

Rooted: There is an Enemy
10.10.2021

It is great to have the chance to speak into our Rooted series experience here at WellSpring! I hope your groups are going well! Not sure if you're aware of it, but we have nearly 30 different small groups going through the series at the same time, a few actually not very small at all! Today I'll be preaching into Week 5, There is an Enemy.

Yes, today we deal with the Devil!

My disadvantage: I am pretty angelic, myself.

My advantage: I work with a pretty rough crew of people, so it's like I'm surrounded by Free Research!

The Scripture verse that is attached to this week is Colossians 1:13— "For He has rescued us from the Kingdom of Darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of His Dear Son!"

I honestly was a pretty good kid growing up there in my small hometown in Missouri. That's always safe to say when your parents aren't available for comment. Just three weeks ago Shari and I drove back for my high school reunion... which one it WAS really isn't relevant... we'll just say we're far enough in that our meetings have to be approved by the Historical Society. Shari's family moved into the community in time for her to start her junior year at the city high school. I had been there all of my life, so we drove around quite a bit, revisiting old familiar places, or spots where those places USED to be. I reminisced on childhood memories of things my buddies and I used to do as kids.

Eventually Shari turned to me and said something to the effect of, "Keith Buddemeyer, you were not as good as you have advertised!" I was a bit taken aback! I said, "If you want to choose to believe a few unsubstantiated rumors from some old classmates, a few retired school teachers, the members of just one church congregation, and a single, faded police report, well, madam, that is on you, but I, for one, choose to give myself the benefit of the doubt!" (Wow, that sounded better in my head)

Well, I'll admit that, like most folks, I had my ups and downs. To be honest, I never was much for doing things that would get me into trouble, and I didn't have brothers or sisters pushing me into it. Not that I didn't make mistakes, not that I didn't occasionally do something out of plain old orneriness, or even out of moral failure. But I'm hard pressed to point out those times when the Devil gets the credit for my own shortcomings.

And probably one of the big problems in our World is that the Devil doesn't get nearly the credit he deserves for his deceptions & misleadings.

This will probably surprise you, but in a 2001 Gallup Poll, 68% of Americans believed in the Devil. By '07 it was up to 70%, and that's a fairly steady increase from 1990 when it was only 55%!

But then I think, "of course people believe in the Devil. They see him all of the time!" Do a Google search on "cartoon devil" and you get hundreds of thousands of images of animated devils, from the cute ones...

Slide 1: **HOT STUFF CHARACTER**

...The sporty ones...

Slide 2: **Devil Mascot**

...Cosplay costumes for your trip to Comic-Con...

Slide 3: **Cosplay Devil**

...or costumes simple enough for Halloween, for Mom... Dad... Junior... and the baby!

Slide 4: **Devil Mom**

Slide 5: **Devil Dad Junior**

Slide 6: **Devil Baby**

There's a devil that helps you make tough choices...

Slide 7: **Shoulder Devil**

...Like do I take up Guitar?...

Slide 8: **Crossroads Devil**

...or the violin?

Slide 9: Georgia Devil.

Change your search parameters to simply “Movie Devil” and it gets real dark, real fast!

So yes, it would seem that people are accustomed to having the Devil around. He’s cute, sporty, entertaining, musical, dramatic, can be beaten in a high stakes gamble, sometimes works at law firms, sleeps in baby beds, possibly even moves in to your very body, but it’s nothing a little quality holy water can’t tackle.

The Devil seems to have a really strong Public Relations team working around the clock to make sure that he comes off as either too funny to worry about, or too cool looking to resist throwing onto a T-shirt graphic.

I have to think that Gallup asked the wrong question. The question should have been, “Do you believe the Devil is someone to be taken seriously?” I’d bet the numbers drop dramatically. *(By the way, thanks to doing those image searches, now when I open up the Bible Gateway app, I have Google ads over on the side saying, “Psst, hey buddy, how’d you like to buy this sweet Devil costume, eh??”)*

For our purposes today we are going to start from the “Given” of acknowledging the Devil is very real. I feel I have to say that because in my internet research one of the first pages I came upon had a Comments section. Don’t know that you’ve picked up on this but very seldom does anything good come out of a Comments section, and opinions on the Devil in this one tended towards bonkers! We could enter into a long study on the Devil but today we will simply start with the Given that **the Devil is Real**, and here’s why:

- 1) His existence is acknowledged in at least 7 books of the Old Testament.
- 2) Every writer in the New Testament mentions him.
- 3) Jesus acknowledges him, teaches about him, & most of all, confronts him

So rather than spending time questioning his existence, we’re going to zero in on his METHODS!

In John chapter 8 Jesus is teaching in the Temple courts. Jewish leaders are gathered around testing Jesus’ words. Jesus delivers a well-known phrase: “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth,

and the truth will set you free.” The leaders reply that they are no one’s slaves to be set free. They are the descendants of Abraham! To which Jesus replies, “If that were true you’d be doing what Abraham did, instead of trying to figure out how to kill me!” Then He says this:

SLIDE 10: “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, **for he is a liar and the father of lies.** John 8:42-44

From the beginning in Genesis we read the Eden account and right off the bat we see Satan LYING.

SLIDE 11: “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

Add to 11: “You will not certainly die”

Add to 11 again- “...your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God”

And it occurs to me that the more aware we are of the Devil’s penchant for LIES, the better prepared we are to resist him! Isn’t all of sin based on LIES??

SLIDE 12: **LIE #1: The False Promise of Temptation**

“Look how amazing this is! This could be yours! What an opportunity! Oh baby, this is the best! It’s all for you; no one else has it this good! Better grab it while you can!”

SLIDE 13: **LIE #2: The False Pleasure of the Experience**

“Isn’t this everything promised? I told you it would be amazing! Nothing in the world could feel this good! Makes you feel powerful, right!?”

SLIDE 14: **LIE #3: The False Payoff of Sin**

“You won’t crash! You won’t be sorry! There won’t be ramifications to deal with. There is no downside! Aren’t you glad you did this! You can stop anytime you want, it’s not a problem. It’s not an addiction. Congratulations!”

Is there any doubt as to why Jesus says the Devil is the Father of Lies??! And Jesus declares this:

SLIDE 15: Jesus answered, "I am the way and the **truth** and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6

The bottom line is that Jesus is the truth, the Devil is a liar; they are antithetical to one another! So, here's what I want to do this morning: We're going to take a look at a few of the most basic lies that we face, and I think that some of them have become so rooted (sorry!) in our psyches that we may not even realize we're being lied to.

SLIDE 16: **The Devil Says, "This Jesus stuff isn't going to last."** C'mon, y'all, we don't have room for superstitious mumbo-jumbo! We are living in an enlightened age! Look how much we have learned! How much we KNOW! We have unlocked the mysteries of the Universe. We know how everything works, what it all means, we can do just about ANYTHING!

SLIDE 17: **The Truth Says, I'm not going anywhere. "I have come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly"** **Junk??!** Can you ignore world history? The teachings of Jesus have been integral in revolutionizing women's rights, the treatment of children, the world of medicine and hospital care. The Church is much-maligned, but has been pivotal in the areas of education, literacy, the fair treatment of workers, the value of the individual, the importance of commitment in marriage, the presence of a fair legal system, safe working conditions, and the beauty of the arts. **Will it last?** Jesus has been on the program since Day One! John 1 places Him in Creation. Genesis 3 foretells the crucifixion. More than 350 Messianic prophecies are laced throughout the Old Testament, and OH, how it all powered up when Jesus came in person! And the bottom line is that YOUR LIFE HINGES ON THE PRESENCE OF JESUS AS REDEEMER. Will He last? Of course, He will, He must, for your sake, until His work of redemption is complete.

SLIDE 18: **The Devil Says, "There is no spiritual war going on."** Isn't it a little hocus-pocus-y to think that there are invisible forces waging a battle? What are you guys, hillbillies scared of haunts in the woods?

SLIDE 19: **The Truth Says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's**

schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. –Ephesians 6:10-17

You think there isn't a war going on? Try following Christ, and see if the battle doesn't begin.

SLIDE 20: The Devil Says, "This temptation is too much to fight. Give in. No one expects you to resist this one."

SLIDE 21: The Truth Says, "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." - 1 Corinthians 10:13

Anyone not able to catch that? Here's the thing: Don't start lying to yourself. Satan's already got that part covered.

SLIDE 22: The Devil Says, "You're too weak to fight this battle!"

SLIDE 23: The Truth Says, "Hey, didn't you just say there WASN'T a battle? And this..."

SLIDE 24: "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ." –Galatians 6:1-2

And this...

SLIDE 25 "I can do all this through Christ who gives me strength!" --Philippians 4:13

SLIDE 26: The Devil Says, "Life shouldn't be this hard..."

SLIDE 27: The Truth Says, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." --John 16:33

Sometimes I think we are going through life under the misconception that if we do the right things, eat the right foods, drink the right water, wear the right outfits, exercise the right way, swallow the right supplements, pray the right words, elect the right leaders, make the right rules... that everything will be better, will be just right.

But the Bible tells us we are running a race to win, we are training to fight, we are preparing to do battle every day. Our work is compared to putting our hands to a plow, or to harvesting fields, and neither is done without breaking a sweat. We're told the World will hate us. We're reminded of the many ways that Christian believers have been arrested, reviled, beaten, driven away, tortured, and killed. If any part of that sounds easy, I've missed it.

But once again, the Devil has twisted the truth. This... this here and now... this is not the true Life. This is the temporary life we are given so we can have the chance for a Life that never ends. THIS is the training ground, and ***training is hard!*** THIS is where we decide who to follow, who to believe in, who to trust. This is where we learn to love one another, to help each other, to comfort. This is where we discover Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control. And those do not come easily. ***They are hard!*** We are shaped here for a while so we will be at home up there forever. This world is difficult. How terrible to try and face it without knowing God.

PRAYER FOCUS FOR THIS WEEK!

Each week we've been trying to give you a different prayer approach, if only as a reminder that there is no set way to pray... talking to God is as unique as each one of us who does it. With our topic this week, I take you to John 17:15-18, where Jesus prays for His disciples:

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify

them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

How cool is that, that Jesus is praying for US!? If Jesus deems it important enough to pray for our specific protection from Satan, how much more does it demand our attention as well? This is something that we should adopt into our daily prayer. The battle is not against flesh and blood, but neither is it for you to fight alone! Start practicing this prayer, and see if it doesn't spare you some head-to-heads with the Devil himself!

THAT LION BUSINESS...

You might remember Andy dealing with **1 Peter 5:8. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**

SLIDE 28: **Cheetah and Gazelle pic**

Now there was some scuttlebutt about his use of a "LION" slide. "Is this a lion? Is this acceptable because it creates the SENSE of a lion? Blah, blah, blah." To which I have to say, "Hey, y'all need to calm down! You probably have no idea how difficult it is to FIND a picture of a lion online!"

SLIDE AVALANCHE: Slides 29-45 (Simba is last one)

I once worked a week of church camp where the guest speaker was a young man who was the actual personification of the "missionary from Africa" trope. One night after the kids had been sent to their cabins we sat and talked, and he taught me something that forever changed how I saw 1 Peter 5:8. Before I tell you what that is, I want to show you this video clip from an episode of Survivor back in 2000.

VIDEO CLIP- Survivor Hot Air Balloon

After VIDEO CLIP, go to SLIDE 46: Lion Prowl (monochromatic with yellow eyes). Leave until final slide.

(You can't hide those...)

My missionary friend said this: "Have you ever thought about the disconnect between a hunting lion and a roaring lion? A hunting lion doesn't roar! A lion on

the hunt is deadly quiet. It glides through the brush, as silent as death itself. A roaring lion gives itself away. Everyone knows where the roaring lion is hiding. In fact, a roaring lion isn't hiding at all! Turns out a roaring lion is generally an old lion who has been around a long time. He's got limited capacity for some reason... perhaps his eyes aren't what they used to be, maybe he's missing a few teeth, maybe he has a limp that keeps him from running like he used to, or a touch of arthritis in his joints. But he's still hungry.

So what the roaring lion does is advertise. He makes so much noise that it pushes the unsuspecting prey towards the lions who aren't roaring... who are as silent as death itself. You saw how it played out in the clip, right? The first lion chased the "wildebeest", but not with any intent of catching it. It was just wearing it down a bit, and then steering it into the jaws of lion #2.

The Devil has known from the beginning that he has been beaten. He cannot take the throne away from our God. He has been hamstrung, limited in freedom. He can influence, but the victory has been taken away from him. And in that bitter knowledge he seeks only to steal, kill, and destroy. And if he cannot poison your heart against God or your mind against the Church, he will do whatever he can to mislead you, to draw you off the path, to roar and push you towards your own failure and destruction.

The Devil Says- "God has deserted you. He has no idea the pain and fear you live with every day. Or if He does, He doesn't care."

The Truth Says- You are safely in His arms as you go through this. This world is not easy, but it is here that you will learn... to be patient, to have empathy, to rely on Him, to depend on one another, to pray, to watch and heed the promptings of the Holy Spirit, to live as a brother and a sister to all believers, to serve as ambassadors for the Kingdom of God, and to hope like a Child of the King.

I leave you with two questions today: 1) Do you find yourself frequently battling against the Devil, and the more telling question, 2) If not, why?

SLIDE- "For He has rescued us from the Kingdom of darkness, and transferred us into the Kingdom of His Dear Son."