

Our Adversary

Message 2 of 4 in the series: "Spiritual Warfare"

A. We are involved in a spiritual battle against the devil.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because **your adversary the devil** walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. **Resist him**, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world." 1 Peter 5:8-9 (NKJV)

1. The devil was once a powerful angel who became prideful and led a rebellion against God. "**How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!** How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, **I will exalt my throne above the stars of God**; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, **I will be like the Most High.**"
Isaiah 14:12-14 (NKJV)
2. Because of their rebellion, God permanently removed Satan and the angels who joined his rebellion from their positions of service in heaven. "When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, 'Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!' 'Yes,' he told them, '**I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning!**'" Luke 10:17-18 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Pride is serious sin with serious consequences. "Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall." Proverbs 16:18 (NLT)

B. Satan hates God and human beings created in God's image. He is strategically working to oppose the spread of the Gospel and the advancement of the Kingdom of God around the world.

"...Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor **so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil**. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places." Ephesians 6:10-12 (NLT)

1. Satan lies to us and deceives us. "He (the devil) has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. **When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.**"
John 8:44b (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Since the garden of Eden, the devil has been twisting and denying God's Word to cause us to doubt and disobey the Lord. "...**Did God really say** you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" 'Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,' the woman replied. 'It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, "You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die."' '**You won't die!**' the serpent replied to the woman. '**God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.**' The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too." Genesis 3:1b-6 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! "Even **Satan disguises himself as an angel of light**. So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness." 2 Corinthians 11:14b-15a (NLT)

2. Satan tempts us to satisfy legitimate desires in the wrong way or at the wrong time. "Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry. Then the devil said to him, '**If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread.**' But Jesus told him, 'No! The Scriptures say, "People do not live by bread alone."' Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. '**I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them,**' the devil said, '**because they are mine to give to anyone I please. I will give it all to you if you will worship me.**' Jesus replied, 'The Scriptures say, "You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him."' Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, '**If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, "He will order his angels to protect and guard you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone."**' Jesus responded, 'The Scriptures also say, "You must not

test the LORD your God.” When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came.” Luke 4:1-13 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! “And **God is faithful**; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13b (NIV)

3. Satan uses fear of persecution to keep us from living out our faith and telling others the Good News about Jesus. “**Satan, who is the god of this world**, has blinded the minds of those who don’t believe.” 2 Corinthians 4:4a (NLT) “**You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil**—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.” Ephesians 2:2 (NLT) “If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. **I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.** Do you remember what I told you? ‘A slave is not greater than the master.’ **Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you.**” John 15:18-20a (NLT)

IMPORTANT! “For **God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity**, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don’t be ashamed of me, either, even though I’m in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News.” 2 Timothy 1:7-8 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! “God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a **great reward awaits you in heaven**. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.” Matthew 5:11-12 (NLT)

4. Satan establishes strongholds of sinful behaviors/false belief systems/controlling addictions in our culture, our families, and our own minds. “**I know that you live in the city where Satan has his throne**, yet you have remained loyal to me. You refused to deny me even when Antipas, my faithful witness, was martyred among you there in Satan’s city. But I have a few complaints against you. **You tolerate some among you whose teaching is like that of Balaam, who showed Balak how to trip up the people of Israel.** He taught them to sin by eating food offered to idols and by committing sexual sin. In a similar way, you have some Nicolaitans among you who follow the same teaching.” Revelation 2:13-15 (NLT) “‘In your anger do not sin’: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and **do not give the devil a foothold.**” Ephesians 4:26-27 (NIV)

IMPORTANT! God has given us mighty weapons to tear down the devil’s strongholds. “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. **The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God**, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV)

IMPORTANT! Satan will NOT win. “Then **the devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur**, joining the beast and the false prophet. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Revelation 20:10 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions:

1. Read Isaiah 14:12-14 & Luke 10:17-18. What caused Satan’s downfall? Should we take pride more seriously? (Proverbs 16:18, 1 Timothy 3:6)
2. Does it surprise you that the devil is strategic in his opposition to the spread of the gospel and the advancement of the kingdom of God? (Ephesians 6:10-12)
3. Discuss the following strategies of the devil:
 - Satan lies to us and deceives us. (Genesis 3:1-6, John 8:44, Revelation 12:9) Why do you think the devil is able to deceive us so often? (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)
 - Satan tempts us to satisfy legitimate desires in the wrong way or at the wrong time. (Luke 4:1-13) What hope do we have that we will be able to resist the temptations coming our way? (1 Corinthians 10:13, Philippians 2:13)
 - Satan uses fear of persecution to keep us from living out our faith and telling others the Good News

about Jesus. (2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2, John 15:18-20) How did Paul encourage Timothy to deal with his fears of religious persecution? (2 Timothy 1:7-8)

- Satan establishes strongholds of sinful behaviors/false belief systems/controlling addictions in our culture, our families, and our own minds. (Revelation 2:13-15, Ephesians 4:26-27) What spiritual strongholds have you come up against in our culture, in our city, in your family, in your own heart/mind?
4. Discuss the following lyrics from Martin Luther's 1529 hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." Are they still relevant? "A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing; Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing: For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe; His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate, On earth is not his equal. Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing: Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He; Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same, And He must win the battle. And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us; 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. That word above all earthly powers no thanks to them abideth; The spirit and the gifts are ours through him who with us sideth. Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still; His Kingdom is forever!"
 5. How does it make you feel to hear that God blesses and rewards people who are persecuted for living out their faith in Jesus? (Matthew 5:11-12) How does it make you feel to hear that the devil will not win? (Revelation 20:10)