

Your Enemy the Devil

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 October 2013

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Ephesians chapter 2, we'll be reading the first 10 verses. As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work and those who are disobedient.

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts.

Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions.

It is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith. And this not from yourselves. It is the gift of God, not by works so that no one can boast.

[1:22] For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

If you learned somehow that a hit man had been hired to murder you, what difference would it make in the way you live your ordinary life?

How would you head out the door for school in the morning, for your job, for the store? Well, we'd all react differently, I'm sure.

Some would stay home all the time and lock the doors. Others might contact the authorities. Maybe even hire a personal guard. Others of you whom I know would pack and would be looking over your shoulder more often.

Some might even move away and even take up a second identity. But no one would go on living exactly as they had before.

[2:27] Can we agree to that? Out of concern for our lives, our ordinary life would be drastically affected. Now, I haven't uncovered a hit list with your name on it.

But I have found something in God's word that is even more important that ought to interest you. For it tells us that you have an enemy and he's out for more than your life.

He's out to rob you of eternal life. Not just a few years here, but forever and ever to see you damned in hell. He's the devil. He's Satan.

Your adversary. That ancient serpent. And the intelligence gleaned is none other than God's own word.

He who knows everything about everyone in heaven and on earth. Says in 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 8. Be self-controlled and alert.

[3:32] Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Now, I don't tell you that to terrify you or to make you paranoid. But I do tell you that, or rather we should say God tells us that, in order that we might be self-controlled, sober, alert, watchful as you go about your life.

Realizing that you have an enemy and he's stalking you. Just like that hitman. Just like that lion seeking to devour.

So knowledge of our stalking enemy is supposed to make a difference in the way we live. And I ask you, is it? Is it making a difference in the way you live?

Or are we just skipping along through life as if we did not have this deadly foe? How on the watch, on the lookout, were you this past week for this stalking enemy?

[4:43] How much on the alert were you yesterday? Or last month? Did it enter your mind that you have this enemy who's prowling and seeking to devour you?

When have you last reminded yourself, I'm in the crosshairs of the greatest murderer of all, the devil? Now, my aim in this message and in this series is not for us to focus on the devil all day long. We are to run the race, how? Fixing our eyes on Jesus, not on Satan. But I would contend that we will never look to Jesus as we ought and for the things that we ought unless we are aware of our enemy.

That's why we're being warned. You see, it's when I see my enemy for who he is, when I see what I'm up against, when I see his power, his resources, it's then that I run to Jesus and say, help me, Lord.

I need you. I can't manage this foe. And so we look and we live. Now, today we're beginning a study on our threefold enemy.

[6:04] I'm sure if you've been going to church for even a year, you have heard someone speak about the Christian's threefold enemy.

Our brother Ed, even in his prayer, referred to them. What are they? The world, the flesh, and the devil. Now, where do we get that language? Why do we refer to it that way?

Well, the Bible's full of it, isn't it? There's verses here that talk about the devil is our enemy. Verses over here that talk about the flesh, our indwelling sin, our sinful nature, and then the world.

But our passage that was read for us, Ephesians 3, 1 to 3, mentions all three of our enemies in this one passage. And that's why we turn to it this morning.

The apostle is talking to believers in the church at Ephesus about their lives before they were converted. So, believer, this was true of you before you were saved.

[7:07] And, unbeliever, this still is true of you. Notice what he says, verse 1. As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world.

Now, right away, we're struck with a strange situation. Notice he says, you were dead when you used to live. Well, which is it? Was I dead or was I alive?

And, of course, the answer is, yes. You were both dead and alive. You were spiritually dead toward God. Toward who he is, what he has said, what he wants you to do, how he wants you to live.

You didn't care about that any more than a dead man does. Oh, but you were very alive to what the world wants. To its ways.

What it says. Its values. Its pleasures and treasures. Its idols. What it thinks is cool. And so the world is here seen as the first enemy mentioned.

[8:17] The world as the combined fallen race of mankind who are joined in opposition against Jesus Christ and his cause.

And so you used to trespass the boundary lines of God's law as you followed the ways of this world. Because the ways of this world are against the ways of God.

And that's the first enemy. The world. And then notice, as you were following the ways of this world, you were also following the ways of the devil. Because the world has adopted the devil's same anti-God agenda.

So the world's ways are the devil's ways. He's referred to here. You were following the ways of the ruler of the kingdom of the air.

The spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. Disobedient. That describes you. Then this evil spirit, Satan, is now at work in you.

[9:28] That's the second enemy. The world. Then the devil. And thirdly, verse 3. All of us also lived among them. That's among the disobedient at one time.

And how did we live among them? Gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature. More literally, our flesh, as the footnote has it in the IV. Gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts.

The flesh is our human nature under the power of sin. So that it has sinful thoughts and sinful desires and sinful choices. And so we see our third enemy.

The same anti-God agenda in our flesh as the devil and as the world. So we were dead toward God, but we were very alive to our flesh. Toward what we wanted.

And what we wanted was the same thing that the world wants. Was the same thing that the devil wants. And so whether we realize it or not, we were following the ways of the devil.

[10:38] And we had his hook in our noses and he was leading us wherever he wanted. And where he was leading us was to hell. You see, verse 3 ends with the wrath of God.

We were by nature objects of wrath. So here's our three enemies. And they were all very active in our lives before Jesus Christ saved us.

They were leading us to hell, but for the saving work of Jesus. Now, I want to give you two lessons about these three enemies.

And then we move on. Just two lessons. Notice, first of all, these three enemies are working together, aren't they? They work together. They're not three separate enemies fighting us independently of each other.

But they form a coalition. They're in cahoots with each other. They work together to defeat us. Now, we see this in the military, in warfare, don't we?

[11:44] Where if there's a strong enemy to be fought that is stronger than any of the other surrounding nations, what do the surrounding nations say and do? They say to each other, listen, that enemy is powerful enough to defeat each of us one by one.

So why don't we gather together and all fight them at once? And it's that gathered force of the nations that multiplies their strength as they fight against their enemy.

And that's the way it is with our three enemies. It's not that they're just all fighting us. That would be bad enough. But the reality is that they are fighting together. They've joined forces against us.

So when the devil is seeking a temptation to pull you down in sin, Christian, he doesn't have to look very far because you have right within you sinful desires that he can play upon.

And he has a whole world of sinners around you to encourage you in evil. Let me give an example of how this works, this together cooperation of our enemies.

[13:01] Let's say that someone said something unkind to you, maybe even untrue about you, and it hurt. Now, that may not happen, but it happens to me.

And, children, it may have happened to you. The people said things to you that hurt you. Now, at that point, Satan may plant a suggestion in your mind to take revenge.

Just give them a little taste of their own medicine. And right away, your flesh responds, yeah, that's what I want, too. I'm all for that suggestion.

And as you glance at the world, you see, well, that's exactly how the world operates. I mean, you've got to stand up for yourself in this world. You've got to be able to dish it out if you're going to not get rolled over.

And so, you take revenge. You speak something harmful to hurt them back. And when you do, you have just been overcome by evil.

[14:08] By a trinity of evil. By the world, the flesh, and the devil. As together, they have worked in that temptation. And when they combine together, they more than triple the power of the temptation.

And hence, the seriousness of our enemy. Now, the second lesson that we see in this passage about our three enemies is that they're not just the enemies, then, of the Christian.

But they are the enemies of all mankind. We often refer to them as the threefold enemy of the Christian. And they are that. But I want you to at least see in this passage, they are the enemies of all mankind.

Because it's talking about us before we were saved, when we were lost. These were our three enemies. And they had us by the nose. And we were following in their ways.

And they were leading us to God's wrath in hell. But then God intervened and sent his son to save us.

[15:19] And by grace, through faith, we trusted in him. And he saved us from our enemies. From damnation. From leading us down to hell. But what we find in the rest of the book of Ephesians, and indeed in the rest of the Bible, is that these same three enemies remain the enemies of the Christian all the way to heaven.

So, dear unconverted friend outside of Jesus, Satan is no friend to you. He wants you damned forever. He's working overtime to keep you from coming to Christ and being saved.

Your flesh is equally an enemy against you. Because though its sinful desires and thoughts lead you in the way that seems right to you, it's the way that ends in destruction.

And this world is not a friend to lead you to God, to lead you to heaven. And this world is sinking into hell, and it's grabbing to pull you along with it.

And so you see, these three enemies of the Christian are also the enemies of every non-Christian. They are the enemies of all mankind, children and adults, young and old, the world over.

[16:39] So we start this morning, then, with the enemy of the devil. And the reason I'm starting with the devil is because he is called that ancient serpent.

We find him first before these other enemies. He's the originator of sin. He's the coordinator of the rebellion against God.

So we start with the devil, our first enemy. And this morning, I want us to see five things about him. First, his person. What is he like? Now, Satan is one of his names.

The devil is another name given. These are not just names given to an impersonal force of evil in the world. Some people think that. There's just this evil force. No, he's a person.

He's got a personality. He's an angelic being whom God created good, but who turned against God and fell and became pure evil.

[17:41] We don't have a lot said to us about that fall of the angels and of Satan. But the Bible points to his pride that he wasn't content with the place that God gave him.

And he wanted to have the place of God. He was envious of God and wanted the praise and worship that God received. And so he fell.

So Satan's a real person, not just an evil force. He thinks. He desires. He chooses. He hates. He rages. He envies. He's cunning, just like people are.

But having said that, he's not alone. Many other angels fell with him. We call them demons. The Bible refers to them as demons. And Satan is the leader of all of these fallen angels who also with Satan did not keep their original place that God had given them.

And so they are reserved for fire of judgment. But the Bible, in at least two different places, speaks of the devil and his angels. Are you familiar with that? Matthew 25, Jesus talks about eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

[19:02] Do you see? They're his. He's their leader. They carry out his agenda and his anti-God plan in the world. And so when the Bible speaks of Satan or the devil, sometimes it's including all of these demons that his whole hellish crew that helps serve him.

Because Satan can't be everywhere at once, tempting you and tempting me. But I guarantee you, you and I are tempted at the same time of day in different places. Well, he carries that out through his demons.

And so his influence is worldwide, though he himself is but one. So that's his person. Not an impersonal force.

A fallen angelic being. What's his aim? What's he out to do? You know, one of the best ways to learn about Satan's aim is just to see the first introduction to him in the garden.

The first time we see him. He's slandering God. And what we learn is that his aim is to steal glory from God.

[20:15] It's the reason he exists. It's his whole purpose. It's why he gets up in the morning. What keeps him going, if we might say so. He wants to rob glory from God.

Now, he hates God. He's anti-God. If God's for it, he's against it. And if God's against it, he's for it. And we see why that is. It's personal with him.

He hates God. And he hates seeing people worship him as God. Living their lives for his glory. Trusting in him. Obeying him. And so he sets out to dishonor God.

To pull God down. To destroy his reputation. And that's what we find him doing the first time he starts opening his mouth and talking to Eve in Genesis 3.

Do you mean that God won't let you eat from any tree in the garden? If you thought God was so good, your creator was so good, I would suggest that you think again.

[21:15] He's holding out on you. You see, he's not really for you. He's not wanting you to enjoy life to the fullest.

And you're just going to have to see. He doesn't want you to get this wisdom and gain this thing. He's slandering God. He slanders his goodness. He slanders his judgment. His justice. And if we're observant, we'll see that he's still doing the same thing today.

He's trying to get men to think poorly about God. Because he hates God. And he hates seeing glory go to God. So his aim is to steal God's glory.

You can see it in the book of Job. Read it. We don't have time. But those first two chapters, you'll see how he hates seeing Job worship God.

[22:12] And he sets out in the course to cause Job to curse God to his face. Now, that's this devil. And that's his aim.

He wants men to curse God. To forget God. To dishonor God. To ignore God. To belittle God. To exchange God for little trivial things.

So he hates God. And he hates all who bear his image. Say, who would that be? Not the monkey. Not the dog. But human beings made in his image. And so he hates you.

Because you bear the image of God. And he wants to deface the earth from that image. He wants to remove it and put his own image there. In other words, he wants you acting not as God.

But acting like him. He doesn't want you loving others. He wants you hating them. He doesn't want you seeking their good. He wants you envious and jealous of their good.

[23 : 13] He doesn't want you humble like Jesus. He wants you proud like him. And on and on we could go. He wants you lying, stealing, killing.

Just like him. Oh, he acts as if he's your friend. He came on like that to Eve, didn't he? But keep reading.

And notice where he led her. He led her out of the perfect garden into sin and misery. He hates her. He wants to do her harm.

So don't be fooled. He's out to devour you. 1 Peter 5.8 says. He's the ultimate thief. And Jesus says the thief comes only to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

Think of those three. He stole eternal life from Adam and Eve and the whole human race. And he comes promising you so much, but in the end he steals from you.

[24 : 13] He takes from you. He killed them by bringing sin and death into the world. He murdered the whole human race. That's why Jesus says he's a murderer from the beginning. John 8.44.

And he destroyed the work of God. There was the perfect paradise. And Satan came in and destroyed it. Kids, it's like you've built this huge castle on the beach out of sand.

And you've been there all afternoon building it. And some big bully comes along and just kicks your castle and flattens it. Satan came into God's paradise and destroyed it.

Destruction is his hallmark. So as you read the scriptures, notice what happens to the lives of those who are controlled by Satan.

Notice what happens to those who are actually possessed. Their personality becomes possessed by demons. And now they're slashing themselves. They're self-destructive.

[25 : 11] They're jumping into fire. They're jumping into water. Follow Judas after Satan entered into him. And see how he destroys himself.

Sells the Lord Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. And then commits suicide. That's the devil. He hates men. He uses them.

And then he trashes them. And gives them over to eternal torments. Because of their sin. And rejoices when it happens.

Make no mistake about it. His aim is to devour you. He hates God. He hates you. And Christian, if he can't damn you. Because you are a Christian and safe in Christ.

He will do all he can through you to dishonor God's name. That's still his aim. Do you know when you obey God and worship God. And trust God.

[26 : 09] And serve God. And bear witness for God. You bring glory to God. And so he's going to be trying to keep you from doing any of that. He's going to try to cause your life to be more like his.

And thereby drag God's name through the mud. That's his aim. Don't give yourself. Don't give the devil any pleasure in having his aim fulfilled in you.

So we've seen his person. His aim. What about his power? You know, whenever we're talking about enemies. We need to be concerned about power, don't we?

What are they bringing? Do we have what it takes to fight against this foe? Well, if the hit man out to destroy you was a two-year-old. You'd have little to be concerned about, would you?

You can easily dodge him. But as we've seen, Satan and his hellish crew are fallen angels. Now let that sink in a bit. Your fight is against angels.

[27 : 08] Spiritual beings. Whom the Bible says are a higher order of creature than man. For man was made a little lower than the angels.

Turn over to Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 12. Where we're reminded of this. In Ephesians 6, 12. Paul says, For our struggle, our warfare, our fight, our wrestling match.

Is not against human beings. Flesh and blood. But against the rulers. Against the authorities. Against the powers of this dark world.

Namely, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Spiritual forces. Not flesh and blood. So our enemies are not human.

They're superhuman. Their power is not natural. It is supernatural. And that's what we need to remember as we think about this one who is stalking us.

[28:09] And all of his cohorts. So we're completely outclassed by our enemy. Like a mouse is outclassed by a cat.

Or a dog is outclassed by a lion. You and I are outclassed by angels. So Martin Luther says, His craft and power are great and armed with cruel hate on earth is not as equal.

Not as equal. In fact, if you'll go through your Bible, you'll find that in every contest of fallen angel against human being, Satan has won.

Except for one. The last man. The man from heaven. Jesus Christ. And he's our hope. He's the hope of all humanity. Who will come and trust in him.

But the first Adam, the first Eve, didn't stand. And yet they were perfect. And in the perfect environment. And if they couldn't stand, what hope is there that you and I, fallen sons and daughters of Adam, could stand against such enemies?

[29:28] Did we in our own strength confide our striving would be losing? We're not the right man on our side. The man of God's own choosing. And that's why verse 12 here is flanked in verse 11 and 13 by words that are calling us to be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

Because your own power will not do in this battle. Put on the full armor of God, verse 11. You need divine armor, divine weapons against this enemy. Human weapons against supernatural, superhuman enemies?

Did you kids ever make sharpened swords out of wood and wooden shields and fight? Think of that going up against nuclear weapons.

You're outclassed, kids. And we are outclassed. If we think by human effort, we can take on superhuman enemy.

Satan. So, you better be strong in God's power. You better get God's supernatural power and divine armor.

[30:50] And you better put on the full armor of God so that when the day of evil comes, you might be able to stand your ground. It's the only way you'll be able to stand your ground.

And after you've done everything, to stand. That when the dust settles and there you are, you're still standing. Why? Because you had God's power and God's weapons.

Yes, the devil is a powerful foe and his power is expansive. 1 John 5, verse 19 says the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

What about his methods? What's his *modus operandi*, his methods of operation? How does he go about achieving his aims of stealing glory from God and so on?

Well, the short answer is he lies. And he lies. And he lies some more. John 8, 44. Jesus said to these Jews of his day who were seeking to murder him, You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire.

[31:59] He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

So, pipers pipe and drummers drum and liars lie. And that's why Satan lies. He is a liar.

In fact, he is the liar. The father, the source of all lies. Have you thought about that? Trace your lie back to its fountainhead and you're here with your enemy, Satan.

The father of lies. So, it's by deception that he leads the whole world astray. It's by deception that he rules over men.

He lied to Eve about God's pronounced judgment. God says, in the day you eat, you will surely die. And Satan says, you will not surely die. He lied. He lied.

[33:05] But he did so in such a way that his lie sounded more convincing to Eve than God's truth. Have you thought about that?

His lies aren't just, well, you know, like some people try to lie and you can see it on their face.

They're lying. It wasn't that way with Eve. It wasn't that way with the devil. He made his lie sound more convincing than God's truth.

And so she bit. She was deceived. And the whole world is being deceived by him. Now, I think this is important for us to understand that the health of Satan's whole kingdom of darkness depends entirely upon men believing his lies.

You just let the truth come in and his kingdom is over. There is no truth in him. And so the God of this age has done what?

He's blinded the minds of unbelievers to the truth of God, of his glory, of his gospel, of Jesus.

[34 : 18] He just blinds men. And so his success depends upon him keeping men in the dark. Keeping men in blindness, in darkness.

Keeping out the true light and glory of Christ. If men but see the glory of God in Jesus Christ, his kingdom crumbles.

And it's crumbled in your heart and in my heart for that very reason. He opened our eyes. God opened our eyes. And we saw the glory of God in Christ. And Satan's reign ended that day.

So place a high price on truth, brothers and sisters. It's the only way out of the kingdom of lies.

And so he comes who is the truth. And he says, the truth will set you free. The success of his kingdom depends upon men believing his lies.

[35 : 23] And so Satan's gone around and he's changed all the labels. Think if someone did that one night at the store. You know, on that poisonous bottle they've now got the label for grape nuts. And the poisonous label on the grape nuts.

And all the labels have been changed. He's lying. He's calling evil good and good evil. And he's putting bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

And light for darkness and darkness for light. Crooked for straight and straight for crooked. And then he goes out and he changes all the signs on the roads. The danger signs are welcome signs.

The broad road that used to say, destruction is where this road's leading. He now has eternal life.

This is the way to satisfaction. This is the way to pleasure.

This is the way to life and fulfillment. And there's that narrow road. And it says, danger. This leads to destruction. This will be the end of your joy. He's lying.

[36 : 23] He's lying. He tells you. I've only come to liberate and bless and enrich you. But what he leaves you with is bondage and sin and misery.

He says, your way is better than God's way. It's just a little sin. Nobody gets hurt. There's no judgment to fear. Everybody makes it to heaven at last. He won't damn you for that.

What lies has he told you lately? Do you even know? Have you even considered the stalking hitman on your soul?

And how he is coming after you? His lies are dressed up. Because he himself dresses up like an angel of light. As if he were a holy angel.

Children, it's masquerade. The Bible says. It's what you do at Halloween. Some of you put masks on and you look like something you're not. You look like Batman.

[37 : 29] But I know it's you under there. Satan masquerades as an angel of light. And so it's no wonder that his servants also masquerade as angels of light.

And so he has preachers who are spreading his lies. But they've got the mask on that says, I'm a preacher showing you the way to life. His lies have filled not just the world, but the church as well. So God's truth is his undoing. God told Paul when he saved him that his ministry of the gospel would be to open blinded eyes.

To turn men from darkness to light. From the power of Satan to the power of God. How does he do that? Through the ministry of the gospel.

Of God's word. And that's why Satan is so busy wherever God's word is being taught in truth. You remember Jesus even told a parable about that, didn't he?

[38 : 38] The man went out to sow. A farmer went out to scatter his seed. And the seed fell on four different kinds of ground. Some of it fell on the pathway that had been beaten down. So the seed didn't go in and it didn't grow at all.

What does that stand for? Jesus tells us. Some people are like seed along the path where the word is sown.

And as soon as they hear it, Satan comes along and takes away the word that was sown in them. Jesus talked about your enemy. And he says, never think of him as being far from the preaching of the word.

Because wherever the word is sown, he's there. He's there like the crows that come and pluck up the seed as soon as it falls on the ground. He's there to take it away.

My friend, have you ever wondered why you can't for the life of you remember what was preached an hour after it was preached? There may be many reasons.

[39:40] But one of them, Jesus says, is that there is an enemy who doesn't want the word of God to bear fruit in you. And he plucks it away. He takes it away.

He fills your mind with other things to keep you blinded to the truth that would set you free. The word of God is that truth. And Satan doesn't care how he damns you, whether as a churchgoer, who never acts upon the gospel you hear, or as a drug addict.

Either way, he's got you and will laugh at your damnation in the end. Another thing that makes his power so great and his methods so effective is that he's invisible.

And he's always staying hidden. Sometimes he's standing behind your closest friend, like he did with Peter to the Savior. Sometimes he's speaking through your wife, sometimes through your husband, sometimes through your preacher, perhaps.

He's invisible. And when an enemy's invisible, he's all the more dangerous. That could be the reason for the reminder in Ephesians 6 of why Paul says, You're not fighting against flesh and blood.

[40:56] Because we tend to think that way. You know, where does most of our hassle in life come but from flesh and blood? From people. And we think, if only I didn't have this husband or that wife or this son or that boss or this employee.

And that's what Ephesians 5 and 6 are all about, up to chapter, up to verse 10. About husbands and wives, loving and submitting, children and parents, teaching and disciplining and obeying and workers and their masters.

And in these relationships, all sorts of conflicts come up. But don't you ever think that your true wrestling match is just with flesh and blood? No.

Behind those troubles that you're having, there is one who is a spiritual enemy. And he's never far away from those problems in our life.

Don't miss him. Remember your stalking enemy. And then lastly this morning, his schemes. His schemes. The Bible warns us of that.

[42:06] Chapter 6 and verse 11 here in Ephesians. Put on the full armor of God. Why? So that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. His strategies. His plans.

You know, a football team hires people to do nothing but watch film. I don't know what you call it today. DVD. About passball games. And they watch hours and hours of their opponent playing other opponents.

Maybe last year's game. And they're noticing things. They're watching closely. Do you notice on this play what this guy does every time? He takes a step back. Do you see that slot?

That's what we're going to hit. We're going to go out. That's our winning strategy. How do they get these strategies from week to week? By studying. Studying. Watching. Learning.

You know your enemy does that too. He's more than a casual observer of your life. He has schemes and strategies to bring you down.

[43:09] He has strategies for your family. Your church. Your workplace. He's plotting this stalking hit man. Satan.

Satan. It's seen in Jesus' temptations. The timing of his temptation. When does he tempt Jesus to change rocks into bread?

When he's hungry and hasn't had anything to eat for 40 days. Oh. He's thought that through. You bet he has. Do you think he's thought about your timing? When are you most vulnerable?

You better be sure he's thought about that. And then at the end he leaves Jesus until a more opportune time. Do you think he knows your opportune times?

Your opportune places where you are most vulnerable to fall? To give in to his time? You better believe he is. He has strategies. He has schemes.

[44:05] And Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2.11. In giving orders to the church there. He says do this and do that and don't do that. In order that Satan might not outwit us.

For we are not unaware of his schemes. We're not ignorant of his stratagems. Because being ignorant of his stratagems. Is to become outwitted.

By him. He's the crafty old trapper. And he's been watching you and knows what to put on his bait stick. And I was struck this week to find he's got special traps for ministers of the gospel.

You can read them in the letters to Timothy. Traps. The devil sets. The devil sets. The devil sets. So be aware of his schemes. It's an important ingredient in not being outwitted by him.

Do you know? Do you know? Satan schemes with you? Let me challenge you with some homework.

[45 : 14] And it's just this. If you were the devil how would you tempt you? Alright. Some of you might be better than others at being the devil. But I think we would all profit by giving 5 minutes, 10 minutes of prayerful consideration.

If I was the devil how would I tempt me? Where would I tempt? Through whom would I tempt?

Through what occasions would I tempt?

What means and instruments would I tempt? Let us not be ignorant of Satan's devices. Let us ask for the help of God.

He is more crafty than our minds can conceive. But he is not more crafty than our God. And we can ask our God for help.

But I don't want to leave you fixing your eyes on Satan. That would be something he would smile at. Grace Fellowship today was concerned all about me and not about Jesus.

[46 : 17] I robbed some more glory from him. Because I want you to see there in Ephesians chapter 2. After you've met your threefold enemy. But, though they were leading you by the nose to hell on a fast lane.

But God who is rich in mercy. Because of his great love for you. Made you alive with Christ. You were once dead toward God and Christ and the Holy Spirit.

You didn't care. But then God made you alive to him. And now you saw his glory. And now you worship him. And you serve him. And it wasn't by works that you were saved.

But by grace through faith. You believed what God has done in Christ for sinners. And that's why we don't need to be paranoid.

Yes, we have a terrible enemy. We have an enemy that, yes, should cause us to tremble.

Sometimes it causes me to tremble. But we do not need to live in fear of him if our trust is in the Savior.

[47 : 25] We're safe in his hand. No one can pluck us out of his hand. And that because of his great salvation. Isn't it kind of God to warn us about our enemy? Let's go back to the beginning.

If you had a hitman out after you. And somebody else knew it. Your neighbor knew it. Wouldn't you want to know about it? If they just kept quiet and didn't tell you?

You'd say, well, they don't love me very much. God has told you. He's told you about your enemy. Is that not love? Is that not kindness? To have God tell us.

Dear friend. You've got these three enemies. And without my Savior. You're damned. What a God we have. Who not only told us and warned us.

But sent his own son to be the one to crush the head of this serpent. To give us victory. That we might not be damned. But might enter into heaven.

[48 : 25] At last. Saved by his precious blood. By grace. By grace alone. Let's take our hymnals and sing to his praise as we conclude.

Grace hymns number 24. Saved by the grace of God. Let's stand as we sing. Our Father, we love you for your word. For your self. For your love.

For having warned us. And having sent a Savior. Even your own son. To set us free from our enemies. And we thank you that in Christ then that you're for us.

And it doesn't matter who is against us. Give us that kind of confidence in your love this week. But do help us to obey your very commands. To put on the full armor of God.

To be strong in your power. And to watch. And to be alert against our prowling enemy. So help us, we pray.

[49 : 28] Bring the light to those still believing the lies. Shatter all the lies that we are believing with your truth. And give us to know that joy of walking in light as you are in the light.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.