

“Our Arch Enemy – His Plan”
Ephesians 6:11-12
(Preached at Trinity, January 31, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As I pointed out last time, this passage describes the intense spiritual warfare that is consistent with the Christian experience. It is a fierce warfare that demands courageous warriors.
2. In **Verses 11-12** Paul describes our great enemy in this war.
Ephesians 6:11 NAU - "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."
3. Last time we began looking at this enemy. We must not fear him but we also must not underestimate his power. In these verses Paul describes the enemy and then he'll describe the armor and weaponry God has provided us in order for us to stand withstand his assaults.
4. Paul describes three elements of this enemy: His Person, His Plan, and His Power. Last time we looked at his person. Paul refers to him as "the devil" from the word *διάβολος* which occurs 37 times. Paul also refers to him as the "evil one" in **Verse 16**. These are generic terms to describe Satan. He is a created being created as a holy angel but willfully rebelled against God and turned to evil. He's our great adversary.
5. This morning I want to focus our attention upon his PLAN.
 - I. Paul describes it as schemes
 - A. The word is *μεθοδεία* – We get our word "methodology."
 1. It is used one other time in Scripture. Paul uses it in this epistle to describe the deceitfulness of false teachers.
Ephesians 4:14 NAU - "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;"
 2. Paul uses a different word in 2 Corinthians
2 Corinthians 2:11 NAU - "so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes."
νόημα – a word that refers to the mind. Paul is speaking of Satan's intentions. Paul is telling his Christian readers that we are not ignorant of Satan's schemes. He is clearly implying that we are well acquainted with our enemy.
 3. There are two extremes in our generation:
 - a. The first is to see Satan in everything. Some put too much emphasis upon him. There is the demon of lust and of gluttony, a demon of jealousy and a demon of envy. He's behind your physical afflictions. He's behind your car breaking down.

- b. The other extreme, however, is much more common. They ignore him. Pastors fail to teach about him. Many feel we are far too sophisticated to believe in the devil today. Paul is saying here that understanding our warfare with Satan is essential to the Christian life.
 - 4. While we must not credit him with too much power, to ignore our enemy is to risk falling prey to his diabolical schemes.
We must not be ignorant of his devices.
- B. What's his plan? Satan's chief plan is to hinder God's redemptive purpose upon the earth.
- 1. Satan's plan is to take all that God has created good and corrupt it. God is light and everything about Satan is darkness. In the Garden Satan labored to turn the heart of man away from God and he succeeded. Adam rebelled against God. Satan holds this world in darkness.
2 Corinthians 4:4 NAU - "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."
 - a. He blinds their eyes to the sinfulness of sin and of God's condemnation
 - b. He blinds their eyes to the beauty and excellence of Christ
 - c. He causes them to look at the Gospel with suspicion and at God's people with disgust.
 - d. He keeps them preoccupied with the things of this world.
 - 2. God's purpose is to rescue a multitude from the bondage of Satan. And God's purpose shall not fail.
Acts 26:18 NAU - "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."
 - 3. Satan and his angels are reserved unto judgment—their doom is sure.
Jude 1:6 NAU - "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,"
 - 4. But Satan has been given a temporary season of liberty. During this age he has continually sought to destroy God's purpose of redeeming His elect people.
 - 5. God promised that the seed of the woman would crush Satan
Genesis 3:15 NAU - "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

6. Satan has continually sought to destroy the seed of the woman. If he could destroy God's people he would destroy God's redemptive plan.
 - a. This seed was foreshadowed through God's covenant people, Israel. Satan has continually sought to destroy them. What (or who) was behind the evil plan of Pharaoh?
Exodus 1:15-16 NAU - "Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other was named Puah; ¹⁶ and he said, "When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth and see them upon the birthstool, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live."
 - b. Satan continually sought to provoke them to sin to destroy them
7. The Seed of the woman is fulfilled by Christ. God's promise was that Christ would destroy Satan. Satan labored feverishly during the life and ministry of Christ to destroy God's Redeemer.
 - a. What was behind Herod's insane plan of killing all of the young boys up to the age of two years old? Satan was seeking to destroy the Christ.
 - b. What was behind the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness? Again, it was Satan seeking to derail the perfections of Christ.
8. While the crucifixion was the plan and purpose of God in redemption the Romans and Jews had a different motivation. Who was behind the wickedness of their scheme?
Luke 22:2-4 NAU - " The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people. ³ And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve. ⁴ And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them."
9. Satan failed in his efforts to destroy Christ but he is continually seeking to destroy God's redeemed people

II. What are some of Satan's schemes? How does Satan work against us?

- A. Satan seeks to destroy our holy lives. He seeks to draw us away from Christ.
 1. This will never be possible in an absolute sense.
Romans 8:35-39 NAS - "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 2. Satan continually seeks to tempt us to take our eyes off Christ. He seeks to divide the church. He seeks to lead us into sin and destroy the purity of our church.

3. He seeks to puff us up with pride. Who was behind David's scheme to conduct the census in Israel?
1 Chronicles 21:1 NAU - "Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel."
 We are commanded to resist Satan's lying devices that lift us up on pride
James 4:6-7 NAS - " But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." ⁷
 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."
 4. He seeks to stir our hearts in anger and then keep it seething within us.
Ephesians 4:26-27 NAS - "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and do not give the devil an opportunity."
 He tempts us making us over sensitive - the little seeds of anger which boil and fester like an oozing sore
 This has destroyed churches - little hurts fester in the heart. People then begin to gossip and individuals are consumed. All the while everyone feels they are in the right.
 5. He seeks to destroy the church by sowing in damnable heresies
2 Corinthians 11:13-15 NAS - " For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴
 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds."
Timothy 4:1 NAS - "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,"
 Calvin – "Truth (Satan) assails with lies, light he obscures with darkness. The minds of men he involves with error; he stirs up hatred, inflames strife and war, and all in order that he may overthrow the kingdom of God, and drown men in eternal perdition with himself."
 6. Peter charges us:
1 Peter 5:8-9 NAS - "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world."
- B. Satan's chief method comes by way of lies and deception
John 8:44 NAU - "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."
1. He tries to convince us that we are making the wise choice. Sin always appears to be the best choice – It always appears as something to bring us pleasure.
 2. He can make our decisions seem so right that we don't even question the wisdom or examine it in light of Scripture.

3. He offers up endless excuses to keep us from our duty. His excuses always seem justifiable. They seem right and are often the perfect instrument to keep our conscience content.
4. Satan promises us that following his temptations will result in our greatest happiness
 - a. He lied to Eve – eating the fruit was the wise thing to do
Genesis 3:5-6 NAU - "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."
 - b. Listen to the temptation of Christ
Matthew 4:8-9 NAU - " Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; ⁹ and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."
 - c. Satan promises the world. He promises great pleasure. This is why we do what we do. We are seeking the greatest pleasure.
 - d. This is one of the things that keeps men from Christ
Luke 8:14 NAU - "The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity."
4. There is no doubt that sin brings pleasure for a while. This is why Satan's lies are so easy to receive.
 - a. The writer of Hebrews speaks of the pleasures of sin
Hebrews 11:24-25 – "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; ²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;"
 - b. Israel was overfilled with joy over their new god
Exodus 32:18 NAU - "It is not the sound of the cry of triumph, Nor is it the sound of the cry of defeat; But the sound of singing I hear."
 It was a great worship service. You can imagine the joy on their faces as they sang with great zeal. They were leaping and dancing as they praised their idol. Tears of joy were probably flowing down their cheeks.
5. Satan's temptations are nothing more than lies
 - a. He promises pleasure but he doesn't tell us the end
 - b. He leads us from one pleasure to the next and they keep us from finding pleasure in Christ
 - c. The truth is sin can only lead to great bitterness

Conclusion:

1. Our enemy is powerful and relentless but God has not left us without the necessary tools to overcome his attacks.
Ephesians 6:10-11 NAU - "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."
2. As I said last week, our greatest defense against temptation is our love for Christ. This is why Paul maintains the centrality of Christ throughout his description of the Christian life. Everything we do has an eye upon Christ – as to the Lord. And so now Paul commands us, "Be strong in the Lord."
3. Satan's arrows are easily quenched by a heart of faith in love with Christ.