

Lie: There is No Danger

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Date: 13 July 2014

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[0:00] Pilgrim's Progress paints a terrible picture of what Satan looks like.! He's called Apollyon, and he's a foul fiend, hideous to behold.

! He's clothed with scales like a fish. He has wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, and a mouth like a lion. And his belly gapes open and belches forth fire and smoke.

That's Satan as the destroyer. But that's not always how Satan appears. Here's a picture of him that is just as true.

Imagine a sweet old grandma. Sweet old grandmother. And he takes his child in his arms and gently rocks her to sleep.

Hush, little baby, don't say a word. Nothing to be afraid of. Shh, there's nothing to worry about.

There's nothing in the dark.

[1:05] You're okay. You're safe. And he's lulling even some of you to sleep even now. There's nothing to be worried about.

There's no danger. You're okay. On these luncheon Sundays, we've been... We just started a series of lies to keep you lost.

Lies that Satan tells us to keep us lost. And last time we looked at Satan's lie says that your sins are too bad. Jesus Christ might save sinners, but your sins are too bad.

God can't save you. Look at what you've done. But he has other lies. And there are other lies that are very different from that lie. And today's lie is one of them.

It's on the other side of the spectrum. It says there's no danger. There's no danger. There's no danger at all. You don't have anything to worry about. And people are telling themselves that lie today.

[2:04] And people were telling themselves that lie back in Jesus' day. And so I'd invite you to turn to Luke chapter 13. Luke chapter 13. And we're going to read just the first nine verses of Luke 13.

Luke 13 verse 1. Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.

Jesus answered, Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you no. But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

Or those 18 who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them. Do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you no. But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

Then he told this parable. A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. And he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. And so he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any.

[3:21] Cut it down. Why should it use up the soil? Sir, the man replied, Leave it alone for one more year and I'll dig around it and fertilize it.

If it bears fruit next year, fine. If not, then cut it down. The big lie is that there is no danger. But you see in these first nine verses that there are four other smaller lies that reinforce this big lie.

So there's these four smaller lies that go in and feed this big lie that I'm not in danger. And you see the first little lie is that other people are in danger, not me.

Other people are in danger, not me. And you see that in the first part of the story. Some people come to Jesus and they say, Jesus, did you hear about this amazing thing, this remarkable, terrifying thing that happened to those Galileans?

Pilate struck them down while they were in the temple. They were worshipping. They were offering sacrifices to God. And Pilate killed them apparently right there on the spot. They must have been really bad.

[4 : 35] Now, I just want you to notice here, who were those people thinking about? They came to Jesus with that story. Well, they were not thinking about themselves.

They were thinking about others. Not their danger, not their sin. They were thinking about those people, those other people, those people that we've heard about. The danger was for them. And that's what humans do. We naturally look and see other people's danger, but we never think about it for ourselves. So we see someone getting older and they don't have any money and they're in debt and they're ready to retire.

And we say they are in real financial danger. Don't they see where they're headed? Why don't they do something to escape that danger? And meanwhile, we have no money and we're in debt and we're not getting any younger.

They're in danger. We're not. We see someone overweight, high blood pressure, and we say they're going to have a heart attack if they keep it up. Well, we're overweight and we have high blood pressure and we're not doing anything about it.

[5 : 47] So it's something that humans do all the time. It's the other people that need to be worried about these things. It's not me. You can see the same thing happening in the book of Romans.

You read the first couple of chapters. And in Romans 1, Paul, I believe, is talking about how sinful the Gentiles are. For the most part, he has his eye and his fingers on the Gentiles.

And the Jews are saying, here, here. Paul, you're exactly right. And then in chapter 2, Paul does a 180 on these Jewish hearers.

And he says, and you. I've been talking about them. But now, and you, therefore, have no excuse. You who pass judgment on someone else. That's the Jews. They're passing judgment on the Gentiles.

You who pass judgment on someone else. For at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself. Because you do the same things that they're doing. You Jews think those people are in danger.

[6 : 49] But if they are in danger, you are too. If you do what they do, then aren't you condemned with them? And so now the gospel comes to all men.

All men. Jesus uses that word. You too will all perish. No exceptions. No exceptions. You'll all. The gospel comes to all men and says, you're the man.

You're the man. You're the one who's done this. You're who's in danger. Don't worry about other people. Look at yourself. Look at your sin. Look at your danger.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There's no exceptions. You're not the exception. So not them. You. Who needs to be saved? You do.

You do. You do. Who's in danger? You are. And that's what Jesus says.

[7 : 52] Do you think those Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no. But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Jesus is drawing their attention back from those people out there, other people, to them, to you.

Jesus says, don't worry about them. Worry about yourself. Then there's another little lie, the second little lie, and it's only bad sinners are in danger.

So Satan says, oh, those people are in danger, but not you. Only bad sinners are in danger, but not you. Surely that's what these people were thinking. Those Galileans, they must have done something really bad if God struck them down through Pilate, struck them down right when they were worshiping.

They must have been something really bad. Who knows what they did? They were bad. Well, do you think that? The Bible makes us feel so uncomfortable because we, by nature, only think it's bad sinners that are in danger.

Hell is just for bad people. It couldn't possibly be me. And the Bible says judgment's coming on all men. All men. So all of us have fallen short.

[9 : 10] There are no exceptions. Everyone is in danger. And we say to ourselves, but I'm a nice guy. There's far worse people out there than me. I don't hurt anyone.

But Jesus says, you think they were worse than everyone else? You think they were worse than everyone else? Unless you repent, you too will all perish.

It's not just that bad people are suddenly swept away in judgment. It's not just bad people who die suddenly and get rushed into the presence of God.

He says, remember that time that tower fell and it killed those 18 people? Do you think those people were any more guilty than anyone else in Jerusalem? They were normal people.

They were normal people. It wasn't Hitler, Stalin, Jeffrey Dahmer, the meth dealer down the road that the tower fell on and killed.

[10:13] It was normal people. And don't we know from towers falling that a lot of normal people going about their business could be rushed into judgment?

It was normal people going about their business when all of a sudden they were there. They were meeting God. So every two seconds, or every second two people die.

Every second two people die. And so there's two more and two more, two more, two more, two more. You can look up on the online calculator. It just shows you how many people died today. And that number is just going, just going up, up, up, up, up. And it's not just bad people. It's all people. All have sinned.

So not just them, but you. So Satan says, hush, little baby, don't say a word. Nothing to be afraid of.

[11:18] But the gospel cries, escape the wrath to come. Escape the wrath to come. So which one has the ring of truth to it?

Which one sounds right? Which one is taking you seriously? See, life is serious. Death is serious. You go to the funeral. You look into the coffin.

And you look. And that is going to be you. They will fill you with embalming fluid, just like this person is. And I will be dead.

And my life will be gone. The gospel takes us seriously as humans. It cares about you. God cares about you. He does not want you to perish.

He doesn't want you to get to that place unready to meet him, unready to die. The gospel is so serious because it takes you seriously. God cares about you.

[12:16] He doesn't want you to perish. It would be so unloving for him to say, you're not in any danger. It would be so unloving for him to say, oh, you're not even anywhere close to the cliff.

Don't worry about it. And meanwhile, you walk off the cliff to your own end. Peter on Pentecost preached like a man possessed.

And this is what he says. He warned them. And he pleaded with them. The words are he just kept going and going.

He warned them. He pleaded with them. Save yourselves from this corrupt generation. There's no danger. That's what Satan says. And the gospel says, save yourself. So that's the second lie.

It's just really bad sinners. No, no, no. You. You. Here's the third lie.

[13:12] I don't have to repent to be saved. I don't have to repent to be saved. I can go on in my sin. Things can just I can keep going. My relationship with sin and God doesn't have to change.

I can live with my sin and I can be saved in the end. That's how many so many people believe they die and they go to heaven. That's the lie.

There's no danger. You just live and die and go to heaven. That's the story for every man. But the gospel comes to us and Jesus comes to us and says, no, that's not the truth. That's Satan's lie.

There is a danger. Unless you repent, you will not be saved. So what does Jesus say? Unless you all repent, you too will all perish. So here's the bottom line.

Sin is a personal violation against God. Sin is a personal disagreement with God. And unless you drop your fight, unless you take God's side in this matter against sin, against your sin, then you too will perish.

[14:14] See, repentance is fundamentally changing your relationship to your sin. It's now facing God and agreeing with God. It's condemning yourself and your sin. You're taking God's side in the matter.

And so there is this great conflict and God is going to win. There is this great conflict between sin and righteousness. And God is going to win.

Satan says, there's no worry. Nothing to worry about. It's not that bad. Sin is personal disobedience against God. God takes every sin personally.

That's what sin is. It's a personal affront against God. So if you're personally offending God, how can that end well for you?

How can that possibly turn out well? Can the clay contend with its maker? You know what a potter does if the clay won't come together under his hands?

[15 : 12] If he works it and works it, but it doesn't bend its will to his, he gets rid of it, throws it away. The pot won't come together under his hand.

He smashes the whole thing. He starts over. What is Jesus doing? Saying, you can't have your sin and be safe. Whatever sin you have, you can't have your sin and be safe.

God lives and that means sin can't go on. Righteousness must prevail. And if you don't repent, you are in danger. Here's the fourth lie.

You don't have to bear fruit to be saved. That's what you see with his story as he ends. You don't have to bear fruit. You don't have to live a different life.

You don't have to bear fruit and repentance and faith and good works. You can just keep living however you want. No, that's the lie. So he tells the little story of a man who plants a fig tree in his garden.

[16 : 16] And he comes year after year looking for fruit. And year after year, he's disappointed. He says, three years in a row, I've come. I've planted. I've looked for fruit. And finally, in utter annoyance, he says, cut it down.

It's just wasting the soil. It's a waste of space. And then the gardener says, leave it alone. Give it one more year and I'll loosen the soil. I'll let it get water.

I'll fertilize it. I'll help. I'll do whatever it takes to get fruit from it. And if then it doesn't bear fruit, then cut it fine. We'll just cut it down.

Now, here's the thing that you must understand about Jesus' parable. This is what you must understand, dear lost person. You are that tree. And you are now in the last year.

That's the point of the story. God has come year after year looking for faith, looking for repentance, looking for obedience, looking for holiness.

[17 : 14] And year after year, what does he find? What does God find when he looks into your life? He finds nothing. He finds just leaves but no fruit.

And now you are in the last year. Time is running out. You see, Jesus is saying it's either now or never. It's either now or never. Are you in danger?

You bear fruit? Or you get chopped down? No. There's an axe in the shed. And it's sharpened. It's ready to be used.

John the Baptist even goes further than that. He says the axe is already at the root of the trees. And every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. What I am trying to say is that the danger is real.

And you are the one who's in danger. Jesus is coming and saying this is the last year. It's now or never. And bear fruit or else. Fire is burning.

[18 : 18] His axe is sharp. And he's announced that he is going to use it. Satan says, hush. Hush. Just wait a little longer.

You're not really in danger. There's nothing to be too concerned about. Meanwhile, Jesus is the Savior saying, Now is the day of salvation. You come to me and I will save you.

See, there's no reluctance on his part. He is issuing this announcement beforehand that the judgment is coming. Why? Because he wants you to know about it. Why? Because he wants you to come to him and be saved. And so Jesus Christ is standing there saying, Now is the day of salvation.

I can save you. You are in danger. Come to me. So I'm going to leave you with a question. If you ignore Jesus Christ, how will you escape?

What is your plan? What are you going to do that will satisfy God? That will pay back all of your sins so that they are all paid in full?

[19 : 19] What are you going to do if you ignore Jesus Christ? How will you escape? The answer is there's really no other. There's no way. This is the one way of escape.

So how will you escape? Hebrews asks, For if the message spoken by angels was binding and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment. He's talking about the law. He's saying if the law was binding and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?

If you could not ignore the law of Moses and escape, how can you ignore the gospel of God the Son and escape?

John the Baptist asked, You snakes, you brood of vipers, how will you escape being condemned to hell? Jesus himself said, Be always on the watch and pray that you may be able to escape all that is

about to happen and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.

Jesus even says to his people, his disciples, Pray. Pray that you will escape what's coming and pray that you will be able to stand before me.

[20 : 44] If Jesus tells his righteous ones that they have to pray, if they're going to escape, what kind of danger are you in?

The waters lapped up and surrounded the ark. Noah was only saved because he was in the ark. So how will you escape if you ignore the ark?

Satan lies and says there's no danger, but the axe is at the root of the trees, the clouds are heavy with rain. You get into Christ before the storm comes. As Peter said, save yourselves from this evil generation.

Let's pray. Oh, great God, how terrible that last day is going to be if Jesus has to tell us to pray that we might escape it, that we would be able to stand in that day.

Surely it has not even entered into our minds and our imaginations how terrible it will be to see you coming in all of your wrath and anger.

[21 : 58] I pray that you would please prepare each one of us, help us to know and feel the danger. Will you make the truth of your word real to our hearts and everyone here would flee the wrath to come and flee from the damning effects of sin.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for setting us straight when we so often think it's not about me. I'm not the one who has to worry. Thank you for setting us straight.

Pray that you would help us to believe your word and to obey it in saving faith. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.