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Tillamook, Oregon

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Murderer and Liar – The Devil's Essence

June 13, 2021

Sermon Text: John 8:44

Scripture Reading: Galatians 5

Joh 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

I wish I was talented at writing novels. I would write one that is – well, whatever they call a *true* novel, that is what I would write. A story that illustrated in detail what Jesus told the Jews here in this verse.

This morning we are going to look at the essence of evil – the heart and nature of the devil. It only requires two points:

- Murdering
- Lying

We have been going through the Gospel of John on Wednesday mornings (it's livestreamed on our Facebook page and on Sermon Audio for those of you who didn't know). And we just finished up chapter 8 where we came across this confrontive statement of Jesus as He told the Jewish leaders, who claimed to be children of Abraham, that no – they were children of the devil. God was not their father. The devil was.

And this fact was known by the fruits of their responses to Jesus. They wanted to kill Him. They told lies about Him. They desired to do the very same thing because they had the same spiritual DNA the devil does.

Let's think then some more about these two qualities and how they play out in the tactics that the devil uses to try to destroy Christ and His people.

Murder

The devil is a murderer, and in fact he always has been – *from the beginning*. When John uses that word “beginning,” he is being very intentional and wants us to think back to THE beginning – the Garden of Eden and the fall of man. What happened there? The devil used lies to kill. “In the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.” That was God’s Word, and it came about.

Rom 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

Death and destruction. The devil is also called “Apollyon” which means, Destroyer. He is all about the destruction of God’s creation. Just look around today and you will see him at work destroying families, God’s creation of male and female, wars, and on and on we could make the list.

Now, here is a very interesting verse on this subject of the devil as murderer:

Heb 2:14-15 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of

death, that is, the devil, (15) and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

See it? Murder produces *fear* and it is that fear which enslaves. Christ sets us free of death and therefore free of fear.

Now, here is a digest of a very vital principle:

Where there is fear of murder/destruction in your life, you can be sure that the devil is behind it. This tactic is interwoven with his other essential quality – lying. Where there is an enslaving fear in us, we can know that the devil is behind it.

Many of you have experienced someone close to you – a family member perhaps – who uses fear to control you. Specifically, the fear of death. The fear of the destruction of you well-being, of you reputation, of your personhood, of your other relationships. Death, death, death. Destruction. It all instills fear.

Still others of you have had tyrannical religious leaders or parents or other people who claim to be Christians, tell you that God is mad at you. That God condemns you, if you do not submit to

their control and demands. “I will destroy you economically, I will destroy your career...if you do not obey me.” Fear of death. Fear of destruction. This is how the devil enslaves.

But...

Luk 4:18-21 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, (19) to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” (20) And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. (21) And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

And hear it again:

Heb 2:14-15 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, (15) and deliver all those who through fear of

death were subject to lifelong slavery.

In that very same chapter of John's Gospel we also saw this:

Joh 8:51 Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”

Joh 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, (26) and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

Life. Eternal life. Life right now, even though our earthly bodies are wearing out. Paul says it-

2Co 5:1-8 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, (3) if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. (4) For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. (5) He who has

prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. (6) So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, (7) for we walk by faith, not by sight. (8) Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

The Christian is free! We have taken part in the great Exodus out of the Egypt of slavery to death and the devil – effected now by the blood of THE Passover Lamb, the Lord Jesus.

Sooooo, what is the problem? How is it that so many people who apparently are Christians, live in so much fear and slavery? Well, the answer to that question is simply this:

Lies. The devil's lies. Listening to them, believing them.

The Devil is a Liar

Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers

has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

The devil is a liar. Whenever he speaks he lies. His goal is to deceive us and destroy us, to instill fear of death in us and enslave us. So he lies. He even lies to God – about us!! But the basis of his lies has been destroyed – Christ has fulfilled the Law so that our sin no longer stands against us.

Col 2:13-15 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, (14) by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (15) He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Some weeks ago we considered this passage from 2 Corinthians –

2Co 10:4-5 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. (5) We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every

thought captive to obey Christ,

Think about this carefully and logically. *Where do these strongholds, these arguments and lofty opinions that are raised up against the knowledge of God come from? The answer is really obvious – from the father of lies, the devil.*

I have said this before but here it is again – *the reason even many Christians remain stuck and enslaved and living in fear is because they have believed the lies of the devil. And what is the remedy to lies?*

TRUTH!

God's Word, Christ's truth is what Paul means when he says he uses *divine power to destroy strongholds*. He preaches and proclaims the Sword, the Word of God.

Look here again:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed...”.

To proclaim. Good news. The TRUTH, you see. God's Word.

Now look. *The reason so many Christians stumble and trip and never really advance in the ability to discern good from evil...is simply because they have believed the devil's lies and there are fortresses/strongholds in their lives that are keeping them captive because they are afraid. The lies produce fear...well, this is the cascading evil chain –*

**Lies--- → Fear of destruction/death ---
→ Slavery**

The remedy is the dynamite of God's Word, the fuse of which has to be lit by the Spirit. Many of you have experienced the explosion. You suddenly realized – the lights flashed on – that you had been living in a lie and that it was enslaving you.

Charles Wesley wrote about it in his hymn – And Can it be, that I Should Gain? He had the new birth in mind, but the same principle surely applies to our finally seeing the devil's lie and being free of it:

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

I know that many people listening to this know exactly what I am talking about. And I also know that many others are probably still stuck and in need of one of these fortress-destroying explosions. Consider some of the lies that are so often brought against Christ's people -

- It is your fault. It is always your fault.
- You are cold and unkind.
- You will never change.
- You are unforgiving.
- Family is everything.
- You need to do what I say.
- You're no good at anything.
- If you ever fail, you will be shamed.
- You need to do what your mother or some other family member says, no matter how old you are.
- You need to keep being ashamed of what you did or who you were long ago.

- God's attitude toward you changes from day to day depending on how you perform.
- If others are not pleased with you, it is your fault and you need to make changes.

And on and on and on the list can go. Remember, these are accusations leveled against those who are in Christ, who are God's real children who He loves, who have NO condemnation from Him, who are fully justified.

Zec 3:1-4 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. (2) And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" (3) Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. (4) And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments."

Now, *we must believe that the devil is a murderer and a liar.* We must believe it

and expect it. Anyone who insists on remaining naïve and ignorant of these things is going to be enslaved and duped. Let me give you an example.

I have, as I have told you, been reading Winston Churchill's account of the Second World War: *The Gathering Storm*. Early on, before Hitler even took Czechoslovakia, and before WW2 even broke out, German generals had planned to arrest Hitler and his cohorts before he destroyed the nation in war. But what was a key element that caused them to back off and a war that killed scores of millions to happen? *Ignorance of evil. A love of peace that was no peace. Specifically, traits to be found in the British Prime Minister Chamberlain*. It was Chamberlain's visits to Munich and the agreements he signed with Hitler that handed a big chunk of the Czech's geography over to Germany. Hitler had won and his generals backed off.

Listen to Churchill tell us as he quotes Mr. Duff Cooper's speech to Parliament after he had resigned in protest as First Lord of the Admiralty-

"That is the deep difference between the Prime Minister (Chamberlain) and

myself throughout these days. The Prime Minister has believed in addressing Herr Hitler through the language of sweet reasonableness. I have believed that he was more open to the language of the mailed fist....

The Prime Minister has confidence in the goodwill and in the word of Herr Hitler, although when Herr Hitler broke the Treaty of Versailles he undertook to keep the Treaty of Locarno, and when he broke the Treaty of Locarno he undertook not to interfere further, or to have further territorial claims in Europe. When he entered Austria by force he authorized his henchmen to give an authoritative assurance that he would not interfere with Czechoslovakia. That was less than six months ago. *Still the Prime Minister believes that he can rely upon the good faith of Hitler.*" [Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, p. 292]

Chamberlain and people like him believed and still believe *that the devil can be believed*. "Oh, surely my own mother would not lie to me." "No, there isn't a chance my pastor or church could be lying." When in fact when the fortress is exposed by God's Truth and blown up, you find out that it was

nothing but lies. Lies all along. And we believed them and we were in bondage to them. We were afraid of going against them.

Do you believe this? –

Joh 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Do you believe this? -

2Co 11:13-15 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. (14) And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. (15) So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

Do you realize that entire churches and denominations can embrace the devil's lies and be enslaved to his fear and destruction? How do we think that

Rome became what it is? Murder, fear, enslavement, lying and deception.

You know, last week we had the privilege of hearing Kelly Orr tell her story of how she and her children suffered terribly at the hands of not only her ex-husband, but by the oppression of her pastor and church and even the General Assembly of that denomination. *Do you believe this? Do you believe that the devil can enslave and use entire churches and denominations to oppress and destroy the innocent?*

“Oh that can't be. Surely this is an exaggeration. Surely things are not that bad.” But they are that bad. Once again, I would say to you – *how do you think that Rome became Rome? Do you think that the devil has ceased to work the same lies and fears and destruction that he always has?*

As long as we are a Chamberlain. As long as we refuse to believe God's Word, as long as we insist that things are just as we have always thought they are, and that things are what they always have appeared to be in our eyes, we are going to remain trapped in the enemy's fortresses.

Let me end with this:

Evil, deception, lies, fear – the devil’s works in other words – appear to be normal and even good if we grow up immersed in them. We don’t know anything else. Even if we are in a supposed “Christian” family, but it is in fact in bondage to sin, it still seems like it is the norm of a Christian family.

I am going to write a blog article soon entitled “The Shock of Love.” Love, the love of Christ, genuine divine love which is the love by which God IS and loves by, *is shocking when you are hit with it*. It is strange. It is refreshing and yet it is soooo different than your normal.

Joh 4:9 The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

When we experience the love of Christ, from Him, by His Spirit, in His Word, or through one of His people, the thing can be a shock. It is AB-normal to our normal. In fact, it is so abnormal to this

world that some people are not even able to receive it.

Eph 2:4-7 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, (5) even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— (6) and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (7) so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Shocking love. So shocking that even in eternity to come its depths will still be immeasurable.

THIS is normal. This is what Christ created us for. So look into His Word diligently. Pray diligently. Ask Him to show you those strongholds and then His truth so that there is an explosion that blows those forts apart for good. Don’t ever let yourself be enslaved by the enemy’s lies and fear. For freedom Christ has set us free.