

## Prepared – Know Your Enemy

Last week we started a new series called “**Prepared.**” For what is it we need to be prepared? Well, if you were here last week, you heard that every day, we are at war with Satan and other evil forces in this world. You should also know that every day brings with it the potential for yet another spiritual attack. The intent of this series is to provide you first with some basic Biblical insight into why we are being attacked and why we need to understand that spiritual warfare is very real. The series will also give you Biblical insight into the “who” and the “what” we find ourselves constantly fighting. This is the area for our focus this morning. If we are in a spiritual war where each day has the potential to bring us a new and different battle, then we must do some things to make sure we are prepared for the fight. One of the first things is to understand our enemy or enemies.

Let’s begin with the ultimate antagonist, the one who desires to make life miserable for as many as possible, the evil one, the one the Bible refers to as the devil. Of course, I’m talking about Satan, which is a transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning, “adversary, or “opponent.” We are first introduced to this chief opponent to God and His people in the third chapter of Genesis where, as you know, the serpent persuades Adam and Eve to question God and leads them into an act of defiance and disobedience that not only sealed their doom but also set every future generation of man onto a course of sin and self-reliance. Adam and Eve were punished for their actions, but an even greater punishment was given to the “adversary.” In **Genesis 3:14-15**, God says, “*Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.*” (ESV) This curse meant the devil would forever be knocked down to the ground, to exist even below all the animals of the earth. Dr. Michael Heiser, who has authored several books on unseen things and demons writes this about the devil’s fate: “The curse also had him ‘eating dirt,’ clearly a metaphorical reference, since snakes don’t really eat dirt as food for nutrition. It isn’t part of the ‘natural snake diet.’ The point being made by the curse is that the *nachash* [Hebrew word translated “serpent” in our Bible], who wanted to be ‘most high,’ will be ‘most low’ instead cast away from God and the council to earth, and even under the earth. In the underworld, the *nachash* is even lower than the beasts of the field. He is hidden from view and from life in God’s world. His domain is death.”

Now, the Bible doesn’t give specifics. In fact, we get little information about Satan’s rebellion against God, but in most of the passages that do provide some detail, they suggest his predominant reason has as its root one of the most dangerous characteristics one can have. That’s right, Pride is the sin which caused one of God’s angels to end up as

God's number one enemy. And as a result, he naturally became man's number one enemy too. Pride is a high or inordinate opinion of one's own dignity, importance, merit, or superiority. The Bible tells us that it's acceptable to encourage others to take pride in the good works of God. It's ok to be proud of being a child of God. It's ok to brag on who you are because of Christ, but we must be careful that we do not allow it to revolve around ourselves because, when we do, it then becomes a sin against God. And that's exactly what happened to the devil. If pride was at the center of Satan's fall, then one of his most prominent methods for getting others to follow suit is to get a person to exalt self (brag), to work hard at getting above others (overly ambitious), to pretend to be perfect (lack of humility), and to appear as more important than others (conceit). Sounds to me like good insight into some of the roots of evil. Listen to God's response concerning evil as found in **Proverbs 8:13**, "*The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.*" (ESV) God hates evil and knows that the root of evil includes the sin of pride. God reminds us that pride is often the main cause for many of the battles we face in our life. **Proverbs 16:18** says, "*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*" (ESV) Make no doubt about it, pride is an immensely powerful tool of Satan and will only leave a path of destruction in your life. Not only are you going to battle against Satan, often, we are at war with ourselves, and the root is often our pride. Sinful pride is so dangerous because it leads us into direct disobedience of God's greatest command, to love Him above everything else.

Another tool of Satan is temptation. It's his way of bartering with us and convincing us that we are more important than God. He even attempted this tactic with Jesus. Let's look at this. **Read Matthew 4:1-11**. In this passage, what is the name given to Satan? The tempter. Don't you think that if he is bold enough, confident enough, and brave enough to tempt Jesus, he'll do the same to you? He came after Jesus when He was physically weak. And since John calls the devil the "prince of this world," we can know that Satan wasn't bluffing with Jesus. If Jesus had not been spiritually strong and used the Word to fend off the tempter, then the things offered could have been possible because as stated in 1 John 5:19, "*the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*" (ESV)

Finally, while there are many other tools of the evil one, I want to remind you of another powerful tactic he uses. Satan is a liar. Paul told the church at Corinth, "*But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*" (**2 Corinthians 11:3** ESV) Notice what the result of believing the lies are.

Jesus says this about Satan: *“He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”* (**John 8:44b** ESV)

The deception, the lies, the pride, the temptations; these are just a few of the things which wage war against us in this life. And their sole purpose, as mentioned last week is either to destroy the mind and heart of the lost, or to prevent the believer from experiencing a great relationship with Jesus, their Savior.

How do we guard against these things and make sure we are prepared for the battles? Remember, Paul said we are to, *“be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”* (**Ephesians 6:10-11** ESV) He also tells us that it will take divine power to help us in this fight. **Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.**

Is the enemy powerful? Absolutely! But, Who’s more powerful? GOD! It is Him and His divine power that will help us destroy, as Paul says here, the “strongholds” the evil one has placed on us. Remember too, Satan has no power over you if you are allowing the power of God’s spirit to be in control. Satan is like us, finite, by nature. God created him just like man was. Although he has become enormously powerful in this world, he is still subject to the authority and power of his creator, who by the way, is, THE CREATOR!