find that he's very active. And while we're here, and we gather with the express purpose to worship and hear from God, we need to note that there is another one who is present.

[15:34] Verses 11 and 12. Luke chapter 8. This is the meaning of the parable. The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are their ones who hear. And then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe in him.

Have you ever noticed your child yawning and acting bored or disinterested during the worship service or in your family devotions? There's more going on, Mom and Dad, than what we see with the naked eye.

We need the eyes of faith to see that the enemy is here. He'll be here today, and he's doing everything he can to keep that seed from bearing fruit.

Over to Luke 22. Just prior to the Last Supper, for the most heinous crime ever committed in our world's history, we have this comment in Luke 22, verse 3.

Does Satan matter Judas to call the Spirit one of them as well? John chapter 13 says Satan prompted Judas to betray him.

[16:50] And I think of that famous picture of the Last Supper. It's not quite right. Someone's missing in that picture. Satan was present.

And Peter came to this meal with a proud heart. If you look at the end of the chapter, verse 24, you see that there's division going on and arguing between the disciples.

And Peter's heart is boastful because he doesn't see this enemy who's present. And notice what Jesus says to him in verse 31.

Simon, Simon, Peter, he's speaking to. Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. Satan has this dogged determination to see you damned, Peter.

Verse 32, what an encouragement. But I have prayed for you. What an encouragement to have the constant intercessory prayers of a powerful Savior.

[18:04] Over to Acts chapter 5. Acts chapter 5. The unusual things are happening when God poured his spirit out on his people.

In response to his. The promise of. Fulfillment of prophecy and thousands are trusting Christ. There's sweet unity in the church.

But wherever God is at work. It won't take us long to find this devil. And we come to this scene where. Ananias and Sapphira lie.

Through they had kept some of the money from the sale of the land. And Peter is the one speaking here. Verse 3. Acts chapter 5. Verse 3. Then Peter said.

Ananias. How is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit? Satan. Put that thought in your mind. Have you ever had such a wicked thought enter your mind that it surprised you?

[19:08] And you thought. Where did that come from? Do you ever see Satan intimately involved in your temptations? Over to Ephesians.

Ephesians. Chapter 4. The church at Ephesus. He's speaking to them about unity. And their relationships one toward another.

Verse 25. He talks about being all members of one body. And at the end of the chapter. Verse 32. He has that great one another passage.

And this whole last half of the chapter is. How we're to be relating one to another. And then in the middle of all this. He has verse 27.

And do not give the devil a footnote. Don't let Satan get his foot in the door. Now why would Paul insert a comment about the devil.

[20:10] In the middle of this discussion about our relationships with one another. You see we tend to think. About relationships.

As a horizontal level. That's between me and her. Or let the two kids sit down and work this out between themselves. And we tend to think horizontally in our relationships.

But there is another person. Who is very interested. In how you respond. To the relationships that God has placed you in this week.

Yes God is. But his arch rival is as well. And he's looking for a place to get his foot in the door. And bring division and disunity.

Did you struggle with a certain relationship in your life this week? Well behind the scenes. There was Satan. Stirring the pot.

[21:09] Trying to cause havoc and chaos. Well let's look at our weapons. We've got to look at Ephesians chapter 6. It's a passage we must be familiar with.

We're not going to have time to deal with much of it. But we've got to look at verses 10 and 11. As we think of our weapons that we use against this devil.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God. So that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

Why is it that we can be in a battle for our lives. And not even be aware of it. Well it's because verse 12 says.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood. This battle is unseen. But it is no less real is it. It's no less real just because it's unseen.

[22:07] And so he says in verse 13 and repeats. Therefore, because this intense battle is going on. We must put on the full armor of God.

And as he lists that armor. God has provided all the necessary resources. To enable you to resist temptation.

And cause Satan to flee. Do you believe that? God has provided all the resources necessary. To enable you to resist temptation.

And cause Satan to flee. I want to just focus on the last weapon. Our weapon of prayer. Our brother Stuart Olyatt.

Calls this our secret weapon. Verses 18 to 20. It's the final one that he lists. And he says in verse 18. And pray in the spirit.

[23:07] On all occasions. With all kinds of prayers. And requests. With this in mind. Be alert. And always keep on praying.

For all the saints. Pray also for me. That whenever I open my mouth. Words may be given me. So that I will fearlessly make known. The mystery of the gospel.

For which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it. Fearlessly. As I should. He said pray. Pray with all kinds of prayers.

Keep on praying. Pray. Pray. Five times. Why? Because he knew. That the only way to be successful. In this spiritual unseen battle.

Against the forces of evil. Is to use this weapon of prayer. And what a weapon. That I so little use.

[24 : 08] Yet I can carry this weapon with me all the time. Without ever having to remember to pack it in the morning. In the morning. It's a powerful weapon. That calls the creator of the heavens and earth into action.

And when I do use it. It moves me to worship. And energizes me for duties that are before me. But you know what's sad.

The first thing. Is I really don't believe this stuff. That I'm teaching you this morning. As I poured over these truths about a real devil.

One of the first thoughts that came to my mind. Was that if I really believe this stuff. It would radically. It would have a radical effect.

On my prayer life. If I really believed. In a real devil. Who's intimately involved. In not only my temptations. But my family. And with my brothers and sisters at church.

[25 : 11] And with the unbelievers. It would have a radical effect. On my prayer life. You see. My actual theology. Is not.

What I say with my lips this morning. My actual theology is how I live. So I would beg for your prayers. In that area of my life. First Peter chapter 2.

We want a couple thoughts of application. In closing. From our brother Peter. What lessons on this topic. Stuck with him.

What lessons did he feel were important enough. To pass on. To future saints. And their struggle. With this devil. First Peter 2.11.

Though Satan is not specifically mentioned in this verse. He's dealing with our struggles with temptation. And we've learned this morning. That Satan's.

[26 : 13] Definitely involved in those temptations. First Peter 2.11. Dear friends. I urge you. As aliens and strangers in the world. To abstain from sinful desires.

Which war against your soul. Each temptation. That we face. Is a battle. That we cannot afford to lose.

Why? What does he say? What does he say? Why does he say? I urge you. It's a battle. We can't afford to lose. Because it is a war.

Against our eternal soul. In the same way. In the same way. That we saw. In that war. With Job. To cause him. To curse God. And to. To damn his soul.

Each temptation. That we face. Today. He says. I urge you. To abstain. From those sinful desires. Because it's a war.

[27 : 10] Against your soul. And. Isn't it. How sin. Starts. It's just. Little by little. You know. Often. I think. In the back of our mind.

We think. I'll just confess it. And God will be faithful. To forgive. And that is true. But. Little by little. Satan knows. And.

Interesting book. By C.S. Lewis. Called the screw tape letters. That are imaginary discussions. Between Satan. And one of his demons. And how they go after us.

And how they use temptations. To keep us from. Doing what we should do. As well as. Doing things we shouldn't do. Why.

Why here in this passage. Does he urge you. As aliens. And strangers. You see. Who you tell. Yourself.

[28 : 07] You are. Affects. How you live. To live. So. How does. My identity. As an alien. And a stranger.

Encourage me. In my battle. With temptations. Want you to think about that. A minute. And help me. Who you think you are. Is going to affect. How you live.

And he says. I urge you. As a stranger. An alien. To abstain from sinful desires. Now. How does that identity. Help you.

Why? Why, Paul, are you so adamant about self-control over your body? So that when I have preached to others, so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified. It's the word for reprobate. Damned as a reprobate. You see, preaching and teaching and using our gifts is not proof of a new heart.

And Paul knew that. Personal holiness is. And it requires self-control. And that's why the Bible says that without holiness, no one will see the Lord.

[35 : 43] So brothers and sisters, be alert and be self-controlled. Why? Because of your enemy, the devil.

Let's pray. Our God, we need you if we are to be delivered from this evil one.

Forgive us for our spiritual blindness of unbelief. Please be merciful to us the way you were to Elisha's servant when you opened his eyes to spiritual realities.

Most of all, thank you for Jesus. Thank you for his self-control and the cross. Thank you for his effectual prayers that keep us persevering.

We come to you in his name. Amen. Amen.