

FREEDOM IN THE CROSSHAIRS #4

Overcoming the Accuser

I. Introduction

I want to continue our 'Freedom' series tonight with a teaching entitled:

Overcoming the Accuser

John 8:32

Jesus said, you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

This would include knowing the truth about our enemy:

- He is a liar and the father of all lies
- The one who comes only to kill, steal and destroy

2 Corinthians 2:11

The Apostle Paul told us that the devil will take advantage of us if we are ignorant of his devices. (Schemes, strategy)

Last week we learned that...

Knowing Our Enemy

**The Devil has 2 devices. Deception and Accusation.
He is the deceiver of the whole world and the accuser of the brethren.**

The level of the Devil's activity can be measured by how much deception and accusation is at work in a nation or in an individual.

He is a DECEIVER.

Revelation 12:7-9

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

He is an ACCUSER

Revelation 12:10-11

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Accuser

A person who claims that someone has committed an offense or done something wrong.

In his classic book "The Accuser", David Alsobrook pointed out the *subtlety* of Satan and the difficulty of discerning his presence...

David Alsobrook in "The Accuser"

When Satan appears as the tempter, his presence is very obvious. When he comes as a deceiver, his presence is usually not quite as obvious. However, when he comes as the accuser, we sometimes not only fail to discern Satan's voice, but we may also even mistake it for the voice of God!

The Bible says the devil accuses us 'day and night'. He never stops accusing us. What we need is to learn to discern how he does it. In 4 different ways.

SATAN IS AN ACCUSER

- He accuses us to God and he accuses God us
- He accuses other Christians to us and us to other Christians
- He accuses us to the world and he accuses the world to us
 - He accuses us to ourselves

Before we finish, every one of us is going to experience freedom from this device of the devil—accusation. I want to look at these one at a time.

I. Satan is an Accuser

A. He Accuses the Believer to God and God to the Believer

1. The most well-known example of how the Devil accuses the saints to God is found in the Book of Job. Here God 'draws back the curtain' to show us how the Devil accuses the saints before the throne of God.

Job 1:6-7

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. And the Lord said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."

(I like the New Living Testament translation on these verses)

Job 1:6-7 NLT

One day the members of the heavenly court came to present themselves before the Lord, and the Accuser, Satan, came with them. "Where have you come from?" the Lord asked Satan. Satan answered the Lord, "I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on."

a. Bible scholars agree that the ‘sons of God’ here refers to the angelic beings. Among them is Satan, the Accuser; remember, ‘enemy’ in Hebrew means, ‘the one who watches you’!

Job 1:8

Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

(Notice that when God *brags* on Job the Devil immediately *accuses* him!)

Job 1:9-11

So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

2. The accusation is that Job only honored God because God had showered Job with material blessings. Satan is saying:

- “No wonder Job serves You, God; look how great you’re treating him!”
- “Job doesn’t really care about You, God; he only cares about what You do for him.”

a. Most of us might expect Satan to accuse us to God when we sin; but the story of Job reveals how Satan will accuse us to God even when we’re doing everything right!

b. Another surprise is how God responds to Satan's accusation that Job only obeyed God because God had blessed him. God actually gives the Accuser permission to test him with troubles.

Job 1:12

And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person."

3. Notice. Although God allows Job to be afflicted, He sets a limit on Satan. He will not allow Satan to kill him.

4. So then all hell breaks loose on Job; he loses his children, his livestock and his physical health. All he has left is his wife.

David Alsobrook

Satan spared Job's wife because they were one flesh, and Satan had to obey and recognize that union. So, Satan decides: "If I can't get at Job directly, I can do it indirectly through his wife."

a. Job's wife doesn't realize that she is allowing the Accuser to use her when she makes fun of his faith.

Job 2:9 NKJV

Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

Job 2:9 The Living Bible

His wife said to him, "Are you still trying to be godly when God has done all this to you? Curse him and die."

b. Here we have a *2-fold accusation* coming through the mouth of Job's wife: an accusation against Job for 'still trying to be godly' and an accusation against a God who would allow such awful things to happen.

Albert Barnes

Job's wife expressed the feelings of corrupt human nature everywhere when sorely afflicted. The suggestion will cross the mind, often with almost irresistible force, that a God who thus afflicts his creatures is not worthy of confidence; and *many a time a child of God is tempted to give vent to feelings of rebellion and complaining like this, and to renounce all his religion.*

c. Testimony: It has been my personal experience as well as in pastoring others *that the voice of the accuser will speak to us like this during times of intensive trial or extended seasons of personal suffering.*

- “You’re a fool for believing this stuff!”
 - Or: “If you’re really trying to live for God why does God allow this to happen? Why doesn’t He do something?”
- d. Satan will accuse us to God; then he will accuse God to us.

5. As we know, Job endured all the onslaughts against him and came out in the end with double what he began with. Thousands of years later we compliment people that have ‘the patience of Job’.

a. Remember that through all his months of suffering, Job has no idea of why this is all happening to him! He has no way of knowing that God has allowed the Accuser of the brethren to test his faith!

b. Even his 3 friends who come to comfort him are sure (in their own minds) that some secret sin is behind his suffering. But Job’s faith in God’s goodness never waivers.

Job 13:15

Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.

6. The story of Job teaches us that even if God has allowed the Accuser to test our patience and faith through some serious season of trial, especially if we are blameless, the devil is on a leash. He can only go so far! God will not allow him to kill us.

7. Just remember that all the suffering Job endured began with an ACCUSATION against him by the devil before the throne of God.

8. So we see that Satan accuses us to God; but...

B. Satan Also Accuses God to the Believer

1. We already saw, in a previous message, how Satan deceived Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Tucked into the temptation was a satanic insinuation that God was not a good God.

Genesis 3:4-5

Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. *For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*"

- a. "God didn't tell you the truth of why he forbids you to eat."
- b. "He is not telling you the truth."
- c. "God doesn't want you to know you to be as great as He is."

2. It's easy for us to look back and see how silly they were to doubt God's goodness.

3. But can we see how Satan still uses that same device today? We need to learn to recognize Satan's voice when he accuses God to us when our prayers seem unanswered, or we go through extended seasons of suffering.

4. Review: So when the Bible says Satan is 'the accuser of the brethren' it not only means that Satan accuses us to God and God to us, it also means that...

SATAN IS AN ACCUSER

- **He accuses us to God and he accuses God to us**
- **He accuses other believers and he accuses other believers to us**

C. Satan Accuses Us to Other Believers and Other Believers to Us

1. This refers to how Satan uses accusation to bring strife and discord inside the church. Solomon wrote of this.

Proverbs 6:16-19

**16 These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:
17 A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.**

2. The 7th thing God hates is 'he who sows discord among brethren'. Satan sows discord among the brethren as the spirit of accusation.

- a. There is an old saying: "There's no fight like a church fight."

b. We were just barely saved when we witnessed our first ‘church fight’; it was a business meeting in a Baptist church over the salary of the Pastor. It was ugly!

c. We look back now and know it was the work of the accuser of the brethren.

David Alsobrook

The greatest hindrance to unity in the church today is not diversity of doctrine or differences of creed, but the discord among the brethren. Much of the division and discord in the church today is due to the work of the accuser of the brethren. At times we unwittingly become a tool of the accuser and voice his very words when he uses our mouth as a tool to accuse others.

3. The average churchgoer is often ignorant of the devil’s devices, especially in the area of accusation. They have no idea how the devil uses their own mouths to sow discord among brethren without their knowing it.

David Alsobrook

How subtly the accuser works to fill our minds with accusations about others! Often, we think these are our own thoughts, not realizing that the accuser is whispering in our ear. Sometimes we have thought the accuser's suggestions about our brothers were insights from God and have called this process the "gift of discernment."

4. We have run into this all too often. Some of the greatest servants and workers in the church, people who truly love God, think they have a gift of discernment when it is really nothing more than a spirit of criticism and accusation.

- Paulk story
- F story

5. In Mark’s gospel, Jesus defines the things that defile a person.

Mark 7:20-23

And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, AN EVIL EYE, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

a. Of all the obvious sins in this list, the one we never hear about is the ‘evil eye’. How did that make the list?

David Alsobrook

What is an EVIL EYE? To look at a person and immediately think evil or to look at them to discover what is wrong with them or to see what wrong they reflect. An EVIL EYE is in operation when a person who has no merit for his judgment looks upon someone and instantly judges from the outward appearance.

David Alsobrook

An EVIL EYE is looking upon someone with evil suspicion. The accused may have done nothing or said nothing. Nothing firsthand is known about the person. This is an evil eye that defiles not only the person with the evil eye but often the whole body. Suspicion is very contagious.

- b. An evil eye can run in families.
- c. An evil eye can take over whole churches.
- d. An evil eye is closely connected with Satan, the accuser of the brethren.

6. The Apostle Paul wrote a warning about this to the Galatian church:

Galatians 5:14-15

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

a. The terms ‘bite’ and ‘devour’ refer to things we do with our mouths! He was referring to accusation and criticism; things that divide the church and consume the one who does it.

7. Satan accuses my brothers to me; but he also accuses me to my brothers.

- a. B.L. story
- b. J story

8. Those who operate in the spirit of accusation have no idea they are tools of the devil to sow discord among brethren.

9. I do not believe there is any way to calculate the damage the devil has done to the Body of Christ through the spirit of accusation operating as the accuser of the brethren.

10. Satan accuses brother to brother. But....

D. Satan Also Accuses Us to the World and the World to Us

1. I will close with the first part of this point: Satan accuses us to the world.

2. Easton's Bible Dictionary has this definition of Satan:

Easton's Bible Dictionary

Satan is the 'accuser of the brethren'. He seeks to uphold his influence among men by bringing false charges against Christians, with the view of weakening their influence and injuring the cause with which they are identified.

3. Satan seeks to undermine the influence of the church in a culture.

- a. He will accuse Christians of hypocrisy.
- b. He will accuse the Church as the cause of a nation's problems.

4. An example of how Satan uses political power to accuse the church is found in the confrontation of the prophet Elijah with evil King Ahab.

1 Kings 18:17-18 ESV

When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is it you, you troubler of Israel?" And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father's house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the Lord and followed the Baals.

5. The current campaign in our own country includes accusing the church that preaches the Bible of hate speech.

- a. "Homosexuality is a sin" = "Christians are homophobic"
- b. "Abortion is murder" = "Christians oppose women's rights"
- c. "All lives matter" = Christians are racists

6. The faithful church, like Elijah, will reject the charges and rebuke those who are really causing the problems.

III. Conclusion

A. Review: Overcoming the Accuser

1. The Devil has 2 primary devices: Deception and Accusation.

2. We overcome deception by knowing the truth that sets us free; we overcome the Accuser when we learn to discern his voice:

- When he speaks to our minds
- When he is seeking to speak through us
- When we see him at work in our nation

3. The implications of accusation run far deeper than we realize. It is running rampant through the culture under many banners.

4. God displaced the Devil from heaven as the ‘accuser of the brethren’; it’s time for God’s people to displace him from our lives!

5. We do this by ‘not being ignorant of the Devil’s devices’.

SATAN IS AN ACCUSER

- **He accuses us to God and he accuses God us**
- **He accuses other Christians to us and us to other Christians**
- **He accuses us to the world and he accuses the world to us**

6. Next week, we will go a little deeper to expose the satanic strategy called:

The Blame Game

How we can overcome the accuser by the acceptance of personal responsibility

Closing Prayer