

HOW THE DEVIL WORKS

- A. Introduction: For a number of weeks we have been talking about the authority God has given us through the Cross and the new birth -- authority to rule and reign in this life. Gen 1:26; Eph 1:19-2:6; Rom 5:17
1. Why do we need authority? There are several answers to that question, but the one we have been focusing on is the fact that we do have an enemy, the devil. He goes about seeking whom he can devour, and, we are instructed to resist him steadfast in the faith. I Pet 5:8,9
 - a. When we say “devil” we are using the term as an inclusive word meaning the devil himself, his works, and the multitudes of demons who inhabit the invisible realm on this earth. Remember:
 1. The hardships and suffering of life are here because of sin (beginning with Adam’s sin) and are ultimately traceable back to Satan as the first rebel in the universe.
 2. The devil and his demons are actively at work influencing the hearts and minds of men to keep them blinded to the reality of God and His kingdom and to motivate them to act in ways that are contrary to God.
 - b. The authority we have been given does not mean that we can stop or remove all the troubles and hardships of life. John 16:33
 - c. It means that we can exercise authority over the devil and his demons and the conditions they produce through manipulating the minds of men and the circumstances on this earth.
 2. Jesus defeated the devil and his works in His resurrection victory. We must now enforce Satan’s defeat by using the armor of God which is the word of God. Eph 6:11,12
 - a. The devil tries to shake us or sway us off of God’s word through wiles, mental strategies, or deceit.
 1. Satan presents us with lies. A lie is anything that contradicts God’s word. Our weapon against his lies is the word of God. Ps 91:4--His faithful promises are your armor. (Living)
 2. The primary way the devil works on people is through thoughts. Since he cannot “make” you do anything through brute force, he seeks to influence your thoughts. What you believe and how you act are both direct results of what you think.
 - b. The Bible tells us not to be ignorant of how the devil works. II Cor 2:11--We don’t want Satan to win any victory here (Phillips) for well I know his maneuvers (Moffatt), his scheming (Berkeley), his wiles (NEB), how resourceful he is (Knox).
 - c. If we are going to enforce the devil’s defeat in our lives we must understand how he works. That is what we want to deal with in this lesson.
- B. In II Corinthians Paul, who was given the privilege of writing so much about our authority and how we deal with the devil in his letter to the Ephesians, made several other comments about how the devil works which will help us deal with Satan more effectively.
1. Let’s first make a few comments about the verse in II Cor 2:11 we quoted above. Look at the context.
 - a. In I Cor 5:1-13 Paul dealt with a serious situation at the church of Corinth. A man was sleeping with his father’s wife and no one seemed upset about it. Paul ordered them to turn the man over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh in the hope that that would bring the man to repentance.
 1. That is a whole lesson for another day, but basically Paul was saying: Put the man out from under the protection and blessings of the church community and let him reap the fruit of his actions to wake him up.
 2. The church followed Paul’s instructions and the man came to repentance. In II Cor 2 Paul was instructing the church to forgive the man and restore him to fellowship -- because we are not ignorant of Satan’s devices.
 - b. In other words, in the normal events of human life, Satan can influence people in ways that produce destructive, ungodly results.
 2. Then, in II Cor 11:3 Paul said he feared for the Corinthians that Satan might beguile them. The

Corinthians were facing some challenges (another lesson for another day), but once again, Paul was concerned that the devil would work and take advantage in the situation like he did with Eve.

- a. Satan beguiled Eve through subtlety. v3--The Serpent by his cunning deceived Eve. (Goodspeed)
 1. Beguiled means to seduce wholly, to delude, to deceive. Subtlety means trickery. Corrupted means to spoil, to destroy, ruin, or corrupt.
 2. Subtlety has the idea of skill to do all, evilly. That means devil is really good at what he does.
- b. Notice, Paul was concerned that Christians living at least 4,000 years after the incident in the Garden of Eden might be tricked by the devil in the same way Eve had been tricked.
 1. Minds means mental perception or thought. That same word translated devices in II Cor 2:11.
 2. The devil has been using the same tactics on people since the Garden and he is very good at it.
3. When we go back and examine what the devil did to Eve we see that he did not overwhelm her with his power. Rather, he presented her with lies. Gen 3:1-6
 - a. Through those lies Satan influenced her to act in a way that was contrary to God. He persuaded her to act in a way that cut her off from the blessings that God had provided.
 - b. The devil lied about God, lied about Eve herself, and lied about the outcome of her actions.
 1. Satan's first question was a subtle dig against God. v1--Is it true that God hath said ... (Young's Literal Translation); "Really?" he asked, "*None* of the fruit in the garden? God says you mustn't eat any of it?" (Taylor)
 2. The implication is that she couldn't trust God and His word to her. The question was also a subtle challenge of her understanding of God's word designed to cause her to doubt: Surely you didn't hear God correctly!
 3. Then, Satan directly attacked God's character: God lied to you when He said you would die if you mess with that tree. You won't die!! God is a withholder, a depriver!! He doesn't want you to eat from that particular tree because He knows it would give you something good, something which you do not now have.
 4. Satan implied: You've been cheated. You are lacking something, missing out on something good, because of God's restrictions. You'd be better off if you disobeyed God.
 - c. Through wiles, through mental strategies and schemes, the devil beguiled Eve. Gen 3:13--The serpent misled me (AAT); I was tricked by the deceit of the snake (Basic); The serpent caused me to forget (Young's Literal Translation).
4. This whole scene in Genesis 3 is amazing when you consider that Adam and Eve were a man and a woman with dominion, with authority over the devil. God made them that way. Gen 1:26
 - a. Before Adam and Eve sinned Satan could not touch them. Satan has the dominion of death and, because Adam and Eve were sinless, they were not under the dominion of death.
 1. Heb 2:14 says that Satan has the power of death: That held the dominion of death, that is the Adversary. (Rotherham); The lord of death, that is, the Devil. (Conybeare)
 2. They did not come under the dominion of death and the devil until they sinned. Gen 2:17
 - b. God had authorized Adam and Eve to dress and keep the Garden of Eden. Gen 2:15--Placed him in this garden of pleasure to work it and to watch. (Septuagint)
 1. Dress means to work. Keep is the same word used in Gen 3:24 where the angels guarded access to the tree of life after Adam and Eve sinned. It means to hedge about, to guard, to watch carefully.
 2. Adam and Eve were a man and a woman with dominion, authorized and instructed by God, to protect their home, their domain. Yet Satan got the upper hand. How did that happen?
 - c. The devil beguiled Eve with his subtlety. But, the devil could not have tricked her without her participation. Eve made some critical mistakes.
 1. Instead of guarding herself and her home she engaged in conversation with the serpent. Then, after discussing things with the enemy she looked to her senses to gather more information about what to do (Gen 3:6). She helped the devil convince her to eat the fruit.

2. What should she have done? Resist the lies of the enemy by telling herself the truth: We live in a place of full provision. We have purpose and meaningful work. We have access to and continual fellowship with God. The very name of our home, Eden, comes from a word meaning pleasure. God has blessed us. We are made in the image of God. We are as much like God as a created being can be like his Creator. We aren't missing out. Serpent, get out!!
- C. Let's look at an incident recorded in the New Testament which gives us more insight into how the devil works. The disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee and encountered a terrific storm which threatened their lives. Had Jesus not intervened, they probably would have died. Mark 4:35-41
1. This incident brings up the question all of us struggle with in the hard times. Why did the storm occur?
 - a. Did God send or allow the storm? No! He allowed it in the same way He allows people to sin and go to hell. He was not for it or behind it in any way. How do we know?
 1. No parent would send a storm and purposefully put His child in a life threatening situation to teach him a lesson. Jesus said God is better than the best earthly father. Matt 7:9-11
 2. Jesus stopped the storm. If the storm was the work of God, Jesus undid the work of God by stopping it. And, that's a house divided against itself. Matt 12:24-26
 - b. Did Satan send the storm? We don't know, but he is indirectly responsible for it as the first rebel in the universe.
 1. Destructive storms are part of life in a sin cursed earth. Before sin occurred there was no such thing as a destructive storm. The earth was watered by a mist. Gen 1:31; 2:6
 2. A deadly storm arose on the Sea of Galilee because that's life in a sin cursed earth.
 2. Even though there is no evidence that Satan directly caused this life threatening storm he is clearly at work here, attempting to keep the disciples from accessing help in their time of trouble.
 - a. Notice, Jesus calls their reaction to the storm "no faith" (v40). What did they do? They were fearful and they doubted God's care for them (v38).
 - b. Jesus said that Satan comes to steal the word through tribulation, persecution, and affliction (Mark 4:15-17; Matt 13:19-21). Satan may not have caused the storm but he used it to steal the word.
 1. When the storm occurred, Jesus had already told the disciples that God loves and cares for them and they therefore do not have to fear. Matt 6:25-33; 7:7-11
 2. But by the way the disciples spoke to Jesus we see that the word had been stolen from them: "Jesus don't you care about us? We're going to die."
 3. How was the word stolen? By a circumstance which made it look as though God didn't care about them combined with accepting lies from the devil.
 - a. How do we know the devil lied to the disciples? Number one, scripture tells us that is how the devil works on men, and, number two, we have examples in scripture where it specifically says disciples were being influenced by and speaking out the words of the devil. Matt 16:21-23
 1. When we look at their words and actions we can see that the disciples have believed lies about God (He doesn't care), lies about themselves (you are powerless, without resources in this situation), and lies about the outcome (you are going to die).
 2. Why are these statements lies? Because they contradict God's word that He cared for them, that He would protect and deliver them. Ps 35:19, Ps 50:15; Ps 91; Isa 43:1,2; etc.
 - b. Jesus responded to this dangerous situation as a man with authority who knew how to exercise His authority. Jesus knew from God's word that God stops storms (Ps 107:29; Ps 89:9). So Jesus reigned over the storm. He spoke to the storm and stopped it.
 1. Jesus saw the same dire circumstances as the disciples. He felt the spray from the water and heard the roar of the waves. Yet He did not allow Satan, through the circumstances, to steal the word from Him.
 2. We know from Matt 4:1-11 that when Satan tried to influence Jesus with thoughts which

contradicted God's word He stood His ground and answered the devil with: It is written.

- D. Conclusion: The devil knows that if you know who you are and what you have because of the Cross and the new birth there is NO STOPPING you. His only power over you is the lie -- to convince you to believe and act on a lie and give up or back down in the situation.
1. So he bombards you with lies: You aren't! You can't! This is hopeless. It's not working. It hasn't worked in the past, it won't work now. God doesn't care. You're too bad. etc., etc.
 - a. The Greek word devil is DIABOLOS. It is made up of two words, DIA, which means penetration, and BALLO which means to throw. It literally means to hit something again and again until you penetrate it. Satan seeks to wear us down through mental attacks until we accept his lies.
 - b. Eph 6:11 says we are to resist the wiles of the devil. Wiles in the Greek is METHODIA, from META (with) and ODOS (road). It literally means with a road. Our word method comes from it. The word has the idea that the devil has one road, one method of attack.
 2. In Eph 6:16 we are told that we must quench, put out or extinguish, all the fiery darts of the enemy.
 - a. There were three kinds of arrows in Roman times: regular arrows, arrows dipped in tar, set on fire, and shot through the air, and arrows made with cane and filled with combustible liquids which exploded on impact.
 - b. That third arrow -- fiery darts -- were the bombs of the ancient world. They did not look that threatening but if they hit their mark they were very destructive
 1. Satan tries to lodge arrows of incorrect information and unbelief in your mind. If an arrow lodges and you believe it, it "explodes" with power over you.
 2. We must learn to use God's word to recognize and cast down the lies (fiery darts) of Satan.
 - c. II Cor 10:5--Notice, we take our thoughts, not Satan, captive. Captive means to take one captive with a spear pointed at his back. It has the idea that our thoughts won't easily be taken captive.
 1. We bring our thoughts into obedience to the word of God. Obedience is HUPAKEO -- HUPO, or under, and AKOU, I hear or I listen. We get our word acoustics from it. It has the idea of forcing someone into a subordinate position and then making them listen.
 2. The number one way you do this is with the words of your mouth -- by saying what God says, just as Jesus did. We overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.
 3. The devil's only real power over you is to get you to believe and act on a lie. If you are going to effectively enforce the devil's defeat in your life you must learn to recognize thoughts which contradict the word of God.
 - a. You must resist them and cast them down by saying what God says about Himself, about you, and about your situation. You must learn to see reality as it truly is -- everything as God sees it.
 - b. God's first instructions to men with authority (Adam and Eve) in regard to their enemy, the devil, was, "Watch over and guard what I have given you". We have been given all things that pertain to life and godliness -- everything we need to live this life and the life to come. II Pet 1:3
 - c. We need to learn how to guard ourselves from the devil's attempts to sway us from the word of God through circumstances and thoughts. You must win the battle for your mind!!