

THE ENEMY ABOVE US
Ephesians 6:10-12

Intro: When Paul and Barnabas were on their first missionary journey, they went to Cyprus. On that island they went to a place called, Paphos. There they were opposed by a man by the name of Bar-jesus, a sorcerer and false prophet, who tried to turn Sergius Paulus away from the Gospel. As a result we read what Paul said to him in Acts 13:9, 10:

Then Saul, (who is also called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

Because he was the "child of the devil," he was an "enemy of all righteousness" because that is exactly what the devil is! He hates God, and, because he hates God, he hates anything that is holy and righteous as God is.

The Lord said the same thing (essentially) to the religious Jews who opposed Him. Cf. John 8:44:

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

The difference between God and the devil is so marked that John wrote these words found in 1 John 3: 8, 10:

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. . . In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

The devil hates the holiness of God, whether it is to be seen in God, or in the people of God.

And so we need to keep this in mind when we read the words of our text: Ephesians 6:10-12.

Let me add to these words, the words of another verse, also written by Paul: 2 Cor. 2:11,

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

The question I want to deal with tonight is this: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DEVICES WHICH SATAN USES AGAINST US TO KEEP US FROM BEING HOLY?

Let me point out six of those which are mentioned in the Scriptures.

I want to touch on the first three lightly because we will be coming to these in our Sunday School lessons. Perhaps what I say will emphasize what Dr. Uchiyama will be saying.

The first device of Satan mentioned in Scripture is this:

I. HE SEEKS TO DRAW US AWAY FROM THE WORD OF GOD.

Cf. Gen. 3:1-4. He started questioning God's Word with Eve, and then he denied that it was true.

He even did this with our Lord. Cf. Matt. 4:1-11. He even tried to do it by quoting Scripture.

Satan knows that the Bible is a holy Book. It is God's book. And it produces holy people. Do you remember Psa. 119:11? Remember also that little saying which you sometimes find printed in a Bible:

This Book will keep you from sin,
or sin will keep you from this Book!

What did John say about the "young men" in 1 John 2:13, 14? I have written unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. . . I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

The devil will do anything he can to get us away from the Word of God--discouragement, busy-ness, and other things--because he knows that the Word of God produces holiness. So watch out for an attack here.

II. HE WILL TRY TO MAKE US SUSPICIOUS OF GOD.

That is what he was doing with Eve. Read Gen. 3:5, and then see what Eve did in verse 6.

Look at what the men of Judah said to Jeremiah in Jer. 44:16-18. Satan had done a masterful job with them. And in Eve's case as well as in their case, it seemed as though Satan was right.

Be careful of those feelings of rebellion and resentment against God which so easily enter into our hearts. It is the work of the enemy.

By way of contrast, cf. Psa. 136:1.

III. HE WILL MAKE US JEALOUS, EVEN OVER THE THINGS OF GOD.

One thing that deeply impressed me in the passage we had this morning was the fact that, as unbelievable as it seems,

the thing that divided the weak believers from the strong, and vice versa, was their desire to please the Lord. Neither side wanted to displease Him--but they got into trouble with each other anyway! Cf. Rom. 14:1-9.

That is exactly what happened to Cain. Cf. 1 John 3:12.

How quickly we see a situation where another is being blessed, and we seem to go without blessing! Then the Devil is on hand to take advantage of us and of the situation.

This is what happened to King Saul, and started all of the trouble that he had with David.

Be careful of this device.

IV. HE WILL APPEAL TO OUR PRIDE.

The devil knew that this was a problem in Simon Peter's life. He knew that he was vulnerable at this point. And so did the Lord know it.

Cf. Luke 22:31-34.

Peter was self-confident, sure of himself, determined to prove his love for the Lord, but actually unaware of how much he was trusting in himself.

Do you remember what followed? He failed to pray in the Garden, and then later he failed by denying that he even knew the Lord. And he did this even though earlier he had pulled out his sword to defend the Lord. Our spiritual strength is not proven by swords, but by our supplications at the Throne of Grace.

V. HE WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR NATURAL LOVE FOR MONEY AND FOR MATERIAL THINGS.

Who is the great example here? JUDAS.

Have you ever studied the life of Judas to learn where he went wrong?

He did not seem to have had Peter's problem. He was not immoral. He did not want to sit by the Lord in the kingdom, like James and John did. What was his problem?

It came to the surface when Mary was worshipping the Lord, and she poured "a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly (note who John said that), and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair . . ." Judas did not like that. Why? Read verse 6 of John 12:

This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and care what was put therein.

Link this situation with what Paul wrote later to Timothy in in 1 Tim. 6:10:

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Who was Paul thinking about here if not Judas?

This can be a primary objective of men in the ministry. But, if anything, it is even more dangerous there than any place else.

Be careful on this point. It seems so innocent at times, but the person who loves things, and the money that buys it, is opening himself up to an attack from the Evil One.

Let me mention one more.

VI. THE DEVIL WILL ENCOURAGE US TO BE UNFORGIVING TOWARD THOSE WHO HAVE WRONGED US.

Read 2 Cor. 2:10, 11 again.

For Satan to get the advantage means, among other things, that our failure to forgive will only lead to other sins of a more obvious nature.

Concl: What is the answer, and where will we find help?

Read our text again: Eph. 6:10-12.

It is by depending upon the Lord's strength, by finding our power in Him, and by daily putting on the whole armour of God, that we will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. May God give us grace to learn that. This is the only way for us to become the holy people that He wants us to be.