

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: Unseen Battle
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Know Your Enemy

Passage: Ezekiel 28:12-19

12 “Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: “You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. 14 You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. 15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. 16 Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. 17 Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. 18 By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. 19 All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.””

Harris Creek, how are we doing? Excited to be with you. I know that was appropriately terrifying. Because we’re talking about the devil. And so, that’s why. So, I’ll start by just telling you a story.

When I was nine years old, I had a friend over to stay the night, and my parents were sleeping, and we were supposed to be sleeping, but we weren’t. We were looking for trouble, as nine-year-old sometimes do when they’re supposed to be sleeping. I was looking for something to play, some game or something, and we were in the guest bedroom, it was my buddy Cody John and I, and I had just been in this closet, this little walk-in closet in the bedroom, about five-foot by five-foot, and one side there’s just shelves in there and the other side is, you know, clothes, a pole that was just full of clothes we didn’t wear, if you will.

So, I had just kind of been there looking for games. And I come out there, shut the door, and then I was going back in there, I was going to look...I couldn’t find what I was looking for, so I was going to go back in there. I open the door, and when I open the door, something didn’t look right to my nine-year-old brain. I’m kind of, I’m seeing something, and it’s taking me a minute to process. There’s something there that doesn’t belong. And what it was - was a snake that had

come down the shelves and was suspended about halfway across the closet, and my nine-year-old brain is looking at that like, "Is that real? Is someone punk-in me, like what's going on?" And then it moved towards me. And when it moved toward me, I knew it was real. And I don't...you know, I can't explain this, but I somehow like supernaturally kind of morphed to the back wall and I just began to scream. And Cody John's like, "What's going on? What's going on?" I'm like, "There's a snake! There's a snake in the closet! There's a snake!" And so, you know, we go and get my dad because everything had been, you know, right in the house. All peaceful, wonderful, great night, I have a friend over. And now I'm like, "Dad, you've got to come! There's a snake!" And so, he gets up and he's like, "How did you know you know? I thought you were supposed to be sleeping." I was like, "Well it woke me up!" You know? And so, he comes to get the snake, and when he approaches the closet, it slithers off. All right. And it's gone. And we can't find it.

Yeah. Yeah. Which changes everything. Okay? Cause then he's like, "Hey, y'all go back to bed." I'm like yeah, like that's going to happen. What in the world? Like where is it, and what is it capable of? And what had shifted because it changed... just the awareness that it's there now changes everything in the house. There's an enemy among us. There's something present that is not safe. It's dangerous. It can hurt us. Right? There's an enemy among us. My little nine-year-old brain, I'm like, "No! This place, we got to burn it down and move! It's not safe!"

And that's what I want to talk about with you this morning. That there is an enemy among us. There is an enemy who is present, and we're going to learn about him. We're really speaking to this idea of knowing your enemy, and we're kicking off a new series called "Unseen Battle," which is a series on spiritual warfare. Which is a topic which, as Christians, we're aware of, but we really don't know that much about it. We're like, "Oh yeah, Satan." And we'll throw that out there, and what will even happen is we'll say things about him that are not true. We'll say that he's responsible for things that, candidly, he didn't do. And then there are things that he has done that we won't blame him for. And we can't see the way that he works, we just kind of live under this, "Well, like I don't know, how does that even happen?"

C. S. Lewis said this about the enemy. Really about us and about our belief about the enemy. He said, "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence, and the other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them." So, one belief that he's saying, one error C.S. Lewis is calling out, is to not believe there is an enemy. To say, "Ah. Whatever." And the other is to make too much of him. He's in every bush and around every corner and he's going to get me. And I live in fear of him. I want to put before you that I think there is a third error. I'm not claiming to be smarter than C.S. Lewis by any means. But I think that in 2022, there is a third error that you believe. There's a third error that we fall into. So, try this on for size. See if I'm talking about most of you. We believe there's an enemy, we believe there are devils, demons and evil. If I were to give you a multiple choice: Is Satan real or not? Or: Satan is real. True or false? I think most people that can hear me right now would say true. And it would have zero implications on how you live.

So, like yesterday...today, I believe Satan's real, yesterday you didn't think much of that. In making decisions, you're not thinking, "Well what does the enemy want? What is he after? How is he at work? What is he capable of?" We don't even understand that. What can he do? What does it look like for him to interact with material things? Can he read my mind? Does he plant thoughts? What can he make me do? Can I be possessed? What is the difference between possession and oppression? And so here we are in this series, Unseen Battle on spiritual warfare.

Sun Tzu, the author of a timeless bestseller called *The Art of War*, says that if you do not know your enemy, in every battle you will suffer loss. If you do not understand your enemy, in every battle that you face, you will suffer loss. And so, I want to take you back to that guest bedroom. There I am. My dad comes in looking for the snake that had slithered off. And what he did is he began to ask me questions. "How big was it, son?" "It's huge dad. Enormous. Bigger than our house." "What color was it, son? What kind of markings did it have on its back? Were they stripes, were they shapes, were they diamonds? Son, what did his head look like, was it oval and kind of just a continuation of his body? Or did it come out like a triangle? Did he have jaws? Things that look like cheeks. What did he look like, son?" And he's trying to understand the enemy among us so that he can rightfully understand what he's capable of. And even as he hunts him, if you will, as he seeks to find him to understand where he might be, what he might do. And that's why we're doing this series, Unseen Battle. So that you would understand your enemy.

I'm going to be in Ezekiel 28. Everybody's favorite book. Everyone's favorite chapter. Got lots of memory verses out of Ezekiel, you got a coffee cup out of Ezekiel 28. As we move through this text, we're talking about our enemy, we're going to talk about who he is, where he is, and what he's up to. Who he is, where he is, and what he's up to, are the three points today. I'm going to set up this text. Mostly I'll be in Ezekiel 28, I may venture over to Isaiah 14, maybe Revelation 12 if there's time, and we'll introduce some scriptures from the gospel. Because if you've heard this narrative that, you know, Satan was an angel in heaven, he became prideful, bode up against God, God sent him to the earth, and so here he is, he showed up in the garden like a serpent. If you've heard that, you need to know that narrative comes from this text. But it is not clear. Ezekiel is an apocalyptic prophetic text. Those are fancy words for confusing. It's a confusing text. Prophets would discern situations to tell you God's will. As you look at something that's happening, they would say "Hey this is what God is doing. This is the truth." And they would come to people with messages. It says this is what you need to know about God. And Ezekiel is no exception. But throughout his book, Ezekiel being the author, would take current events and speak, through those current events, timeless truths. And he would explain timeless theology through the lens of what was happening there, in the day, in the age, in the space that they occupied. It would be like this: if I said, "Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine, and I remember when he fell from heaven and a third of the angelic realm fell with him."

You'd be like, "Wait what?" You had me, like you were talking about the news, and then you went somewhere weird. This is what Ezekiel does. And so, this text that I'm about to put in front of you is where we get that narrative, along with Isaiah 14, about Satan falling from heaven, but it's poetic in nature, so as you read it you have to bring in and introduce other texts. And as you do that throughout the Bible, you see all the verses that reference the enemy. We begin to see in

kind of HD, if you will, 4K. We begin to understand: What is the narrative that Satan exists in? What is his story?

So, Ezekiel's talking about the king of Tyre, who's a real king, to make things confusing. Tyre is a real place, just north of Israel. It's modern-day Lebanon. I think we may have a map here. And so, right there you can see that little red star. That's Tyre. That area that's tan there, that's Lebanon today. And so, as Ezekiel's talking to this king who's amassed great wealth, he's won battles, he's very powerful, he has a word from the Lord for him, he's calling him out. But then in the middle of calling him out and talking about him and talking about current events, he begins to talk about Satan.

You might draw the conclusion that he is possessed by Satan. That Satan is ruling him. Satan is ruling everyone not given to the Spirit. And there's a theology that comes out of this that because Satan is not all-knowing, he has to constantly have an antichrist in office. Some theologians believe that. And potentially that is the king of Tyre here. But regardless, what we need to know and what we do understand from the scriptures: Ezekiel's talking about the king of Tyre, and here in verse twelve he begins to talk about Satan. We're going to answer questions. It's bible teaching this morning, but it's going to be heavy theology. And so we're going to answer questions like, Why did Satan fall? What are angels? Can they still sin? Can Satan read our minds? It's really knowledge heavy and application light today. Because the application is essentially: know your enemy, understand how he works so that you can resist him. And so, this is the chapter that we're going to turn to, 28 verse 12. Let's go.

In verse 12, this is when he kind of leaves the king of Tyre or he begins to introduce a new character that we now know as Satan. **12 "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl.** Interesting. We would just blow past that like, "Oh, a bunch of stones...whatever that means." These nine stones come from the priestly garments that show up in Exodus 28. So, he's already kind of nodding his head at the reality that God had some sort of special service for Satan. This angel. This magnificent angel. God had something special for him to do. He's adorned with the stones that are on the priestly garment. **13 Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created (you can underline that - that's important) you were created they were prepared.**

Where it says, "settings and mountings," this could be interpreted as timbrels and pipes. Let me say it like this: many theologians translate this, as "timbrels and pipes," which are musical instruments, and there's a doctrine out there that would say that Satan was the first worship leader. Like Drew. But I mean, not like Drew. Like Drew but...like Drew does for us, he did in heaven. There's something unique that God has purposed for this angel. **14 You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you.** Again, you're seeing this thing, there's something special about you.

Now when you hear cherub, you think Hallmark card. Right? You think chubby little angel with cute little wings and rosy cheeks. You think Cupid if you will. Which is stupid if you will. Because, where you see guardian cherubs reveal themselves to creation in the scripture, the next two words you usually see are “Get up,” or “Fear not.” These are insanely huge, strong, powerful, creatures. **14 You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. 15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.** Something went wrong. You were created good, but you rebelled. **16 Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned.** You were greedy. You wanted more than the amazing gifts I gave you. **So, I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. 17 Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor.**

It’s because he was made special that led to his sin. It was because of his abundance that led to his sin. **So, I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. 18 By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So, I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. 19 All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.”**

And so, he’s been talking about the king of Tyre. He moves here talking about Satan, the devil. You may know him as Lucifer, and what we learn from this text, just a few things upfront is that he is a created being. That God made him, that he did not exist in eternity past like the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Triune God, the Trinity, the God that we worship who has always been. He sits outside of time. At some point in history, God made Satan. He made the angelic realm. He made the heavenly hosts, the angel armies. These beings were created to reflect the glory of God and to carry out his will, even here on earth. In heaven and on earth. And we know that they are smarter than us, and they’re stronger than us. But one day we will rule over them. 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse three says that we will stand as judge over them. My first point this morning is that Satan is a fallen angel.

1. Satan is a Fallen Angel

Satan is a fallen angel. What’s interesting, you might have picked up on the fact that C.S. Lewis called them the devils. You might think, well there’s only one devil. That’s not true. We’ve kind of learned that through fairy tales. But in reality, Satan is here with a team of demons, of which he is simply one of them. And what has set him apart is God made him more beautiful (the scripture says) than them. So, he’s more attractive than them, he is their leader, but he is one of them. He’s not a deity. He is a demon. Much like all the other demons. And he is just the one that’s taken the lead. Says, “Hey follow me.” Right?

It says, **12 You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.** God made him special. This begs the theological conundrum of: did God create evil? Did God make evil? Is evil God’s doing? And the answer is no. It says very plainly in the text, I created you good. I

made you perfect in beauty. And then you rebelled. So, God created the possibility of evil. The only way that something can be good is if it could be bad. If it could not be bad, it would not be good, it would just be. Then go here. Light is a thing. Darkness is *no thing*. Darkness is simply the absence of light. You insert light you have light. You pull light away what you're left with in the void, the emptiness is darkness. Heat is a thing, you introduce heat, heat is there. You withdraw heat, you're left with cold. Cold only exists because heat exists. Without heat cold would not be cold, it just would be. And so evil is the absence of good.

God is good, goodness marks him. You pull back good, what you're left with in the void is evil. Godliness is a thing. Ungodliness is what you're left with when you withdraw godliness from the equation. So, God created the possibility of evil. But he did not make evil. It says, **15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.**

And so, we share likeness with Satan when we begin to focus on what we do not have. Because the scripture goes out of its way to show you how much God blessed him. But then he rebelled. And so, when you get to this place where you're discontent and you begin to compare yourself, you are on Satan's dance floor. You ventured into his playground. You say, "But I don't have."

Genesis chapter 3, "Oh you have all of this? Oh, he's put you in paradise? But he won't let you eat that fruit huh? Hmmm. That's because he knows that you'll be like God." But they were already like God. Remember, God put them in the garden to rule over every living creature. He made Adam and Eve in his image. He created them in his image. They were like God. Satan says, if you eat this you'll be like God. This is his lie. This is what he does. He's still running this offense. That's why you have to be really careful when you venture into discontentment and comparison.

Why is sex just for married people? Why has God withheld marriage from me? Why can't I get a better job? Or make more money? Why can't my kid get into that school? Or make the team? Why won't God give us children? How could God let this happen? And it all comes down to this. Is he really good? Can you trust him? And Satan's going to rush in when you begin to feed feelings of discontentment. He rushes in and says, "No you cannot trust him. He's not good. He's forgotten you. You can't trust him."

You say, why are we talking about this? I don't know that we fully grasp here that the devil has desires. Should I buy that car? He's right there. He has a desire. And he wants to do something in your life with that decision. Should we move? He has a desire. Should we do select sports? He has a desire. He has a will! And there's something strategic that he wants to do in the midst of that decision. Should I date him? Should I date her? Should we go there? Should we go on that vacation? In all of life's decisions, Satan is here, or his demons are around you, and they have a desire for you. There's something that they want to carry out in your life through those decisions.

It matters in the spiritual realm. It's important. **17 Your heart**, he says, **Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of splendor. So I threw you to the earth.** So, he's not just fallen, he was cast out. It says in verse sixteen, he was expelled. God sent him here. Here's what it says in Isaiah 14, so I'm going to bring in this chapter to put over Ezekiel 28 to better understand all that's happening. In verse twelve, **Isaiah**

14:12 How you have fallen from heaven, morning star. That word interpreted “morning star,” is the only place that some people interpret as “Lucifer,” so if you do not have the King James Bible, “Lucifer” is nowhere in your Bible, Genesis to Revelation. That name for Satan, it comes from the King James Bible, from this word that we interpret “morning star.” **Isaiah 14:12 Son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations. 13 You said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” 15 But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit.** So it says, **14 I will make myself like the Most High.**

So, it’s because of his rebellion, his pride, that he was sent here. On the earth, and there’s this cosmic experiment, if you will. Experiment’s not the right word because the variables are fixed, which makes them not variables. It’s a test. It’s a battle. And you and I are in the test. Who are you going to worship? The God, the Creator of the heavens, the earth, or the prince of this era? The god of this age, scripture calls him. Which way will you go? And you can sit in church on a Sunday morning and worship Satan. He doesn’t need you to worship him with Ouija boards and seances and lit candles. Like, he will just receive you worshipping anything other than God as worship to himself. In fact, he doesn’t even want you to do the Ouija boards and candles because that’s weird, and then you wouldn’t have friends, they wouldn’t want to hang out with you, and really what he wants you to do is worship anything other than God and be as influential as you possibly can in doing so. This is his tactic. We don’t talk about it enough. Jesus says in Luke 10, **Luke 10:18 I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.** He was sent here. My second point is, where is he? Satan is on earth.

2. *Satan Is on Earth*

Guys, he’s not in hell. It’s a theological misunderstanding, a categorical mistake to say Satan is in hell. Hell is a place that is created for his eternal judgment. He will be cast down there. He will be cast into hell, into the lake of fire after the last battle. We get to see how that battle goes, who wins all the things. But right now, Satan is roaming around the earth like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. He’s here on earth. But I want you to know, he’s not everywhere. He’s not omnipresent. So, it is also a categorical mistake to say, “Satan did this to me.” Most likely, and I can’t say for certain, but most likely, Satan has never been anywhere near you. He’s never been even in the same zip code as you, unless he was just visiting for some election or something, some influential event. Right? I mean today, Satan’s probably in Ukraine, Russia, Myanmar, somewhere there’s a genocide, a lot of death. Some persons of great influence, that’s probably where he is. But Revelation 12 tells us that a third of the angelic realm came with him. And they’re here with us.

And so, you may have a demon assigned to you and seven people or seventeen people or twenty-seven people, that studies you. Knows what you love, understands how to take you out. Feeds

your control. Feeds your materialism. Feeds your ego or your pride. Seeks to distract you. Right? Wants to pull you offside, keep you focused on something other than God.

Friends, why? Why is this the narrative? If God's all-powerful...? Because it's not like...we don't believe in dualism. Ok? So, this is not like two equal forces just going at it, right? God created Satan. This isn't like David and Goliath, even. This is Goliath versus a cream puff. Right? That's what's happening. Like God is...like the devil is God's devil. God's sovereign over him. He must ask God for permission to do stuff. God is all-powerful. He's not...right? Why would we live in this narrative? Why wouldn't Satan say, "Hey I don't want to worship you. I want to be like you." And God's like, "Oh, you want to be like me? Be no more." And we just roll on with it. Because if he would have, how would you ever know that God is good? Like, if God just obliterates anything that comes against him, how would you know that he's that good? It says a third of the angelic realm went with Satan, so a third of the angels are questioning, maybe he's a good God and, we don't know, we kind of want to check this out. God's like okay, as an incredible act of mercy, God says, "Great let's see what happens." And he sends him here to the earth where he lives, and he creates us out of the manifestation of love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, made in his image, and says, "Okay, you can try to rule over them if you want. But I'm going to show them something better at every turn. And they will choose which god they desire to serve. Me or any other god, which is you." And that's the narrative that you and I live in. That's the story that we're a part of. Right? And you've seen this play out over and over, that they go to a foreign land and fight a battle. This is the script that Disney and Marvel and DC and many others have made millions off. Yeah, your thought is like, not a great creativity, like do we want her to be a kind of princess that talks to animals. Or do we want her to be a stepsister with a stepmother? Or a fairy godmother? Or in a tower with long hair? And then we'll send in the prince...right? Maybe it's two lions. God and Satan, Mufasa and Scar, the battle. Who's going to be the king of the jungle?

Over and over and over, whether it's Avengers, Justice League, Snow White, or Harry Potter, you've seen this, and it resonates deep within your heart because it's the story you live in. That's why. That's why you're seeing it over and over and over and over and over again. It doesn't take a lot of creativity to write their scripts, you just take the characters, change their names, tweak the plot a little bit, tweak the setting and there you go. That's what we're doing. Right?

And here we are, a tale of two kingdoms. As an aside here, can angels still sin? Like, if Lucifer fell, can't they make that choice again? Angels have the benefit...it says we entertain them. They see us, they watch us, and they interact with us. They have the benefit of watching thousands and thousands and thousands of years of history. So, they have what is called wisdom through revelation, which is going to impact—now hang with me, this is complex, but it's pretty important. It's wisdom through revelation which is going to drive their behavior because it influences what they know and what is true about God.

Let me explain it like this: When you're four years old and you see the hot stove, and its bright red, it's pretty. You haven't experienced heat, you're not fully aware of it, and you're like, "Oh, I want to touch that. It's glowing. I wonder what that feels like." And you take your hand, and you lay it on the hot stove and your hand sticks to it for a minute, it sears. And then your nerve-

endings in your skin send signals to your brain that it's the greatest pain that you've ever felt, and you jerk it away from...you have third-degree burns through your flesh, and you're traumatized. You experienced trauma through the event. As a four-year-old, did you have the free will to touch the stove?

Now as a twenty-year-old, I bring you to the stove, and there it is, red-hot, and I say, "Touch it." And you say, "I can't. I can't even bring myself to it. I know how it feels." Because you have wisdom through revelation. And it thwarts your free will. You understand what is good and what is bad, what is pleasurable and what is painful. And so, the angels, for thousands of years, they see creation making choices to go the way of Satan and being hurt and heartbroken and crying and sleepless and anxious and depressed and despairing, and then they see people go the way of God and find life and blessing and they're like here, "Why would we ever let that happen again? That's where everything terrible has come from. God, we will only worship you." And so, their free will is thwarted by their wisdom that comes through revelation. And so, they wouldn't choose to rebel.

It's like me, you know, I had great parents. I mean they gave me a home, put a roof over my head, a soft bed, I never went hungry, not one time. They fed me. My dad worked hard, and we used the money that his work produced, my mom's work produced, to put the food on the table that I consumed, not as a contributor. Right? And they gave me opportunities and they took me to beautiful places. We experienced beaches and theme parks, and then I go through adolescence and all these hormones enter my body, and some scrub comes along, and you know, he's just got out of in-school suspension. You know, high school drop-out, whatever, and he's like, "Hey, JP, come with me. Go have fun and do all these things that your parents told you not to do." And I'm like, I got these people that love me that provide for me, that have done all these great things for me. And I've got this scrub that seems to have train-wrecked his life, saying "Hey, come here." And you know, it's like, "Whatever shall I do? Sure, why not?" You know, it doesn't make any sense. It makes no logical sense, and yet we do it all the time. It's not just adolescence. The angels see the destruction from the choices that we make, and they trust God. And Satan will lie to you to hurt you. It says, verse 18, **18 By your many sins and...** what's that word? **18 By your many sins and [dishonest trade].** He's a liar. That's my third point. Satan is a liar.

3. Satan Is a Liar

It's his primary method. He lies. And what's his primary lie? It's the one you still believe. You're going to believe it today at some point. I hate to say that. It's probably true. God is not good. You cannot trust him.

Jesus said in John 8, **John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father' 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.** How does he lie? We don't exactly know. In the spiritual realm, thoughts take some sort of different dimension, capacity, and even words fail me. And so, we don't exactly know how he lies. We just know his lies are very simple.

He calls what is good evil, and what is evil good. Tell me he doesn't do that in our culture today. Call what is evil good and what is good evil. He takes things of infinite worth, and he makes them look cheap. And he takes things that are cheap, and temporarily pleasurable, and he makes them look luxurious and eternal. He's just a liar. And all of us, at times, we have been and will be again, if we live long enough, we've been duped. We have been led astray.

People will say, "Well, can he read my mind?" He cannot read your mind. He's not omnipotent. He's not all-powerful. He's not God. So, in a traditional sense of what you think about, he cannot read your mind. He can say, I'll say that I'll insert this here—if he could read your mind, he would be able to read Job's mind to the point of knowing the outcome if Job was going to turn from God or not. Now God can read Job's mind. God can see his heart. God knows the future. He knows how that's going to go, but Satan doesn't. He's debating with the all-knowing, right?

But he can read your mind in a sense. Like sometimes Monica... I'll say, "Well, how do you feel?" She'll say, "I don't know how you feel." And I'll say, "Well it seems like you feel this, this, this, and this." And she'll go, "That's exactly how I feel, I just wasn't able to put it in words." Because I've studied her, you know? And I understand how her mind thinks. Way more - so has Satan, or some demon studied you. And understand how you think what trips you up, what will take you out. He can't make the believer think something, but he can lie to you. He can influence your thoughts, and this is why the truth is so important.

Okay guys, all coming down to this point right here. This is why your quiet time is not a discipline, but it's a method for fighting the enemy on the front lines. You have to know the truth. Okay so, I can say, what is Satan's latest lie? This is how he lies in 2022, and I'm hearing it more and more. "Well, it's my truth." Or "What's your truth?" Or "That's their truth." Anybody heard this? "Everybody has their own truth." Okay? Listen, if my truth is gravity and your truth is weightlessness, we can climb up to the Alico building and you can jump off, and you're going to see that my truth wins. Right? Because it's the truth.

Jesus says, "I am *the* truth" **John 14:6 I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.** And so, you can say, that's cool that that's your truth. My truth is Brahma. My truth is Allah. My truth is, some other god. You're going to die and you're going to realize Jesus is who he said he is. That he is the truth, and what he said is then you will know the truth, **John 8:32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**

Friends, especially young people, the way you fight a lie is always for the rest of your life, with the truth. Whoever knows the truth wins. Whoever knows the truth knows where to go. Whoever knows the truth knows the way, and so what are two truths that I want you to have a death grip on today? One: the gospel. That Jesus paid the price for your sins. He died for them on the cross, and he raised from the dead. He defeated death, giving you hope for eternal life, that you can be with God forever, not because of what you do but because of what he did for you. This is the first truth.

And the second truth is what my friend John Green put before us a couple of weeks ago. That **2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.** And that this isn't just some old dusty book, full of irrelevant tales to you. Right? Like, Satan loves it, he loves it when you read a scripture like, "Oh that's for the culture, it doesn't really apply today. Let's skip that one." He delights in that man. He loves that. Or when you get irritated at it like, "Oh man you know nobody's going to tell me what to wear! Or how to talk!" Man, he will dance with you all day long. Yeah, you pull up a chair to your table and say, "Hey Satan have a seat." Give him a foothold. Give him a stronghold in your life. "Oh, you got your rebellious spirit against God's word. Hey guys I got one over here!" He will lead you away. He does it. I've seen countless people in the body, a part of the flock, go their own way, venture away from the church, withdraw from the church, just saying, "I've got some other truth, some greater truth. I have some greater understanding."

I did a podcast this week and they wanted me...they had done a survey with hundreds of thousands of young believers, young Christians. And they said, "Hey I want you to address some of their greatest beliefs in the faith, the Christian faith." Okay? So, these were the things they wanted me to address. I'm going to put it in front of you. This was belief number one: if it makes me happy, it must be good. Generation Z Christians: the best thing you can do is just invest in yourself. You should rid your life of anyone who is toxic. Only God can judge me. God is the only relationship you need. If you want it, manifest it. And sometimes drugs make me closer to God. I was going to cut that one, and the sermon team, said, "Oh no, don't cut that. We hear it all the time." Okay, we'll keep it in then. The only way you can fight lies is with the truth. You have to know the truth. Right? He's after your children. He's after a future generation, he's after the church. You got to write the truth on your heart. If you don't grip the truth, if you don't teach your children the truth, if you don't cling to the truth, then he just leads you astray.

In summary, Satan is a fallen angel. Not just fallen but cast out. Expelled. And Satan is here. He's on the earth. He's here as a test, he's here in a battle, and Satan, Satan is a liar. He's going to try to lie to you. He's going to tell you that what is good is evil, and what is evil is good.

There's a phenomenon called Stockholm Syndrome. That is when a victim develops positive feelings for their captor. And I had heard of this psychological phenomenon, but I just thought, "Is that even true? Is that even real?" And you've seen it, and there have been case studies where there's been a hostage situation and the people in the hostage situation have developed positive feelings for the person holding them hostage, and I had never seen this. I didn't really...it was difficult for me to believe until I saw it. Until I came face-to-face with it, and I began to do some work with sex trafficking organizations like International Justice Mission and interviewing those who had gone overseas and had done work in setting people free who had been taken captive in the sex slave industry. And there was this young woman that was a part of our church, and she had responded to a modeling ad in Miami. They come into Miami, "We think you're beautiful. We want you to work for us." She wanted to be a model. You know, they made her think she was going to be America's next top model. She flew over to Miami. She got off the plane. She got with this model agency, and they took her prisoner. And they forcefully fed her illegal drugs, gave her an addiction to illegal drugs—forcefully. And she became their prisoner. And then they

caused her to do unspeakable things to other people for profit. I don't know if you can imagine, as a parent, to lose a child, but they're not dead. They're alive, and they're being abused for profit. And you know that. What would you do to get them back?

Probably exactly what these two adults did. They depleted every resource they had. They hired private investigators and detectives, they hired retired Navy SEAL soldiers, and they scoured throughout our country in search of their little girl. And they found her. They get the news, "Hey we found her." And so, these powerful people burst in to take her back. And guess what? She didn't want to go. She's so enslaved, so entrenched amongst these people, so addicted to the substances that they forcefully fed her, she didn't want to leave. And so, what they have to do in that situation is what's called a blitzkrieg of truth. They begin to just speak truth over her in this situation. Right? There she is in a dark room where there's mold, it's musty, it's nasty, it's dirty. Right? And she's in there and there's all kinds of terrible things that happen in there. And they come in and they say, "No, why don't you... This is who you are. Your mother waits for you. Your brother, you remember your brother? He's at home right now. And he prays for you every day. Remember? We have a puppy. Remember playing with the puppy in the backyard where the swing set was? Remember? We dug the swimming pool. And do you remember when we took you to Disney, and you stood in line with Mickey, and you laughed until Coke came out your nose? Do you remember these experiences? Remember our house? We had the house in the suburbs, and the fence, the neighbors that you'd play with. This is who you are. This is not who you are. This is who you are."

And the gospel, the narrative that you exist in, is a story of God getting his children back. He comes here on a rescue mission, and his tool is the truth, to speak it over you. "That's not who you belong to. You don't have to keep doing that. You don't have to keep hurting yourself in those ways. I know you're addicted to this stuff, and the status and the trinkets and the treasures and the things and the pleasure, the temporary weak, meaningless, momentary pleasure. But I have something better for you."

1 John 4, you are dear children. **1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.** The enemy's taken us captive in this world. But God has paid an enormous price to set you free. Choose today, and every day, to walk in that freedom. I pray that you would.

Father, help us. We can't do that without you. We will forget the truth. We will go our own way. We will do what we want when we want it. We will indulge our flesh. Father, we will be led astray. We will shout and scream. We steal and cheat. We will give our bodies away. Lord, would you rescue us? Thank you for rescuing us. As we sing, Lord, I just pray that you would grow freedom in our heart. Give us a greater vision of what you have for us. In the name of Jesus. Amen.