

FREEDOM IN THE CROSSHAIRS #3

Know Your Enemy

I. Introduction

Tonight, we continue our teaching series on 'Freedom in the Crosshairs'. The title is taken from the perilous predicament of the Christian church in America where the enemies of God have set their sights on taking away our freedom and bringing us into bondage to a totalitarian political system. But the Lord has promised us freedom if we meet His conditions...

John 8:31-32

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Theme

Jesus says that there is a close connection between truth and freedom.

Freedom comes from knowing the truth.

(From which we have a corollary)

If freedom comes from knowing the truth bondage comes from believing a lie.

This principle applies to individual persons and nations.

Personal Application

Any place in my life where I am not free, there is a truth I do not know or there is a lie that I am believing.

History has taught us the same principle applies to nations.

Political Application

A nation founded on God's word and the principles of God's truth will be free. But any nation that believes in a lie will be brought into bondage.

The power of knowing the truth sets men and nations free.

The power of believing a lie brings men and nations into bondage.

The truth that sets us free is our friend and comes from God.

Conversely, the lie that brings bondage is our enemy and comes from the devil. To be free means you must know your God; to avoid bondage means you must...

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

I. Know Your Enemy

A. This is One of the 1st Principles of Winning Warfare

1. 500 years before the birth of Christ, Chinese warlord Sun Tzu wrote a book called “The Art of War”; it’s still studied today in all military academies.

SunTzu in “The Art of War”

If you know neither the enemy nor your yourself, you will lose every battle.

Sun Tzu

(544-496 B.C.)

Know yourself, know your enemy. A thousand battles, a thousand victories.

2. No wise commander goes to war without knowing his own army and without studying the enemy.

3. The Apostle Paul echoed the same principle to the Church of Corinth in a word of warning if we do not know our enemy...

2 Corinthians 2:11

Lest Satan should take advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.

a. Paraphrase: Satan will take advantage of us if we are ignorant of his devices.

“Devices”

(Gk. ‘noema’)

purpose, disposition, or thought process

Modern translations:

“schemes”

4. To be ignorant means to lack knowledge; which can kill you!

Hosea 4:6

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

5. Here is some knowledge we need to win the war with the devil.

3 Things To Know About The Enemy

The Devil is a Liar

**The Devil's purpose is to steal, kill and destroy
The Devil's devices are deception and accusation**

B. The Devil is a Liar

1. Our proof text on this point comes from the Lord Jesus Himself in His famous debate with the Pharisees in John 8.

John 8:43-44

Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. *He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

a. Notice that they cannot understand God's word because they were of their father, the devil!

b. 'From the beginning' refers to the fall of man in the Garden of Eden.

2. Here's a brief review of the 1st 3 statements of Satan recorded in the Bible:

Hath God said?

(The serpent is subtle; he begins by simply questioning God's word)

You shall not surely die!

(He moves from questioning to outright denial)

You shall be like God, knowing good and evil.

(The greatest lie ever told; that we can 'know' independent from God)

a. He still employs these same 3 devices today.

3. Jesus tells us that the devil is not only a liar; he is a 'murderer'. God had warned them of that tree; 'in the day you eat of it you will surely die'; but now we discover they did not just die; they were *murdered!* They were murdered by believing a lie!

4. Jesus goes on to tell us that the devil is not only a liar but a thief as well.

John 10:10

The thief cometh not but for the steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

a. There is an ascending severity in the devil's purpose in coming:

- To steal from us (our peace, our joy, our finances, our family)
- To kill us (physical death)
- To destroy us (spiritual death)

b. The Rolling Stones may sing about "Sympathy for the Devil"; but he will receive no sympathy here.

Matthew Henry

Deceivers of souls are murderers of souls.

5. If we care about our own souls and the souls of others we must expose the works of the great Deceiver.

C. The Greatest of the Devil's Devices: Deception

1. The devil's deception begins in the Book of Genesis and continues right on through the Book of Revelation.

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.

a. Here we have 4 names given our enemy...

- **The great dragon**
- **The serpent of old**
 - **The Devil**
 - **Satan**

b. Notice that the ‘serpent’ in the Book of Genesis has become the ‘dragon’ in the Book of Revelation. This is not because he is more powerful now than then but that his devices now influence an entire race. He deceives the whole world!

2. Here is what some great men of God said about this verse:

John Gill

(English theologian, 1697-1771)

Satan deceives the whole world, which he did by deceiving our first parents, from whom all mankind spring, and in whose loins they were when they were deceived. And so he seduces every age and generation of men in the world.

Charles Spurgeon

(Baptist Reformed minister, the ‘Prince of Preachers’, 1834-1892)

What a power of deception must reside in him, when under his influence a third part of the stars of heaven were made to fall, and myriads of men in all ages have worshipped demons and idols! He has steeped the minds of men in delusion, so that they cannot see that they should worship none but God, their Maker.

John Wesley

(Founder of the Methodist Church, 1703-1791)

He has deceived the whole world — Not only in our first parents, but through all ages, and in all countries, deceiving into unbelief and all wickedness; into the hating and persecuting faith and all goodness.

3. The devil’s deception, that began with Adam and Eve, has extended throughout the whole world in every field of endeavor: science, politics, education, and religion.

a. **In science: the devil has deceived the whole world with Darwinism,** the theory of evolution that denies God made the heavens and the earth; denies that God created man and woman and all the species and made them to reproduce after their own kind.

b. **In politics: the has deceived the whole world with many ‘isms’:** Marxism, Communism, Socialism; political theories that deny God’s word on our right to private property and promise us a political salvation independent of God. Socialism is based on a great lie that has deceived millions and brought many nations into bondage. But the deception is not limited to the natural world.

c. **In religion: the devil has deceived the whole world with systems of salvation that cannot save:** Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism; all of which deny the claim of Jesus as the only way to the Father.

d. **Even within the ranks of those who call themselves Christian, the devil has deceived millions through the proliferation of 'christian' cults:** Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Unitarianism, the Way

4. **The Lies We Believe** bring us into bondage: in science, in politics, or in religion. We must 'Know Our Enemy'. He 'deceives the whole world'.

5. So what can a Christian do in the midst of deception? We can "Flip the Switch": We can expose the lies we believe and speak the truth that sets us free.

- We can denounce the doctrines of Darwin and evolution and preach the word of God about creation to our children.
- We can renounce the antichrist political systems of Socialism.
 - We can preach Christ as the only way to God.

6. We can follow the words of the Apostle Paul about separating ourselves from those who line up with the enemy and we can expose their works to light.

Ephesians 5:11

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

a. God is calling His true church to separate ourselves from this world.

We must close our ears to the mass media's propaganda of lies and deception.

b. We must speak the truth and expose the works of darkness.

7. We can do this if we know our enemy! His greatest device is deception. But he has a second weapon.

D. The Devil is the Accuser of the Brethren

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*".

1. The Greek word for ‘accuser’ means ‘one who blames another’ or charges another with a crime. The term ‘brethren’ refers to Christians, or the people of God.

Albert Barnes

Perhaps the most skillful thing that Satan does, and the thing by which he most contributes to diminish the influence of the church, is in causing ‘accusations’ to be brought against the people of God. He accuses ‘day and night’. He never ceases to bring accusations against the brethren to convince the world that there is no sincerity in the church and no reality in religion.

2. This explains why the Christian church always comes under persecution by antichrist socialist political systems that are controlled by the Devil.

3. Think of how all the nations controlled by Socialists, Communists and Marxist always seek to drive the church underground or destroy it altogether. This explains why Christianity in America is coming under attack by the political party currently in power.

Albert Barnes

Satan is ‘the accuser of the righteous’; he is employed in bringing against them charges maligning their character and destroying their influence. By this he keeps up his influence in the world—bringing accusations against the people of God so that they are charged with hypocrisy and insincerity; with being influenced by bad motives.

Albert Barnes

Satan accuses the people of God with being influenced by bad motives; with pursuing sinister designs under the cloak of religion; with secret vices and crimes. So were the martyrs accused. He brings unfounded accusations against ministers of the gospel to paralyze and diminish their influence, and if a professing Christian falls, the church is made to suffer by an effort to cast suspicion on all who bear the Christian name.

4. This explains the incredible ‘double-standard’ that exists in the media today when it comes to judging people.

a. For 4 years, if anything went wrong, it was President Trump’s fault.

- The media accused President Trump of inhumanity in putting immigrant children at the border in cages; but he actually got them out. And it was President Obama who built the cages in the first place

b. I could cite dozens of examples, but the point is made. Much is explained when we ‘know our enemy’! Especially these 2 things:

He is the Deceiver of the whole world’ and the ‘accuser of the brethren’.

So how do we win the Victory Over Satan?

III. Conclusion: Overcoming the Devil

A. Three Keys

Revelation 12:11

And they overcame him (1) by the blood of the Lamb and (2) by the word of their testimony, and (3) they did not love their lives to the death.

(“They” is “Us!”)

1. The first thing we need to overcome the devil is ‘the blood of the Lamb’.

a. **This refers to Christian salvation; those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.**

b. We know that all Christians are covered by the blood of the Lamb; so why are so many still defeated by the Devil?

c. Because the blood of the Lamb is only the first element we need for victory over Satan.

2. It says **“they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony...**

a. The word “testimony” is from a Greek word which means to give evidence, to give witness to report.

“Testimony”

Marturia (mar-too-ree'-ah, from which we get the English word "martyr")
The Greek word means evidence given; record, report, witness

b. This is legal language; in a courtroom, a witness gives testimony; it means *to speak!*

c. Defeating the devil will require us to open our mouths and speak!

d. There will be no victory for those who remain silent.

3. What is 'the word of their testimony'?

a. The Greek word translated "word" here means the substance of what is spoken forth; a testimony consists of words.

b. When we put the 2 thoughts together we can quickly see that the "word of their testimony" refers to their "speaking forth the Word of God"!

We overcome the Devil by (1) the blood of the Lamb and (2) the word of our testimony; which means that we are speaking forth the Word of God out of our mouth!

c. Remember that Jesus overcame Satan by speaking the word of God to him; and this is the same way that we overcome him!

Matthew Henry

The word of their testimony is the great instrument of war, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Ephesians 6:17

Take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (rhema) of God.

d. F.B. Meyer, an English Pastor and friend of D.L. Moody captured the concept this way:

F.B. Meyer

"We overcome only in so far as we take shelter in the blood of the Lamb and wield the Word of God as our weapon."

Review:

4. So we overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of God as our testimony; but there is one more thing, often overlooked...

Revelation 12:10

And they overcame him by (1) the blood of the Lamb and (2) by the word of their testimony, and (3) *they loved not their lives unto death.*

B. Third: They Loved Not Their Lives Unto Death

1. Here is the one we never hear about; but it's as important as the first 2.

John Wesley

“By the word of their testimony is meant the word of God, which they believed and testified, even unto death.”

John Wesley

2. It literally means that those who overcome the Devil are so completely committed to the Word of God that they are not afraid to die for it.

Revelation 12:11 (New English Translation)

...and they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die.

3. We are in a war. No nation ever won a war without soldiers; and no soldier ever goes to war if he is afraid to die!

4. The level of deception today is high; the accuser of the brethren is at work; our freedom is in the crosshairs of that great Liar who is attacking the truth. But we can overcome—**if we know our enemy** and meet the conditions!

5. Let me close with a word of wisdom from a great Scottish theologian:

Horatius Bonar

The real chains, prison, and bondage are within us – so is true liberty. True freedom springs from what a man knows of God and of his Christ. Seldom do men realize this. Error brings bondage! But the Master is very explicit. The truth shall make you free. There is no other freedom worthy of the name.

Closing Prayer

Lord, you told your disciples who continue in your word that we would know the truth and the truth would make us free.

Help us know the truth that makes us free.

Show us the lies we believe that are keeping us in bondage.

Help us to know our enemy and understand the devil's devices.
How he deceives the nation and accuses the brethren.
Most of all, help us to overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, by speaking the
truth of your Word, and not loving our lives even to death.
May we be found faithful to the end!
In Jesus' name, AMEN!