

“Your Enemy”
Ephesians 6:10-13

January 14, 2018

SI: We’re spending 12 weeks or so looking in depth at a few verses at the end of Ephesians, chapter 6 verses 10-20.

Paul begins this passage with the word, Finally.

That’s not just a signal he’s about to wrap up the letter.

He’s making a point that everything he’s said about the Christian life so far in the letter has a context. The context is warfare.

As you live out your Christian life and identity someone is shooting at you. You’re in a combat zone.

You have an enemy who is trying to make you crash and burn in every one of the areas and relationships where you are trying to live as a Christian.

INTRO: There’s a biography of Winston Churchill written by William Manchester. The second volume covers the years 1932-1940 and the title is “Alone.”

That’s how Manchester described those 8 years of Churchill’s life, from age 58 to age 66—alone.

The reason is that during those years Churchill was the only member of the British Parliament who was warning the nation about the rise of Hitler in Germany.

Any chance he got he would say: Germany is rearming.

They are breaking the terms of the Versailles Treaty.

Listen to what Hitler is really saying, he’s planning to invade Europe.

We’re in danger. Our existence as free nation is being threatened.

We have to do something.

Not only would nobody listen to him.

Churchill was ostracized politically. Considered a crank and a warmonger.

Even in his own party he was a back-bencher. No important committees.

Hitler invaded Poland in 1939

Even then in England the powers that be didn’t want to listen to Churchill.

Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was sure that Hitler was a reasonable man and that they could work out terms agreeable to everybody.

And then in May of 1940 German army crushed Holland, Belgium, France and suddenly the British found themselves cut off and facing invasion.

That’s when Chamberlain resigned and Churchill was made Prime Minister.

How could so many intelligent people completely miss, completely ignore such a dangerous enemy as Hitler?

It’s a sobering history lesson but I want to use it to make a spiritual application.

The Bible teaches, from beginning to end, that we have an enemy.
He has many names and titles but usually called the Devil or Satan.
He's dangerous and his existence should not be ignored.
But many people do ignore his existence.
They don't believe there is a Devil, or maybe they even mock the idea.

I'm not just talking about people in the world.
There are even branches of the church that downplay or ignore the Bible's
teaching about the Devil. They say it's just symbolic or a metaphor.
And of course, that suits the Devil just fine.

But we're not going to fall into that trap.
We're going to take the Apostle Paul's words about spiritual warfare seriously.
And in order to do that, we need to know our enemy.
So let's look at the enemy under five points.

1. His personality
2. His power
3. His purpose
4. His weapon
5. His weakness

MP#1 His personality

By this I simply mean the Bible teaches the Devil is a person.

He's a self-conscious, rational, thinking, independent being.

When God created the universe, he made two order of intelligent beings—
men and angels

The Bible doesn't tell us much about angels.

It places angels above mankind in terms of strength and intelligence.

The Bible refers to hierarchies of angels.

There are angels of different ranks and abilities, perhaps even types.

Speaking of the Devil himself, there are some verses in Isaiah 14 the church has historically interpreted as referring to the Devil. Not all Bible scholars agree, but, as I said, this is the historic interpretation.

In passage the creation of the Devil alluded to and he called by his original name.

His name was Daystar and Son of the Morning.

Daystar is where we get the name Lucifer. It's Latin for light bearer.

The historic understanding of this is that Lucifer was the first being God created.

He was the Daystar of God's creation.

He was a being of enormous beauty and intelligence and power.

In the hierarchy of creation that God established, he was at the top.

But the Bible seems to hint in Isaiah 14 and other texts that Daystar,

Lucifer, Son of the Morning, rebelled against God.

You have said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God. I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds. I will make myself like the Most High.”

He wanted to be God. He wanted to sit on the throne of heaven.

Which is a lot like what he promised Eve. Eat fruit and you will be like God.

Revelation 12 speaks of 1/3 of the stars swept out of heaven.

Some think a reference to numbers, that 1/3 of angels followed him.

Other NT passages call these rebel angels who followed Satan

the angels who did not keep their positions and the angels who sinned.

Also often referred to as evil spirits, demons.

Daystar no longer called that in the Bible, he's mostly called Satan, which means adversary, or the Devil which means slanderer. Other names too.

The reason all this is important is that it gives us perspective.

The Bible does not present evil as an impersonal force.

Sometimes people make this mistake with the Holy Spirit. They talk as if the Holy Spirit is just a force. Refer to the Holy Spirit as it. Like it's just force for good in our souls, something like that.

But the Holy Spirit is a person. Holy Spirit can be grieved.

Holy Spirit can be lied to. Holy Spirit can comfort and counsel.

Only a person can do those things or have those responses.

The reason I bring the Holy Spirit into this discussion is that in some important ways the Devil tries to mimic and counterfeit the work of the Holy Spirit.

We'll get into that in later sermons, so it's important to understand this crucial aspect of personality, personhood.

From the very beginning there was an evil person responsible for evil in the world. How did evil appear in the Garden of Eden?

It came in the person of Satan, manifesting himself in the serpent.

And when he talked to Eve, he conversed and reasoned and argued.

The Bible makes it clear we are to think of the Devil in a personal sense.

MP#2 His power

The Bible has a number of titles and descriptions of the Devil.

“The prince of the kingdom of the air”

“The spirit at work in the children of disobedience” Eph 2

Indicates that he rules over everyone on earth who does not follow Christ.

“The god of this world” power to blind minds of unbelievers 2 Cor. 4

God with a little g. God-like in his power.

“A strong man, fully armed, guarding his house, keeping his goods safe” Luke 11

“Beelzebub, the prince of demons” Matt 12

Lord of the flies. Indicating a great swarm of demons

“A roaring lion, prowling about, seeking whom he may devour” 1 Peter 5

Lion is the king of the beasts

“A great red dragon, 7 heads, 10 horns, 7 crowns” Rev 12

7 the number of perfection, “Satan masquerades as an angel of light” 2 Cor 11.

10 the number of power

It's important to keep your theology clear at this point.

Satan is a created being so he does not have divine attributes of God.

Omnipotent—all powerful Omniscient—all knowing Omnipresent—everywhere Satan is not any of those things. But his power extends beyond his person because he has a demonic government under his control. He has forces. Organization.

Even though he himself cannot be everywhere at once, his servants are.

That's what our passage in Ephesians 6 tells us.

Our enemy is the Devil, but then it says our struggle is against what?

the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

All of this reflects government and organization.

Demonic forces work behind the scenes in all forms of idolatry.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians that on the one hand, idols are nothing—

but if you worship them, you are actually worshipping demons.

There is a money god that has supernatural evil powers over people who worship.

There is a pleasure god, an achievement god, an approval god.

Why is it so hard for a person who has worshipped drugs or sex or money

to break away from those things? Because a powerful demonic element.

Power of Satan is a reminder that human problems are multi-faceted.

There are certainly psychological reasons, social reasons, brain chemistry reasons.

But remember what Paul says: We don't just wrestle against flesh and blood.

There are also rulers in this dark world.

MP#3 His purpose

Last year after the mass shooting in Las Vegas and after the mass shooting

in Sutherland Springs, Texas—and after every mass shooting—

whether Columbine High School, or Newtown, Conn., Pulse Nightclub Orlando

The question is always: Why? And all the experts look for a motive. Purpose.

Mental health problems, religious or political statement, revenge.

And those conclusions have a grain of truth.

But there always seems to be an incompleteness even to the experts' answers.

There is a maliciousness that a purely flesh and blood analysis misses.

What does the Devil want to accomplish in this world? He wants to murder people.

Jesus says in John 8 that the Devil was a murderer from the beginning.

Jesus also says the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy.

Why does he want to murder people?

Because he hates God and human beings are made in God's image.

Revelation 12—a fascinating chapter—says when the Devil rebelled against God

he was expelled from heaven. And all who lived in heaven rejoiced.

But then it says: Woe to the earth because the Devil is filled with fury because

he knows his time is short. He knows. His rebellion failed.

Woe to the earth because he will take out his fury on human beings.

Only God's restraint keeps the Devil from killing everyone.
So the Devil does all he can to keep people enslaved in spiritual darkness,
he blinds the minds of unbelievers. Does all he can to ensure go to hell.

Revelation 12 also tells us that believers are the special object of Satan's rage.

It says that we are the particular focus of his warfare.

But what could he possibly hope to accomplish by attacking us?

Through Christ we have been delivered from Satan's dominion.

He cannot blind our minds in unbelief. We are delivered from hell.

Why does he make war against believers?

Thomas Brooks was an English Puritan pastor.

Wrote a book in 1652 about Satan's strategies that was a best seller.

"Though he can never rob a believer of his crown, yet such is his malice and envy, that he will leave no stone unturned, no means unattempted, to rob them of their comfort and peace, to make their life a burden and a hell unto them, to cause them to spend their days in sorrow and mourning, in sighing and complaining, in doubting and questioning."

Malice, envy, hatred, evil—that's what you need to know.

MP#4 His weapon

Vs. 11 talks about the Devil's schemes. Vs. 16 Flaming darts of evil one.

What do those refer to?

The Devil has one primary weapon that he uses in many different ways.

Lies. He enslaves and destroys people through lies. Jesus says:

When he lies he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

I want to give you a Bible quiz. If you have a pen, you can write your answer in the
bulletin, and if you show me after church you got it right, I'll give you a prize.

But this is honor system. No lying!

And Allison is disqualified, because I asked her this question this week.

Here's the question: Where in the Bible does Satan actually speak?

List all the places where his actual words are recorded.

We're not counting Isaiah 14.

These are all very well-known passages.

Three times: First, Garden of Eden. Second, Job. Third: Christ's temptation.

Each of those accounts he is lying in order to destroy people.

Different forms of lies—seeds of doubt, temptation, false accusation.

This is his weapon, to insert lies into the minds of people to enslave and destroy.

He doesn't have to speak directly, he can use the words of other people.

Remember when Jesus told his disciples about his coming death.

Peter said, Never, Lord. You don't have to go through with this to be Messiah.
Jesus replied: Get behind me Satan.
He was lying through Peter's well-intentioned words.

Think for a minute about the power of the lie.

If you believe money will give you security in life, then money will determine your security—and you'll always be either elated or worried, but never have enough.

If you believe the approval of people will give you self worth—
then what people say will make or break you, and criticism will crush you.

If you believe personal fulfillment barometer of marriage success—
then your marriage will rise and fall on your emotions.

If you believe other people have power to make life worthwhile or ruin it—
then people have that power over you.

Paul says in Ephesians 4,

“Do not let sun go down on anger, and do not give the devil a foothold”

If you believe the lie that you have a right to nurse your anger, hold a grudge,
for one more day, and then another day—soon swimming in bitterness.

What are your biggest struggles? Your persistent sins?

Maybe some problems in life, have no idea what happened,
just looked around and said, my life is a disaster!

Start to examine your thinking—could you have fallen for his lies? Paul, Corinth.

I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may
somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

He's a personal, powerful, malicious, murderous, lying enemy.

But he's also vulnerable. Let's consider . . .

MP#5 His weakness

We all know Martin Luther's hymn, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*.

And you know that in the hymn he speaks about our enemy the Devil.

His craft and power are great and armed with cruel hate.

On earth is not his equal.

That's completely biblical, as we have seen.

But then there's this verse:

The Prince of Darkness grim, We tremble not for him;

His rage we can endure, For lo! His doom is sure,

One little word shall fell him.

So here's the interesting question: What is the one little word?

Luther says that one little word will stop the Devil in his tracks.
What is the one little word Luther was referring to?

Is it the word Jesus? If you say Jesus' name does that stop Satan?

True in a sense, but Jesus' name can't be used like a magic spell.

Song says, The enemy he has to flee at the sound of your great name.

But not precisely true. Demons themselves spoke to Jesus, argued.

And anyway, thinking about hymn, would Luther call name Jesus, a little word?

That's also an argument against this referring to the Bible, word of God.

You wouldn't call the Bible, one little word.

Martin Luther himself was asked this. What is the one little word that fells Satan?

The word is: Liar. Devil, you lie.

Satan's favorite lie against you is to declare "unclean" what God has made clean,
to declare "guilty" those whose sins God has covered.

There's nothing Satan wants more than to eat away your faith in Jesus.

Satan wants nothing more than for you to forget who you are in Christ.

The text Luther most likely had in mind was Revelation 12 where John writes

The accuser of our brothers been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God

Accusation is the biggest lie and weapon in his arsenal against us.

The answer to this lie and to all the others is to call him on them.

Paul calls us to action. Put on the full armor of God. Take stand. Wrestle

Peter says, resist the Devil and he will flee from you.

Which we will see is nothing less than putting on Christ and all the benefits
and promises of the Gospel and appropriating them and claiming them.

It's believing you are justified and clean and holy and blameless and loved by God
and a branch saved from the fire.

But that's not all. It's then bring them to bear against all of Satan's accusations
and all of his temptations and doubts and saying to him: Liar!

That's the one little word that exposes Satan's weakness.

Say it out loud. It's word of faith in Christ and all his benefits.

It's also an offensive weapon of our own, which as soldier we must use.

Lot's more to this. Coming weeks. Battle against a great enemy.