

“Satan’s Power”
Mark 14:27-31; 66-72
(Preached at Trinity, March 25, 2015)

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. In my last sermon on this text we focused our attention upon Peter. We saw him as impulsive, hasty, and filled with self-confidence. He was a natural leader who would often be the first to speak. But Peter often spoke when he should have listened.
 - A. In this account we find Peter again as the first to speak. He spoke with great confidence but, as we saw, he was lacking in discernment.
 - B. Peter would ultimately fall into the sin of forsaking Christ.
2. Last time we examined Peter’s path to failure; the great dangers that all of us must be aware of lest we fall into sin.
 - A. He doubted the Word’s of Christ - The fastest road to sin is to deny the Word of God. He did not receive the Words of Christ as having authority and absolute. If we reject the authority and infallibility of Scripture we are doomed to sin.
 - B. He had an unrealistic, prideful view of himself
He elevated himself above all others. He saw himself more able to face temptation than anyone else. God would humble him to make him useful.
 - C. Peter failed to seek Divine help
Peter made a bold promise – “*Even though all may fall away, yet I will not.*”
 1. Peter made this bold pledge while trusting in his own strength
 2. Peter should have been in fervent prayer
3. There is one other great error that I only mentioned in passing last time. This ultimately proved spiritually poisonous for Peter. He failed to take into account the power of the adversary; he failed to understand the power of Satan’s temptations.
 - A. In Luke’s Gospel Jesus had warned Peter -
Luke 22:31 NAU - “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat”
 1. The word for “Behold” is ἰδοὺ – “behold, take note, pay attention”
It is an equivalent of saying, “Watch out!”
Peter can never complain that he wasn’t warned
 2. Satan was desiring to “sift *Peter* as wheat” – to shake vigorously
Symbolizing the shaking or trying of his faith.
 - B. Jesus warned Peter, James and John of the great spiritual dangers in **Verse 38**
Mark 14:38 NAU - “Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
 - C. Again, this is a clear teaching from the Lord’s Prayer (masculine gender with article)
Matthew 6:13 – “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

4. Tonight I want us to take a moment to examine this great adversary. Peter learned by experience the power of this enemy. He warns every believer - **1 Peter 5:8-9 NAU** - "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around 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."
5. The Christian is in a constant state of war—war with this world, war with our own flesh, war with Satan. This is a consistent aspect of Christianity. Every Christian without exception is under attack. Satan is an ever present enemy. Peter says, "knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world."
6. Satan is cunning, deceptive, and crafty – and he hates you. The Bible gives us sufficient information about this enemy so that we might not be caught off guard. **2 Corinthians 2:11 NAU** - "so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes."
7. What are these schemes Satan uses to tempt us in an effort to make us betray our Master?
8. But before we examine his methodology we need to consider something else:
 - I. We must realize that his power is limited
 - A. God created him and allows him to exist
 1. God could have destroyed him when he fell or at any time since
 2. Satan is doomed. He moves about only by God's permission.
 3. God allows him to exist according to His purpose - a mystery
 - B. Satan is under the sovereign control of God - all of creation moves according to God's good pleasure
Daniel 4:35 NAU - "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"
 - C. Satan could not touch Job except at the permission of God - See **Job 1:7-12**
 - D. Satan had to seek permission to tempt Peter
Luke 22:31 NAU - "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat"
ἐξαιτέομαι – to ask and receive
 - E. Satan can never separate us from God –
Romans 8:38-39 NAS - "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."
 - II. What exactly are his methods. How does Satan operate? How does he attack us? What are his schemes?
 - A. Satan has an influence over a man's mind
 1. Satan is a master of deception
“schemes” - *μεθοδία* - trickery
Our mind is a wonderful gift, makes us different from the animals - It is the object of attack by the enemy.

2. He has been a deceiver from the beginning
Genesis 3:1 NAS - "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. "
 3. His power over the mind is seen in the mindset of this world. He is controlling the world mind, the world outlook. No other time in history has he had the resources he has today. With the electronic media and the internet His schemes are easily spread.
- B. Satan inspires false teachings
1 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,"
1. He often works through individuals, deceiving them and then using them to deceive others.
 2. Paul makes it clear that Satan can even appear as being holy
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."
 3. Satan sows seeds of division using his lies and deceit.
 He sows seeds of doubt, discouragement – often from the lips of people
 4. He whispers doubts and subtle deceits
 - a. He makes cunning suggestions of doubt "hath God said?"
 - b. Clear example with Peter - Matt. 16:21-23
Matthew 16:21-22 NAS - "From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. ²² And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid *it*, Lord! This shall never happen to You."
 - c. From where did the thought arise?
Matthew 16:23 NAS - "But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."
- C. Satan raises doubts and fears within us
1. Look at Peter again - **Mark 14:29 NAU** - "*Even* though all may fall away, yet I will not."
 And again he said,
Mark 14:31 NAU - "*Even* if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"
 2. Such bold words. Such self-confidence.
 Christ warned Peter,
 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat"
 3. When he was called to demonstrate his boldness, however, Peter was swallowed by fear and denied Christ with shouts of cursing even when asked by a mere servant girl. Where did the fear come from?

4. Where does our fear to share the Gospel come from? Satan cripples us.
2 Timothy 1:7 NAU - "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline."
- D. Satan is also often behind the evil thoughts that suddenly enter our minds
Sometimes out of the blue a thought enters into your head.
1. Dark thoughts of doubt that comes over your soul. You say, "I am afraid I am not converted." Joy is consumed as Satan holds our sins before us.
 2. Thoughts of pride towards yourself making you even more vulnerable to Satan's attacks. You begin to take pride in your own strength.
Or you begin to see yourself as superior. Churches have often struggled as little groups form in the church that become exclusive of others.
 3. Evil thoughts towards one another
Ephesians 6:12 NAU - "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."
 4. 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, people begin to gossip and feed upon each other
 5. This is why Jesus said that problems between the brethren must be resolved before worship is possible
Matthew 5:23 NAU - "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering."
 6. With careless words we can actually hinder the work of the kingdom
Matthew 16:23 NAU - "But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."
Jesus was telling Peter that he was actually being used to make His work more difficult – Peter was being a stumbling block (σκάνδαλον)

Conclusion:

1. But you ask what does all of this have to do with me? I'm not under Satan's attack.
If that is your thinking you have already been defeated. Satan has already accomplished his work. You are falling into the same trap as Peter.
2. Believers who have had their discernment weakened can actually be used of the devil – and in their weakened state, not even know it
 - a. Satan turns our thoughts towards ourselves rather than to God
 - b. We can cause strife with one another and in the church and even think we are right.
Our natural pride makes us easy prey for Satan.
 - c. He can make us so unhappy that we will leave our church – and we will be completely unaware that Satan is the source
4. The charge to us is to resist him and to stay on the alert.
James 4:7 NAU - "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."
1 Peter 5:8 NAU - "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

5. We must put on the full armor of God.
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."
6. But the ultimate solution to Satan is Christ. This is true of the whole of our warfare.
 1. This is true of our warfare against this world:
Colossians 3:1-3 NAU - "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God."
 2. This is true of our warfare against our flesh
 Paul grieved over the remaining sin within him and cried out:
Romans 7:24 NAU - "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?"
Romans 7:25 NAU - "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! "
 3. Our ultimate defense against Satan is Christ. Nothing shall separate us from His love.
 - a. What were the unspoken words between Peter and Christ:
Luke 22:60-62 NAU - "But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. ⁶¹ The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." ⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly."
 - b. It was a look of acknowledgement. But surely it was also a look of pity and love. And an affirmation:
Luke 22:31-32 NAU - "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat; ³² but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail"