

When The Devil is at Work (10-24-2021)

By Edward Rangel

The devil is looking for any opportunity to tempt God's children and is thrilled when we give in to his temptations. In the grand scheme of life nothing makes us sin, we decide to sin and we will give an account for that sin. The devil uses his temptations to help us on the road to destruction.

Luke 8:10-15

Introduction

- Satan never sleeps, times where he works extra hard
 - **1 Peter 5:8; “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”**
- We are not ignorant of how he works, his weapons and his battle plans
 - **2 Corinthians 2:11; “so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.”**
 - **2 Corinthians 11:13-14; “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.”**

1

When Evangelizing Others

Explanation

- Barnabas and Paul were attempting to evangelize the chief proconsul, Sergius Paulus, Elymas the sorcerer attempted to interfere and stop them from preaching. (**Acts 13:6-12**)
- The devil uses these devices
 - Prejudice (**John 8:23**; ***“and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”***)
 - “They think they are right and everyone else is wrong.”
 - Campbell started the church (**Mt. 16:18**; ***“I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”***)
 - False teachings (**2 Pet. 2:1-2**; ***“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned”*** **2 Tim. 4:1-4**; ***“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”***)

Illustration

Counterfeit Bills

The expert federal agents who look for counterfeit money don't learn their skill by studying counterfeits; they actually learn it by studying genuine bills until they have learned every characteristic of the real thing. The same is true of Christians wanting to discern false teaching—we learn best by studying the real thing, not the counterfeits. In the midst of Paul's instructions to Timothy about imposters and false teachers, he reminds him of the true source of teaching: Scripture (v. 16) (Tim Challies, "Counterfeit Detection (Part 1)," Challies, June 27, 2006).

Media



Counterfeit Bill

Application

The devil is always working to get in the way of bringing more people to Christ. Let us never lose our zeal for the lost, even if we share the Gospel with 1000 people and no one is receptive. Continue with the task. Remember that God has relieved us of the responsibility of growth, only of planting the seed. The devil wants us to believe that the failure to produce fruit is dependent on us so as to become discouraged and give up. But God's Word never comes back empty. It will bring results of either salvation or condemnation. (Is. 55:11)

2

When Worshipping God

Explanation

- Our Worship should always be in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:24)
- Whatever we do we should do it with the authority of God (Col. 3:17), yet the devil would have us wink at sinful practices in worship. “No big deal.”
- During the Lord’s Supper our minds should be focused on Christ and His sacrifice, yet too many times we allow ourselves to wonder off and think about other things (1 Corinthians 11:23-29)
- The devil makes going to the House of the Lord a tedious and tiresome thing, but we should change our attitude to one that it is “I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.” (Psalm 122:1)

Illustration

Kingdom Values

Think of what happens when a new basketball coach takes over in a school program. He will immediately begin to institute his values, the things he believes makes a winning basketball team. Maybe the last coach was focused primarily on offensive firepower, so he only emphasized shooting drills in practice. This new coach values defense well above offense and physical conditioning above the flashy plays. The players are going to immediately feel the effects of the new coach and his new values. Practices are going to look completely different. In the same way, the values of the kingdom of Jesus are so different from the values of this world that those who are in his kingdom now (the church) should look and act vastly different. They are under new management. The new king has set up his rule, and he's delivered his manifesto: blessed are the poor, and woe to the rich. The world hasn't seen a kingdom like this before or after. The church should full of people who are dedicated and happy to worship the King everyday , especially on the Lord's day!

Application

Do not allow the devil to rob you of your joy when worshipping God. Do not allow the devil to interfere with your table fellowship with the Lord during the Lord's Supper. Do not allow the Lord to dampen your praises when you sing to God. Do not give in to the devil's temptation on the Lord's day to alter your family's attitude on the way to His House of Worship. Rejoice on the day that you hear, **"Let's go to the house of the Lord!"**

3

When the Church is United and Working

Explanation

The scariest time for a church is when everything is calm all things are going smoothly. It's like those few moments before the tornado lands.

- Jesus understood this truth in His own life and in the lives of His apostles. This is why He prayed for their unity after His departure:
 - John 17:20-21; “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”
 - Ephesians 4:3; “being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”
- Several things that the devil uses to destroy church unity and peace:
 - Deeds of the flesh
 - Galatians 5:19; “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: **immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these**, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that **those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**“
 - Evil suspicion
 - 1 Timothy 5:3-5; “If anyone **advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words**, those of our **Lord Jesus Christ**, and with the **doctrine conforming to godliness**, he is **conceited and understands nothing**; but he **has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words**, out of which arise **envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.**”
- The Lord's work depends on all
 - 1 Corinthians 12:20-22; “But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; or again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.”

- Souls are lost – This should be our greatest concern. Sometimes we are too worried in destroying each other that we do not focus on our first and greatest mission.
 - Mark 16:15; “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”
 - Philippians 2:16; “holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.”
 - 1 Timothy 3:15; “but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.”
- The church needs strengthened
 - Ephesians 4:11-16; “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

Illustration

Bucket full of Crabs

If you ever see a bucket full of crabs, you'll see the crabs continually try to get themselves out of the bucket by crawling on top of each other and pulling each other down. It is an endless cycle, as each crab is only trying to help themselves, thus fighting with all the others. Getting themselves out of the bucket is the thing they are lusting after, which is only causing futility. In a similar way, the contentions we typically find between groups and individuals are due to selfish desires, bringing the church community down instead of helping it.

Media



Bucket full of Crabs

Application

There is no place for tolerating sin, but there is a place for compassion and understanding. Just like Jesus taught when He had interaction with sinners. Never condone sin, but always consider yourself lest you too shall one day fall. How many bulwarks now are now rubble because they never took into consideration their own shortcomings and temptations? We are not in competition with one another, we are in the same family carrying each other's burdens! This means we will learn to exhort, rebuke, but above all, love each other so that we can exhort and rebuke.

4

When Planning Our Contribution

Explanation

The root of all sorts of evil is the love of money! Someone somewhere said that! (1 Timothy 6:10). This is an interesting truth. Money (or some variation thereof), like food is a necessity in everyone's life. People will do some extreme things for both money and food. When it comes to planning our contribution, which but the way, is an act of worship, we should pray and commit to it. Once we have committed, it is a promise unto God. The devil definitely is at work when it comes to planning our contribution. "That's too much, they just waste the money on nonsense, we could use the money for our vacation....."

- Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)
- Purpose, proposal and attitude – 2 Corinthians 9:7; "Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."
- When there is a need, do not be stingy and give liberally: 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; "Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God."

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Bad Apple for God

Illustration

Last Picks for God?

How many of us have played pickup basketball or a game that required us to be chosen by a team captain? Imagine standing on the sideline while the teams are chosen: “I’ll take him. And him. And him and him.” One by one, people are chosen, and you are the last one picked. Not a great feeling. No one wants to be chosen last. Some of us tend to treat God like that when it comes to our resources. We spend money on shopping, bills, food, and other items—and after all of that we might give God consideration. Just like we don’t want to be last, God doesn’t want to be last in our lives in any area. In fact, he expects us to consider him first. So much so that he introduced to us the concept of “first fruit.” First fruits mean offering to God our very best without hesitation or regret. This includes our finances, time, gifts, and whatever he asks from us.

Application

Our relationship with God can be easy going until money is involved. We need to understand that God does not need our money. In the first place, it is not our money He has allowed us to be stewards of that money. The devil would make us believe, "I worked for it, it is mine and I will do with it what I want." While it is in our possession we can do what we want with it, but, one day we will have to answer for what we did with it and the devil will not be our advocate.

Conclusion

There is one other area where the devil is hard at work, and that is in deciding in whom we will serve.

- Joshua chose God for him and his family (Joshua 14:15)
- Elijah demanded that the people make up their mind who they would serve, either Baal or Jehovah God. “Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.”
But the people did not answer him a word.” (1 Kings 18:21)
- You are faced with a choice today. Who will you serve?
- Gospel plan of salvation
- Simon the sorcerer for Christians who are in sin (Acts 8)

