

Evil Can't Win

Part 1: It Can't Sustain Itself.

(preached 11/3/24)

Please turn to *Ezekiel 28:13-17, 2 Corinthians 6:14-15, 1 Corinthians 15:50-58.*

This is a Presidential Election year and a time of division in our country.

Emotions are high, things can get heated, even to the point of family and friends drawing lines in the sand and ending relationships. Why are things so intense and why are some going to such extreme measures? *Why can't we agree to just disagree and still be friends?*

The answer is that “evil” is being attached in the

conflict. Horrible labels like “Hitler, Communist, Nazi” are being applied in the midst of this fray and those who believe such things to be true want no fellowship with what they consider to be darkness.

What is evil?

- Has it always existed?
- Will it win?
- Will it be here forever?
- How can it be overcome?

Allow the following revelations to change your life. Apply them to the world, to our country, and to the battles you face personally: both the one within and those without.

Evil exists only in response to good.

- It has no “life” within itself.
- It cannot sustain itself.

Imagine a healthy tree growing in your backyard. Suddenly it comes down with a disease that threatens to rot it out.

- Which existed first: the tree or the disease? **The tree.**
- Did the tree exist for awhile WITHOUT the disease? **Yes.**
- Did the disease exist without the tree...or did it depend on the tree to sustain itself? **It depended on the tree.**
- ***If the disease was cut out of the tree, the tree would live and the disease would die***

God created marriage in the beginning when He wedded Adam & Eve. The opposite of marriage is adultery, which God calls sin.

- Which existed first? Marriage.
- Can marriage exist without adultery? Yes.
- Can adultery exist without marriage? No.
- *Adultery only exists in RESPONSE to marriage.*

Do you own something? A home, a car, some furniture, a cell phone? The opposite of owning is stealing, which is a sin.

- Which came first: ownership or theft? Ownership.
- Can ownership exist without theft? Yes.
- Can theft exist without ownership? No.
- *Theft depends on ownership and not the other way around.*

Evil and sin cannot exist without goodness and righteousness, but goodness and righteousness can exist without evil and sin.

Once upon a time it did...and will again.

- A person can only lie because truth existed first.
- One can only dishonor their parents if they have parents.
- One can only murder if life is already present.

The only reason we have Satan is because we have God and evil was found within the devil first:

[Eze 28:13-17 ESV] 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. 14 You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. 15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. 16 In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you.

This tells the tragic tale of Lucifer whom we've come to know as the Dragon, Satan, the Devil. How he was once a powerful and beautiful angel who lived in Heaven with God and then something happened: *evil was "found" in him.* Verse 17 says that his heart became proud because of his own beauty which then corrupted the great wisdom he had.

IDK how Lucifer was able to separate himself from God in his own heart, but what I do know is that he was the first: **he is the source from which all evil flows.**

While we can't blame him for every bad choice we make, it is because of him that mankind came to know evil and be corrupted by the same. He's the reason we all live with it until this day.

- Did God and goodness exist before Lucifer was created? Yes
- Did God and goodness exist before Lucifer sinned and became evil? Yes.
- *God and goodness will exist long after Lucifer is gone for good.*

God doesn't need Satan, Satan needs God.

In the GOE mankind only knew good but after we rebelled, we knew BOTH good and evil.

- Now that we know the latter, we can DO the latter.

Evil points to good and not the other way around.

Since evil depends on good to live—like cancer feeds from a healthy body—it actually POINTS to God and His goodness. The Apostle Paul tells us that, in a sense, **it highlights God's righteousness!** In *Romans 7:13* he tells us that God's righteous commandments show sin to be evil.

Before we were Saved all 4 parts of us knew both good and evil: our bodies, minds, hearts, and spirits. Our spirit is the part of us that lives on after the mortal body expires and goes on into eternity.

When Jesus cleansed us with His blood, He permanently removed evil from our spirits.

Our spirits only know good and guess what: it's doing just fine!

- It doesn't need nor depend on sinful desires to exist...or to be HAPPY.
- It doesn't prioritize pleasure in order for it to experience JOY.

Thanks to Jesus, our spirit is constantly joyful and righteous at the same time, with no conflict.

- It wants to be in God's presence and worship Him!
- It desires to pray, prophesy, and lay hands on the sick!
- It clings to God's Word and loves to consume it!
- It wants to obey the Lord: restraining from sin and doing what's right!

Do you know that some Eastern religions have tried to “solve” the problem of good vs. evil by claiming there must be a “balance”? Have you ever seen the Yin-Yang? Have you ever watched Star Wars? In Star Wars there was the Light Side and the Dark Side of the Force. The first 3 movies allow the Light Side to triumph over the Dark Side...but the later movies took a more sinister turn and clung to a more Eastern religion approach.

If you listen to the later movies and TV series it’s all about BALANCE between the Light and Dark sides. If there are too many good Jedi then “the Force” will compel more people to embrace the DS to balance things out—and vice versa.

NO! The Light of God doesn’t need the darkness! As a matter of fact, guess what the very definition of darkness is? The absence of Light! The Light God put within you and I doesn’t need the darkness either:

[2Co 6:14-15 ESV] 14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

The Apostle Paul isn’t just wagging his finger at us. He (and I) are not just saying “it’s time for us to do better!” He’s sharing a truth that we’ve been made righteous and been given the Light of Christ because we believe. Righteousness doesn’t need lawlessness to exist. Light doesn’t need darkness. Jesus most certainly doesn’t need Belial!

Evil and sin have lied to us for too long.

It’s like trying to leave an abusive, cheating, and obsessive ex who just won’t let us go.

- While we were in a relationship with them they gaslit us, kept us from having friends, and tried to control us.
- They told us we were worthless and that no one else would ever want us except them. (IRONY: the Hebrew translation of the god Belial is “worthless.” Satan makes us feel worthless.)
- They convinced us there was no way we could make it without them, as if they were part of who we were.

Sin—which IS evil—tries to tell us that it’s PART of us—interwoven into our very being like strands of DNA. That if it were taken out we would die, wouldn’t be who we truly are. Some Christians have given up the fight against it because it seems so strong. They’ve even gone so far as to embrace that part of themselves and sometimes even exalt it.

The truth is any sin inside of us is only a RESPONSE to God's goodness:

[Rom 7:8-9 ESV] 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, **produced in me** all kinds of covetousness. **For apart from the law, sin lies dead.** 9 I was once alive apart from the law, but **when the commandment came, sin came alive** and I died.

Sin (evil) cannot exist without God's holiness, but God's holiness can exist without sin.

My spirit and yours are FREE from evil. Jesus removed it once and for all then remade it into His likeness which is great news because Jesus is completely free from evil, death, and unrighteousness. **Our desires and insecurities are NOT who we are.**

We need to HATE sin. We're actually called upon by the Lord to hate it *instead of people:*

[Psa 97:10-12 ESV] 10 **O you who love the LORD, hate evil!** He preserves the lives of his saints; he delivers them from the hand of the wicked. 11 **Light is sown for the righteous,** and **joy for the upright in heart.** 12 Rejoice in the LORD, **O you righteous,** and give thanks to his holy name!

"Scott, I don't feel much joy in my life." Perhaps we don't hate our sin enough? Maybe we continue to allow it to lie to us and therefore justify it's existence in our lives?

[Psa 119:101-104 ESV] 101 **I hold back my feet from every evil way,** in order to keep your word. 102 I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me. 103 **How sweet are your words to my taste,** sweeter than honey to my mouth! 104 Through your precepts I get understanding; **therefore I hate every false way.**

What if we hated the lies we tell ourselves? IDK about you, but I can't stand being gaslit and deceived by others...especially those in authority like government. I hate the lies they tell because I see how it impacts those I love and myself. Yet as we said in the previous sermon series, the biggest battle is against the lies we've convinced ourselves of. If we take up the Sword of the Spirit against them, wouldn't we be less susceptible to the deception of others?

[Psa 141:3-5 ESV] 3 Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips! 4 **Do not let my heart incline to any evil,** to busy myself with wicked deeds in company with men who work iniquity, and let me not eat of their delicacies! 5 **Let a righteous man strike me--it is a kindness; let him rebuke me--it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it.**

The previous sermon series showed us we need to *have constant conversations with ourselves* where we need to speak truth in response to any lies we believe. We need to let others do the same to us.

This applies as much to me as any of you: **if we are living out an aspect of sin and another notices the same**, we need to allow them to bring it up to us. Even if the person doing so is under our authority, should we be in a position like that. I don't like this any more than you do but we all have blind spots that need to be addressed by a third party.

We need to also receive rebukes from unbelievers. There have been several times in my life when I felt deeply convicted after an unbeliever called me out on something and realized it was the Lord speaking through that person.

[Pro 8:13 ESV] 13 **The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.** Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.

A day will come when this mortal body finally expires and guess what? **We will fully be our spirits...who have no evil.** At the Resurrection we'll get a new body, new heart, and new mind all made from the stuff of Heaven and none of it will know evil.

[1Co 15:50-58 ESV] 50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed,** 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and **the power of sin is the law.** 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, **be steadfast, immovable,** always abounding in the work of the Lord, **knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.**

Verse 50: the corrupted parts us (mix of good and evil) will not inherit God's Kingdom (Heaven/NJ). Why not? There's no evil there and no sin. Remember: sin and death are a married couple that will never be divorced. ***When evil is removed, both sin and death are removed at the same time.***

Verses 51-55: when the Resurrection happens we're CHANGED to something IMPERISHABLE (deathless and therefore sinless) and IMMORTAL.

Verse 56: with evil removed, it will no longer exist. No longer be able to do the Romans 7 thing: feed off of God's goodness, lie to us, and inspire us to embrace it!

Verse 57: by removing evil from our spirits we've been given VICTORY.

Verse 58: turning from sin and the lies it tells us are NOT in vain. Let's keep up the good work!

Evil and sin are the ones clinging to life, not our righteousness.

The Devil is the one whose days are numbered, not ours.

It's THEM that cannot live without us!!! (Not the other way around b/c Christ has made us like Him).

We CAN live without them and are designed to!