

## ☞ The Devils' Devices

Last time I preached we talked about the Ability of Praise. From 2 Chronicles we saw how the enemy attacked as soon as the people got serious about going after God. **The enemy** does not like to see progress in your spiritual walk and he **will often attack when you are** ☞ **moving forward with God**. In Jehoshaphat's case he didn't back down. Instead he turned to God even more. When things go South for us, we need to remember that is not ☞ the time to give up, but instead **it's the time to press in even more!** We need to remember, as did Jehoshaphat, that "the battle is not yours, but God's." And, it's smart for us to be aware of the enemy's tactics. GI Joe said, "knowing is half the battle." There really is an enemy and the Bible tells us how he tends to operate.

Zechariah 3:1 (he brings accusations and condemnation) (different than conviction)  
Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.

John 13:2 (he prompts ungodly behavior and tempts us to give up on Jesus)  
the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.

2 Corinthians 11:14 (many of his tactics appear as good things)  
Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

1 Peter 5:8 (he stirs up fear)  
Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

### ☞ False Evidence Appearing Real

John 10:10 (ultimately, he wants to destroy)  
The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy

Let's talk about his methods...

#### 1. ☞ Deception

We can see this from the very beginning...

Genesis 3:4, 5

"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.

"You will be like God..." (But they already were like God, cf. 1:26-27)

Genesis 3:13

"The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

The first sin recorded was prompted by deception and pursued by desire.

John 8:44

he is a liar and the father of lies.

He lies, and we often actually like his lies...

*A school teacher lost her life savings in a business scheme that had been elaborately explained by a swindler. When her investment disappeared and her dream was shattered, she went to the Better Business Bureau. "Why on earth didn't you come to us first?" the official asked. "Didn't you know about the Better Business Bureau?" "Oh, yes," said the lady sadly. "I've always known about you. But I didn't come because I was afraid you'd tell me not to do it." The folly of human nature is that even though we know where the answers lie--God's Word--we don't turn there for fear of what it will say.*

Romans 16:18

☞ By **smooth talk and flattery** they deceive the minds of naive people.

*You fool me once, shame on you. You fool me twice, shame on me.*

*-- Theodore Roosevelt... I think there is only one quality worse than hardness of heart, and that is softness of head.*

## 2. ☞ **Division**

Genesis 3:8 (he wants to separate us from God)

they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:12 (he turns us against each other)

The man said, "The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, ☞ and I ate it." (**accusation is actually doing the Devil's work**)

*An issue of National Geographic included a photograph of the fossil remains of two saber-tooth cats locked in combat. To quote the article: "One had bitten deep into the leg bone of the other, a thrust that trapped both in a common fate. The cause of the death of the two cats is clear. When Christians fight each other, everybody loses. As Paul put it, "if you keep biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other" (Galatians 5:15)*

-- James C. Dobson... *Satan's most successful maneuver in churches and Christian organizations is to get people angry at one another; to attack and insult our brothers and sisters, thus splitting the body of Christ.*

Jesus prayed for unity amongst believers in John 17.  
Paul appealed for unity in 1 Corinthians 1.

Advice on keeping unity:

Matthew 18:15 (handle matters discreetly)

☞ If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, **just between the two of you.**

Titus 3:9-10

avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. 10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him.

*United we stand, divided we fall.*

### 3. ☞ **Distraction**

Genesis 3:1 (he gets us focused on side issues)

"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

#### ☞ **Distracted Dog video**

Often the distractions are actually good things, but they turn us away from the best thing:  
Matthew 6:25-34

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes..."

☞ **But seek first his kingdom** and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

### 4. ☞ **Doubt**

Genesis 3:1

"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

Doubt is having little faith:

Matthew 14:31

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

### ☞ **Doubt yields instability and unbelief which is sin:**

James 1:6-8

he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

Hebrews 3:19

So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

*Doubt sees the obstacles; faith sees the way.  
Doubt sees the darkest night; faith sees the day.  
Doubt dreads to take a step; faith soars on high;  
Doubt questions, "Who believes?" Faith answers, "I."*

### ☞ **Fantastic Adventures In Trusting Him**

#### 5. ☞ **Discouragement**

Genesis 3:5 (he wants us to think we're missing out on something)

"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

*--James S. Hewett... Mary was having a tough day and had stretched herself out on the couch to do a bit of what she thought to be well-deserved complaining and self-pitying. She moaned to her mom and brother, "Nobody loves me -- the whole world hates me!" Her brother, busily occupied playing a game, hardly looked up at her and passed on this encouraging word: "That's not true, Mary. Some people don't even know you." What a lift!*

None of us are immune to discouragement. Everyone you have ever known has been discouraged at one time or another. Being discouraged once does not give you an immunity to the disease. You can be discouraged over and over again. In fact, you can even be discouraged by the fact that you are discouraged a lot.

*Maybe you have lived for a while behind closed doors. Many good people have. There's a story about a young lawyer who descended into the valley of despondency. Things were going so poorly for him that his friends thought it best to keep all knives and razors away from him for fear of a suicide attempt. In fact, during this time he wrote in his memoirs, "I am now the most miserable man living. Whether I shall ever be better, I cannot tell. I fear I*

shall not." The young lawyer who unleashed these desperate feelings of utter hopelessness? His name was Abraham Lincoln.

There's an old fable that says the Devil once held a sale and offered all the tools of his trade to anyone who would pay their price. They were spread out on the table and each one labeled. Hatred, malice, envy, despair, sickness, sensuality -- all the weapons that everyone knows so well. But off to one side lay a harmless looking wood-shaped instrument marked "discouragement." It was old and worn looking but it was priced far above all the rest. When asked the reason why, the Devil replied, "Because I can use this one so much more easily than the others. No one knows that it belongs to me, so with it I can open doors that are tightly bolted against the others. Once I get inside I can use any tool that suits me best."

God to Joshua:

Joshua 1:9

Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your  **God will be with you wherever you go.**

 **Deception; Division; Distraction; Doubt; Discouragement**

 **So, Be Aware**

2 Corinthians 2:11

...that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

 **Be Alert**

1 Peter 5:8

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

 **Be Armed**

Ephesians 6:11

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ...Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, **15** and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. **16** In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **17** Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **18** And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

 All of this armor is related to the Bible, so **Read your Bible:**

John 17:17 says that the word is truth.

2 Timothy 3:16 says scripture trains us in righteousness.

Right here it says that readiness comes from the gospel.

Romans 10:17 says faith comes from the word.

Romans 1:16 says the gospel is power for salvation.

☞ And, all this armor is tied to Jesus, so **Draw near to Jesus:**

John 14:6 says he is the truth.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says through him we become righteous.

Ephesians 2:14 says we have peace through Christ.

Hebrews 12:2 says he is the perfecter of our faith.

Acts 4:12 says salvation is found in Christ.

Revelation 1:16 shows us a sword coming out of his mouth.

*---Theodore Cuyler... Every step toward Christ kills a doubt. Every thought, word, and deed for him carries you away from discouragement.*

So, be aware, be alert, and be armed. Read your Bible and draw near to Jesus.