

The Devil's Devices

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[0 : 00] As we advance in the Christian life, we can expect to face enemy fire.

! You know, that's the reality. Soldiers who prepare for battle, ultimately they're going to face opposing enemy, set against them.

And we're talking about the enemy today. An enemy, the devil, real, alive, actively at work in the world today.

Perhaps evermore the case. We see his sneaky, slippery, sly ways about us, don't we?

In the world around about our enemy, our accuser, our adversary, the devil. Spiritual warfare is a reality. It's not just some theory, not some theological concept.

[1 : 10] Spiritual warfare, it's a real thing. It's present day. It's taking place in the minds and hearts of people. A battle is on for souls, as we've sung, rescue the perishing.

It's a battle. And it begins the day that you are born. This battle that's waiting against you. And because we face the enemy's attacks, we want to be prepared.

We want to be alert. And to know what we can about him, and how we can prepare for that battle.

And in 2 Corinthians 2 verse 11, we read, Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.

2 Corinthians 2 verse 11, For we are not ignorant of his devices. The devices of the devil. What does that mean? What is that all about?

The devices speaks of thoughts, of purposes, of schemes. Zodiati says, concepts of the mind. It's about thinking. It's about the mind. That's where the battle rages at times.

[2 : 21] The battle is often in the mind, at the start. And through life. Our thought life. Our thinking. And in the parable of the sower, in Luke 8 verse 12, we read, The seed of the sower went out to sow.

Of the seed, the word of God, as it was represented as seed. And of some it says in Luke 8 verse 12, that the seed was sown by the wayside. And it says, the fowls of the air came, and they devoured it.

Before it could grow. Before it could strike. Before it could strike. In the ground, the fowls of the air came, and swept down and devoured it. Munched it all up. And it says there, those by the wayside are they, that here, then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts. And the enemy, it didn't have time to germinate in their mind, in their heart, in their life. And the enemy loves that. And I know, as it was prayed earlier, the enemy just wants to snatch the word, before it even germinates, before it even takes hold.

The truth. He doesn't want you to hear it. He wants to take it away from people, before it can affect their lives. And that's one of the devices of the enemy. That he would snatch the word.

[3 : 42] And the battle is mostly in the mind. And we read in 2 Corinthians 4, verse 4. We read how Satan uses deception to blind the mind. The word speaks of some who are spiritually blinded.

Blinded in their minds. That their mind cannot conceive, it cannot realise it. It cannot see. It cannot perceive the truth. In 2 Corinthians 4, 4.

In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them, which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The enemy seeks to bring doubt, deception, disorder. We know that as we see the perishing. The perishing all around us. They're the walking dead.

They're blind. Whilst they have eyes, they cannot see the truth. They cannot see God's truth. And in 2 Corinthians 11, 3. We read that deception.

[4 : 42] That deceptive work. As we read in Genesis, how he said, as he came to Adam and Eve, ha, God said, as if he would cast doubt, as if he would cast doubt in the minds of people about the truth.

And he's still about that work today. In 2 Corinthians 11, 3 it says, But I fear less by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety.

So your mind should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. That cunning, crafty trickery that Satan would use as he did with Eve and Adam in the garden.

So your mind should be corrupted from that simplicity, from that pureness, that devotion, that love for Christ. He just wants to corrupt it. He wants to take it away.

He wants to damage it and take it from you. And so we see that snatching away. We see that sneaky, corrupting, half God said, casting doubt, bringing disorder and deception.

[5 : 52] And friends, the devices of the enemy, we see them right through the word of God.

Another instance is 2 Corinthians 10. 2 Corinthians 10, we read, A strongholds in verses 4 and 5.

It reads there, See there the strongholds spoken of.

I wonder what that could mean. We could imagine all manner of things that that could represent for us today. Perhaps those strongholds could be unbelief. Those strongholds in our mind, that fortress that is built up that opposes God's working, God's spirit.

They need to be pulled down, they need to be torn down. A demolition job has to happen against those strongholds. Things like fear, bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness, depression, apathy, lukewarmness, sinful thoughts, lusts, pride, greed.

What is your stronghold perhaps? We could think of that list that I've given and wonder. Maybe some of those strongholds are in my life. They're stopping God's spirit from working in my mind.

[7 : 25] They're garrisoning and fortressing off my mind as a stronghold against God's working.

God says, tear it down. Tear down that fortress. Tear down that stronghold.

Cast down those imaginations. Cast down that high being, that pride that exalts itself. And bring into captivity most of our thoughts. No, it doesn't say that here.

Every thought. Every thought to the obedience of Christ. God helping us, every thought can be held captive by his hand. Held captive in his control.

And the weapons of our warfare have God's power, we're told. God's got power. And he's given it to us in those weapons to tear down and destroy those fortresses.

And friends, the enemy in 2 Timothy 2.26 talks about, he wants to ensnare people. We know in the Proverbs it talks about the snare of the fowler. Think of that little loop on the ground and the fowler, the one catching the birds.

[8 : 28] Well pull that rope and snag them and capture them. Whether it's dropping a net or pulling them and dropping a box or whatever they do to pull the stick away. Or capturing them with the rope around their legs.

That's what the enemy is spoken of as a snare of the fowler. And he wants to ensnare people, to take them captive. To distract, to distress, to discourage, to destroy.

He's come to steal, to kill, to destroy. There's many works of the enemy around about. And instead of letting the enemy capture you and captivate you and hold you captive and ensnare you, captivate every thought.

Captivate every thought. Let Christ capture your thoughts. Let Christ have your obedience, your will, your heart, your soul as you surrender it to him.

And think of discouragement now. Think of discouragement as we know, as it's been said that discouragement, discouragement is one of the most effective tools that the enemy used.

[9 : 35] Discouragement. Just think of the word. It means to lose courage. Discourage. And I know I can face it as you can, as we do really often, don't we?

Through life, discouragement. Discouragement. It dogs our steps and it faces us through life even as young people through to older age. Discouragement is constantly against us.

God wants to overcome discouragement and give you courage. Give you his courage. But the enemy wants you to lose courage, to lose courage, to be discouraged.

And when you lose your courage, you lose your zeal. When you lose your courage, you lose your commitment. You lose your steadfastness. And discouragement is spoken of in the word.

It's only used one time in the New Testament. This word, discourage. And it's used of fathers. In Colossians 3, 21. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger lest they be discouraged.

[10 : 39] Fathers, don't discourage your children. Don't provoke them to discouragement. I know I was encouraged by my brother again. He often inspires me.

My brother, he's been a stockman. He's been out there breaking horses. He was telling me that just this morning. About breaking horses. And he says there's a way of breaking a horse without breaking their spirit.

Breaking their spirit. You want to tame the horse such that that horse will be an effective work horse. That it will be an effective vehicle.

And an obedient animal to the rider. But some will trash the horse and hurt the horse and whip and beat the horse such that the horse can become dispirited.

It can lose its spirit. It can lose the spirit. And you don't want a horse like that that's just going to hang its head and have to be whacked every time to move and to be coaxed and mothered.

[11 : 48] You want a horse that will take your instruction and move with that instruction. And so the one who breaks a horse needs to break it without breaking its spirit. And we can think of that as fathers with children.

Obviously the father needs to enforce godly discipline in the spirit of nurture and admonition. Not to break the spirit.

Not to break the courage. Not to discourage the children. Literally that means to dispirit. Literally means to be dispirited. To be discouraged. Where there's no spirit there's no courage.

We don't want that as fathers. As godly parents. We want to encourage our children in godliness.

By our example. By our instruction. By needful discipline. But done so without that harshness as we know which can be destructive.

We don't want that. And it's seen in the Old Testament too. Through the work of God. Through the people of God. As when at time the way was hard. In Numbers 21.4.

[12 : 51] In part it says. The soul of the people was much discouraged. Because of the way. We know the children of Israel. The people was much discouraged because of the way.

Sometimes the way of life can discourage us. And then also it can be through the talk and actions of others. For example. Numbers 32. Verses 7 to 9.

Talks about. Wherefore discourage ye the heart. Of the children of Israel. It was talking about some. Who brought an evil report. And it says that. They saw the land. They discouraged the heart of the children of Israel.

That's Numbers 32. Verse 9. They discouraged the heart. Of the children of Israel. That they should not go into the land. Which the Lord had given them.

And. Discouragement. It can come because of the hardness of the way. Discouragement can come because of the talk. The negative talk. And the discouraging talk.

[13 : 49] The animal wants to attack you. In your spirit. In your courage. To discourage you. To fill your mind with wrong thinking. Wrong believing.

False perceptions. We know that through life. Don't we? That all too often we can be discouraged. And sometimes it's the hardness of the way. The hard times can discourage us.

But then the word says. You can encourage yourself in the Lord. As David did. He encouraged himself in the Lord. So that is a counteracting force. That you can take the word.

And encourage your heart. In Christ. Think of. How. We are to. Maintain our stand. Maintain our stand. In Ephesians 4.27 it says.

Neither give place to the devil. Don't give him place it says. Neither give place to the devil. Don't give him a foothold. Don't give him an inch. Don't give ground to the devil. Don't give him an opportunity.

[14 : 45] Don't give him a place in your life. We can think of that. In all manner of ways. Am I giving the devil place. Through my disobedience. Through my.

Succumbing to temptation. Through my failing to live. Victoriously. Through my failing to live. As God would urge me to. Through my disobeying the scriptures.

Through my. Willful disobedience to God. Am I giving place to the devil. Don't do it sister. Don't do it brother. Neither give place to the devil. Don't give him an opportunity.

To get a foothold. Learn and do the will of God. So we've seen. His devices. His sneaky. Cunny. Crafty devices. We've seen. Those strongholds.

Those. That fortress. They would build. To block out God. As it were. From your mind. From your thought life. From your thinking. And we read also. Of his wiles. Of the wiles of the devil.

[15 : 42] In Ephesians 6.11. It says. It uses this word. Wiles. And put. It says. Put on. Ephesians 6.11. Put on. The whole armor. Of God.

That you may be able to. Stand against. The wiles of the devil. Now that word. Whole armor. It's one word. It means. The whole armor. Choose.

Which pieces. Put on. The whole armor. Every bit of it. That you may be able to. Stand. Against the wiles. Of the devil. Now that word. Wiles. It's.

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C. C. C. that he's waging against us. And sometimes his wiles are so cunningly crafted that they even look like righteousness.

Amazingly enough, as we read in 2 Corinthians 11, 14-15, it says, And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works, transformed into an angel of light.

[17:35] And we see that about us today. As we see in 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 9, it describes some of these religious ways as the working of Satan.

It defines in 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 9, they're defined there as all power and signs and lying wonders. That's the definition of the working of Satan.

2 Thessalonians 2, verse 9, All power and signs and lying wonders. Of course we know God is a wonder-working God. And he does work wonders in souls saved by grace, by the blood, washing our sin away, by his wonderful redemption work.

But we need to be aware that the devil comes in disguises. He cloaks himself even with righteousness and religion. And then he can come in more subtle forms too.

Sometimes the enemy can come clothed as pleasure. Clothed as pleasure in Luke 8, verse 14, it says, of, again, the sower, and that which fell among the thorns of the day, which when they had heard, go forth and are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life and bring no fruit to perfection.

[18:48] They're like the seed that was choked by the thorns and the growth that crept in and squeezed out the life, if you like, of the seed.

And these are they, it says, that are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. The devil comes clothed in righteousness.

He comes clothed in pleasure. And he comes clothed in business sometimes too. In Matthew 13, 22, it says, He also that receives seed among the thorns is he, that heareth the word and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and it becometh unfruitful.

Now, the care of this world, we can get so anxious and filled with anxiety and worry and stress and concern about making a buck and making a living that the cares of this world just choke.

Choke. Choke the word. Choke your Christian life. Roman sisters, don't let the enemy choke you with that horn that he comes in as business, as pleasure, even as righteousness.

[20:01] And then he can come as worldly things. It's a bit less easy to be sucked in, you would think, when the devil comes clothed in worldly things, it's clothed in worldly ways, because the word is quite clear about that.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. Love not the world. He comes clothed in the world. It looks appealing, it looks popular, it looks, you know, quite attractive.

And yet we know, as James said in 4.4, Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity or hatred with God.

Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world will be an enemy of God. Worldly things. Friends, there's all those different garbs and disguises that he wears as he comes, sneaking along around about us.

[21:11] There's a battle on the go, even right now. And sometimes, really, we all can sometimes not even think of it, can't we, as we go about our day by day, that there is a determined enemy, there's a determined adversary, an opponent, who's waiting war against us, day by day, through the

everyday, day, and we don't always take stock of the spiritual forces of evil that are arrayed against us, pitted against us.

Sometimes we're oblivious to this fact, and we just think we're having a hard time. Maybe it is the enemy giving us a hard time. And we don't always grasp this important fact, not that we need to go through life thinking as some extremists might think, oh, there's a demon under every bush, and I've got to be, you know, totally, you know, overwhelmed by this thought of the spiritual warfare that I'm in, because friends, if you are a Christian today, you're on the victory side.

You're on the victory side. We don't have to be under a bondage, or under a weight, as much as there's devices, and strongholds, and wiles of the enemy all around about, and comes clothed in pleasure, in riches, in lusts, in righteousness, in deceptive ways.

We know that, if we've got the word, greater is he that is in you. Greater is he that is in you, Margaret, than he that is in the world. Amen? That's what the word tells you, that greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

We know that, whilst there is this spiritual war going on, and it's not a game, it's not a theory, these are not war games, it's a reality, it's a real battle, it's not some superstition, or some make-believe, this is a real battle going on, and it's spoken of truly, as a wrestling match.

[22 : 58] So we think, and sometimes you see those wrestling matches, and a lot of that's quite a bit of play acting, we know. In the wrestling, you see them when, not that I make a habit watching it, but you see how they almost, they're putting it on, and exaggerating.

It's a bit like soccer players, when they have a foul, isn't it? There's a bit of make-believe there, I think sometimes. But, this is a wrestling match, that's a real one. Amen? It's a real thing. We wrestle not, Ephesians 6, 12, against the flesh, and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness, of this world, against spiritual wickedness, in high places. We wrestle. We wrestle. We should. We should wrestle. Sometimes we don't wrestle, do we? We just, you know, we're a bit like my dog sometimes, he tucks his tail between his legs, and goes and hides.

But, we don't want to be like that, do we? Amen? We want to wrestle. We want to wrestle. Keep on wrestling. And just to, end this message, think of some ways, we can make victory, a reality.

How we can, be assured of victory. And of course, the word says, this is the victory, that overcometh the world, even our faith. Faith is the victory, that overcomes the world.

[24 : 13] Think of, the way of escape, that God gives to us. Sometimes we neglect that. When temptation, God always, will bring a way of escape.

There'll be a door there. Just, just look for it. When temptation comes, in 1 Corinthians 10, 13, there hath no temptation, taken you, but such as is common to man.

But God is faithful, who will not, suffer you to be tempted above, that ye are able, but will with the temptation, make a way of escape, that ye may be able, to bear it.

A way, to escape. He'll bring, bring that to you. There'll be a way to say no, to sin. There'll be a way to say, no, to temptation. There will be, a way of escape.

Look for it, when temptation comes your way. Look for that way of escape. Another, answer to, realising victory, is to, watch and pray.

[25 : 12] Our Lord, in the garden, he said in Matthew 26, 41, as he was in the garden, of Gethsemane, as the burden, of humanity's sin, was before him.

And he knew that he would bear it, and take it to the, to that rough, cross, as he would walk those, bloodstained footpaths, to the cross, from his scourging, and bear, the weight, of your sin and mine, on that word, on Calvary's hill.

He said, watch and pray. Watch and pray, that you enter not, into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

You know, our Lord was tempted, in all points, just as we are, and yet without sin. He says to you, to me, when you enter, into temptation, watch, and pray.

Watch, it's got the sense, to give strict attention to, to be cautious, to be alert. It's in the present tense, watch, keep on watching, keep your eyes open.

[26 : 17] He says to you, watch, keep on watching, and pray, pray. It's our source of power, isn't it? That we can hold his hand.

And I know, there's some, that have had anxious times, and they want to pray, and that's, that's a blessing, and that's the answer. We can cast our burden, upon the Lord, and he will sustain us.

He will, not suffer, the righteous to be moved. We can, watch, and pray. In James 5, 16, it says, confess your faults, one to another, and pray, one for another, that you be healed.

The effectual, fervent prayer, of a righteous man, availeth much. There's a much availing there.

There's much power there, as you pray. And so, watch and pray.

And 1 Peter 5, it says, of the enemy, it talks of him. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast, in the faith.

[27 : 23] Resist, resist, learn to resist, as we know, in James it says, that we should submit to God, and resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Resist, is another vital word.

He's seeking whom, he may devour. He's got the sense of, swallow up. Swallow up. I just got the picture of, I don't know, someone swallowing a goldfish.

You know, look, gold, you know, it's gone. Not that we should make a habit, of doing that. But, you know, that's the enemy, isn't it? He just wanted to gobble you up, and swallow you up. You know, just gulp you down.

As a roaring lion, he walketh about. Brothers, sisters, friends, but we can be encouraged, that God is with you. God is with you.

Just to wrap up, an account of, a missionary, in the New Hebrides, John Patton, a missionary, in the New Hebrides, his mission was surrounded, by hostile natives, the locals were, arrayed there, they weren't coming to hear, he preached the gospel, they were coming to kill him, they were wanting to kill the Pattons, and burn the station, Patton and his wife, prayed through the night, they prayed through the night, in this mission station, in the hope that God would deliver them, and when daylight came, the coast was clear, when daylight came, they'd gone, and a year later, Patton was talking to the chief, of the village, who had become, a convert, converted to Christ, and the chief was surprised, by Patton's question, because Patton asked him, why didn't you attack, why didn't you attack, and the chief said, who were all those men with you, although Patton knew, of no other man, the chief had said, he was afraid to attack, because he'd seen, hundreds of big men, in shining garments, circling the mission station, with their swords ready, so, we've got, a wonderful,

[29 : 32] God haven't we, he's able, he is able, to deliver thee, he's able to deliver thee, even when, the odds might seem, against us, and seems like we're, outnumbered, and at a loss, and overwhelmed, that you have the victory, that overcomes the world, even your faith, watch and pray, God is real, he is real, he can intervene, in amazing ways, when, when it might seem like, all is, too hard, watch and pray, casting all your cares, upon him, for he careth for you, and wear the armour, wear the armour, day by day, be battle ready, be on guard, be sober, clothe yourselves, with God's armour, and as I say, resist the devil, it's got the sense, of an active resistance, of, a military word, in the original, of those who place themselves, against the enemy, and held their ground, resist, resist, we think of the French resistance, in World War 2, they didn't, lay down, and roll over, when the Nazis came, they resisted, resisted, resist, resist the devil, and he will flee from you, hold your ground, hold your ground, be strong, stand fast, having done all, stand, someone has said, when we become Christians, we enter into, a cosmic struggle, because Satan, hates people, who, believe in Christ, and sometimes,

Satan tests our belief, like he tested Job, Job was tested, wasn't he, the most just man, on all the earth, he faced a severe storm, a severe storm, Satan's limited power, is pitted against, believers today, just as it was, in Job's day, through the old time, saints of old, the enemy still, waiting war, hoping to sink us, in the depths of the sea, maybe discouragement, despair, certainly deception, is out there, trying to, catch us out, and sometimes, the Christian life, can be stormier, than the, non-Christian life, do you think the enemy, is worried about those, who don't, follow Jesus, he probably, gives them, scarcely a thought, I mean, I'm sure, the rain falls on the just, and the unjust, they have their woes too, but, who's the enemy, pitted against, you, and I, as saints of the living God, and so, if storms come, don't be surprised, don't be surprised, if the storm may come, that it may not be, calm seas for you, you will encounter, life's threatening, challenges at times, he is waiting, war against you, but do not be disheartened, do not be discouraged, it's all the more reason, why, we should hold our ground, and resist the devil, and he will flee from you, now the spirit, speak of expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart, from the faith, giving heed, to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, it's all around about, we need to be very alert, very guarded, very word, founded, that we can, be alert to that, but thank God, the word says, that Christ has come, to destroy, the works, of the evil one, he's come to disarm, the powers of darkness, as

we see, in the cross, he triumphed over them, he disarmed them, he, destroyed them, really at the cross, in effect, you know, the full reality, of the cross, is yet to, probably, be enacted, as we see, the enemy's still, he's still at work, he's still roaming about, but, he's on a chain,

I think, and, you know, as much as he, wants to, devour us, as some preachers said, he's, he's got no teeth, you know, he's just, if he gets, he'll just gum you, you know, he'll just, he won't, he won't hurt you, because, you're in Christ, and Christ is in you, and Christ has disarmed, the powers of darkness, and we are assured hope, and victory today, we are assured peace with God, friends, think of it, think of that, devices, the wiles, the trickery, the strongholds, think of, the way that, the devil cloaks himself, and clothes himself, in different garbs, and disguises, be alert, be aware, be sober, be vigilant, watch and pray, look for that way of escape, find that, victory that you have in Christ, in your salvation, and wear the armour, don't go about, don't forget to put your armour on, when you get out of bed, Amen.

■ a network of demons, a