



CrossRoads Notes:

Turn your Bibles to 1 John 5:4-5

Title: Enemies Exposed

Theme: Assessing the Problem

Series: Grasping Our Authority in Christ

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves His child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out His commands. This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” (1 John 5:1-5)

Introduction: *God’s desire is for the children of God to live in the abundant life promised in Christ Jesus.* Jesus said, “The thief comes to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10 NAS)

Proposition: *I would propose to you Christians are not born again to be surrendered back over to the sins and lifestyle that kept them from having a healthy relationship with God, Christ and walking in step with the Holy Spirit.* Christians do not have to wait until they get to heaven to enjoy the authority they have in Christ. They can choose to live victoriously in this sin torn world now. In Christ you can literally outlive your enemies for eternity.

Interrogative Sentence: *Who is our enemy?* How does he take people captive? To whom should Christians be in bondage?

Transitional Sentence: *A key step to living and enjoying the life of victory promised in Christ is to recognize the evidence of the struggle.* Jesus said, “If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.” (Matthew 15:13) (Matthew 15:12) (Matthew 15:7-9) (Matthew 15:13)

“Plant” (*phuteia*) figuratively means to establish, authorize teachers or their teachings. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary; Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament) Every religious system which has not been planted by God will be rooted up. (Thru the Bible) Any religious system not set up by the Lord will be used to keep mankind in spiritual darkness, thus keeping them bound in sin no matter how religious they may appear to be. Thus the blind will lead the blind.

Illustration by Pastor Adrian Rogers:

Ephesians says, “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..." (Ephesians 6:12-13)

Transitional Sentence: *Once you fully grasp the truth that there is a real struggle for the souls of mankind upon this earth you must then expose the enemies, the first being Satan.* Christ clearly speaks of this enemy (Luke 10:18) and the Apostle Peter warns of this raging lion who has only one purpose. Peter writes, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8) The "devil" (*diabolos*) or "Satan" (*Satanas*) is present in the world and tempts both believers and unbelievers. (Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33; Luke 22:3; Acts 5:3; 1 Kings 11:14, 23, 25) He is also called "the dragon," "the old serpent" (Revelation 12:9; 20:2) "the prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30) "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2) "the god of this world." (2 Corinthians 4:4) The distinct personality of Satan and his activity among men are thus obviously recognized. He is "the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). He tempted our Lord in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:1-11) He is "Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." (Matthew 12:24) He is "the constant enemy of God, of Christ, of the divine kingdom, of the followers of Christ, and of all truth; full of falsehood and all malice, and exciting and seducing to evil in every possible way." (Easton's Bible Dictionary; Harper's Bible Dictionary; New Bible Dictionary) His power is very great in the world. He is a "roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8) Men are said to be "taken captive by him." (2 Timothy 2:26) Christians are warned against his "devices," (2 Corinthians 2:11) and called on to "resist" him. (James 4:7) I have a great concern that people do not take Satan and his abilities serious enough.

Satan is not a comic character who is dressed in red with horns on his head and a tail dangling behind him. This is the symbol of a character we all know to run from. Barnes Notes give us these thoughts, "The phrase 'Angel of light' means a pure and holy angel, an emblem of purity and holiness.

We learn here, Satan can assume such an aspect as he pleases, he is a prince of duplicity as well as of wickedness. He is long in the practice of deceitful arts and well practiced in the art of delusion."

I would like to add, Satan is a master of presenting false teachers as being sincere as well as making evil be desirable. This is why the Apostle Peter warns us to be on our guard. We should not listen to any suggestion that appears religious or good, but only that which is birthed from the whole council of God's Word, taught by those who are mature in the faith of Jesus Christ.

There was a story told of a lady who made it a practice in life to say something good about everyone she had come to know. She was challenged to say something good about the devil. She thought and then said, "He is at least persistent."

Transitional Sentence: *The Word of God exposes our most persistent enemy, the devil and the Bible tells us his resources as well, one being the world.* 1 John 2:15-17 says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the

lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”

The “world” (*kosmos*) here is the present world system or order of things that by human nature oppose the kingdom of Christ. This world order moves the lifestyle of man toward evil both physically and morally. It is the temptation found in this world system Satan uses to keep unrepentant man from a vibrant relationship with the Lord and draws Christians away from the perfect will of God. As a matter of fact this world system is hostile toward God, is embarrassed to give God the praise He deserves and literally those of this world system despise true worship to God and Christ Jesus.

John teaches us about three truths found in this present world system that keep mankind from receiving Christ and can keep the children of God from giving proper praise to God. The first truth is, “the cravings of sinful man.” This phrase describes the principle of worldliness producing focus on self which pursues its own ends in self-sufficient independence apart from the Lord. (The Expositors Bible Commentary) The second truth is, “lust of his eyes.” This is that tendency to be captivated by outward, visible splendor and show. It breeds a desire for the things aroused by sight. (The Expositors Bible Commentary) This is the channel that feeds mankind’s acquisitive nature and covetousness. (The Bible Knowledge Commentary) The third truth is, “the boasting of what he has and does” (*he alazoneia tou biou*) or “the pride of life.” It is that attitude that is lived out that says, “my reputation, my public image matters more than the glory of God being revealed in and through my life.” (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Charles Swindoll wrote, “The world system is committed to at least four major objectives, which I can summarize in four words: fortune, fame, power, pleasure. First and foremost: Fortune, money. The world system is driven by money; it feeds on materialism. Second: Fame. That is another word for popularity. Fame is the longing to be known, to be somebody in someone else’s eyes. Third: Power. This is having influence, maintaining control over individuals or groups or companies or whatever. It is the desire to manipulate and maneuver others to do something for one’s own benefit. Fourth: Pleasure. At its basic level, pleasure has to do with fulfilling one’s sensual desires. It’s the same mindset that’s behind the slogan: ‘If it feels good, do it.’” (Charles Swindoll, *Living Above the Level of Mediocrity*, p. 219)

D. L. Moody once wrote: “The church is full of people who want one eye for the world and the other for the kingdom of God. Therefore, everything is blurred; one eye is long and the other is short; all is confusion... When the Spirit of God is on us, the world looks very empty; the world has a very small hold on us, and we begin to let go our hold of it and lay hold of things eternal. This is the church’s need today.”

Transitional Sentence: *Satan uses the world to overcome mankind and even to draw Christians away from God's will. Satan also knows our weakest link, **our flesh**.* Galatians 5:19-21 says, "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."

The "flesh" (*sarx*) is that fallen nature of mankind that is sensual toward acts of sin and opposes the Holy Spirit's work towards drawing sinners to Christ and has an ongoing act against the perfect will of God. This flesh has carnal appetites and desires sinful passions and affections affecting the physical and moral welfare of mankind. If left unchecked by the Holy Spirit of Christ it takes control of a person and causes him to do what he would not like to do and keeps him from doing what he ought to be doing. (Baker's Greek New Testament; The Complete Word Study Dictionary; Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament; The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible; Theological Dictionary of the New Testament; Romans 7)

If this enemy is left unchecked he can cause mankind to fall into any one or all of these lifestyles, sensual passions, unlawful dealings in spiritual things, violations to one's own neighbor and excessive addictions. Sexual sin never begins with inflamed lust, but with flirtations and gentle lures. Unlawful spiritual practices do not begin with outright open disobedience to God's Word, but with questioning the authority of the written Word. Direct sin against our family members, friends and co-workers does not happen with a plan started in a group meeting, but with nursing and rehearsing of bad thoughts in the mind. Addiction to alcohol, drugs or to anything else does not usually start with excessive indulgence, but by experimenting, taking little doses and convincing ourselves, "Now that didn't hurt anything." The sinful nature is often fed by little bits of feeding and then grows to a full grown feeding frenzy. Feeding the sinful nature is like working in a chocolate chip factory. Everyone knows if you work in a chocolate chip factory long enough, you are going to reach out and take just a little chip. Yes, you get by with it and the next time it is two chocolate chips, then a handful. Then every time you get a chance you feed that flesh. Unchecked it will sooner or later get you into trouble.

J.O. Sanders writes in regard to The Devil's Tinder, "What is meant by 'the flesh?' Dr. W.G. Scroggie detected ten shades of meaning used in the Bible. In nine of the ten, there is no ethical or theological content. But the tenth, which is the one Paul mainly employs, does have such significance. The flesh may be defined as 'man's fallen nature as under the power of sin.' It is the evil principle in man's nature, the traitor within who is in league with the attackers without. The flesh provides the tinder on which the devil's temptations can kindle." (10,000 Sermon Illustration) Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman writes of a Methodist preacher who often spoke on the subject of sin. "He minced no words, but defined sin as 'that abominable thing that God hates.' A leader in his congregation came to him on one occasion and urged him to cease using the ugly word, 'sin.' Said he: 'Dr. Blank, we wish you would not speak so plainly about sin. Our young people, hearing you, will be more likely to indulge in sin. Call it something else, as 'inhibition,' or 'error' or a 'mistake,' or even 'a twist in our nature.'

'I understand what you mean,' the preacher remarked and going to his desk brought out a little bottle. 'This bottle,' he said, 'contains strychnine. You will see that the red label here reads, **Poison**. Would you suggest that I change the label, and paste one on that says, **Wintergreen?** The more harmless the name the more dangerous the dose will be.'" When people who live in this world's system and even Christians mislabel sin and do not take the flesh seriously, the more dangerous Satan's snares become.

In Closing: *The whole council of God's Word gives a clear warning. There are enemies that are constantly attacking us.* If we walk around blindly and are led by the blind we will fall into an endless pit of eternal punishment. We have to live self-controlled and be alert. There is a devil who uses the world and the weakness of the flesh, that sinful nature to keep mankind from coming to Christ and even to keep the children of God from enjoying God's perfect will for them.

The great news is we have a redeemer who conquered the devil and all his works. The writer of Hebrews gives this exhortation about Jesus Christ, "Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels He helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted." (Hebrews 2:14-18)

With our enemies being Biblically exposed we can agree with God and find strength to overcome our persistent adversary, the devil, as he throws the world at us and tempts our flesh. Through Christ who redeemed us we can live a victorious life and outlive our enemies in eternity.

Let us partake in the Lord's Supper!