

Choose This Day Whom You Will Serve

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- [0 : 0 0] All right. Well, good morning, everyone. Where we are positioned now in the Gospel of Luke, the crowds are amassing, growing large.
- ! This is just jump ahead half a chapter where we're headed here in the next few weeks. In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together, so many that they were trampling one another.
- This is what's happening now in the ministry of Jesus as he has set his face towards Jerusalem and he's headed there. And in this moment now, he is in what we're going to see today in the scene that we see today, is he's going to draw a line in the sand and make a very clear declaration of who he is and who he is not and asking us, the people of his time, and also for us to make a decision one way or the other.
- This idea of drawing a line in the sand, I think it goes back all the way to Thermopylae. This is the Battle of Sparta and Persia.
- King Leonidas drawing a line in the sand and telling his soldiers, we will not retreat, we will not go back beyond this. Something that kind of carries down through history.
- [1 : 3 1] Even in our own country in the Alamo, there was Colonel William Travis who drew a line in the sand with his sword and declared that if you were willing to fight for freedom, that you could join him across that line, cross that line and fight.
- And if not, then you could leave the battle. And even today, if you go to the Alamo, that line is filled in with steel. It's legend where they might figure out where the line is today, but that's where they have it memorialized in that way.
- And in a very real sense, what we'll see today is Jesus drawing a line in the sand. And the second thing that we'll see today is the curtain pulled back a little bit. This is going to be difficult for some of us to see what we don't normally see with our regular eyes, to see behind the curtain into the spiritual realm, and to see the battle that takes place all around us even today as we live and breathe.
- So we start in verse 14 of Luke chapter 11 with this statement. Now, Jesus, he was casting out a demon that was mute. And as we've seen throughout the Gospel of Luke, for Jesus to cast out demons was a normal occurrence.
- And this was happening again. Here is a man who is both mute and blind. Matthew tells us he's also blind, but he's not able to speak.
- [3 : 1 0] And that's significant. And it's why Luke just highlights the idea of him being mute in the sense that if you could know in their world, this is how they understand, how they understood casting out demons, that if you could get the demon to speak and tell you his name, knowing the name of the demon was important.
- In other words, they thought if you didn't know the demon's name, there would be no way to cast out the demon. But if you knew the name of the demon, you could do this.
- And so because this man was mute because of the demon, they would have considered this man hopeless, beyond help, because there's no way that you could possibly know the name of the demon, because the man is mute.

Of course, this doesn't matter to Jesus. Jesus is not bound by their superstitions. And so when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke and the people marveled.

It was so, so incredible for them to see Jesus do this with this man who was blind and was mute. But some of them said he casts out demons by Beazabal.

[4 : 25] Now, there's a couple of different ways to pronounce this. You could say Beazelbub or Beazelbul. It's the same thing. It is the demon or the prince of the flies.

It's where it comes from. It comes from Baal worship. It comes from the city in Philistia, the Philistines. It's actually where the Gaza Strip is today.

If you want to pull it up into modern maps and modern history, this is the origination of this. So this is literally what they're saying of Jesus, that Jesus himself is either Beazelbul himself or that he is by the power of Beazelbul casting out these demons.

So some of them were saying that, and then others were testing him continually, keeping seeking, they kept seeking from him a sign from heaven.

So even as Jesus is performing sign after sign, they just want more. They're not willing to make a decision yet. They kind of want to remain neutral, if you will, and say, well, I don't know.

[5 : 41] I need to see another sign. Show me something more, and then I will make a decision. And this is something that we need to discuss as we go into this and understand this dark world that we don't really see around us, but that is absolutely operating in the world around us.

So I want to start with understanding who Satan is, where he comes from, the battle that started the war around us. And you have on your notes there a collection of different passages.

We're not going to take the time to look at them all, but you see it in Ezekiel. You see it in Isaiah, Book of Revelation, even all the way back to Genesis 3.

God had created, before he created the world, before he created us, he created angels that would serve him throughout eternity. And he created three especially, Michael and Gabriel and Lucifer, who are mentioned by name.

Lucifer was very powerful and very beautiful. He was the angel of worship. And he got to, and we don't know how this worked, but he got full of himself.

[7 : 00] The sin of pride, if you will, began to creep up in him. And he began to think of himself to be even equal with God or perhaps even better than God.

And so as he developed this mindset, he began to go to other angels and say, Hey, I just want you to know that I'm better than God and I'm going to prove it.

And he gathered among him a bunch of other angels. Revelation tells us that it's a third of the angels actually acted out in rebellion against God with Lucifer.

And then this battle ensued. And it wasn't much of a battle, just like we don't see. There isn't ever much of a battle between Satan and the demons and God.

God just speaks a word and it's over. But for some reason, they think that they can beat God. And even though they know the scriptures and they know their end, they know that the end is coming, that they will be cast into the lake of fire, and that is their eternal destination.

[8 : 08] They still think that they can overcome God and defeat God. And so Satan was cast out along with a third of the angels as demons.

That's what we know as demons today, of fallen angels. angels. And they are existing on the planet now. And there is this spiritual warfare that goes on between them and the angels all around us that we don't see.

And we don't really see much of that in our world today. Except occasionally you see some stuff happening like in India or in Africa or maybe some parts of remote South America or some other third world nation, you hear some pretty crazy things out there of some demonic forces at work or demon possession or some incredible miracles that take place as a result of that going on in the world.

But we don't see that so much around us today in the United States. We'll talk about that as we go on. But even in the Garden of Eden, this is in Genesis chapter 3, when Eve is confronted by the serpent, by Satan, it is this lie that he begins to tell her.

Did God really say? And don't you know that you too can be like God if you'll just eat this fruit of the tree that God said you should not eat of it.

[9 : 34] And so this pride and this deception took root in her heart and in the heart of Adam as well. And they sinned against God and that's how we have sin in our world as well.

And each of us are guilty of sinning against God because we are all children of Adam and Eve. So the lie at the heart of it all, and this goes back to Lucifer in heaven and also to Adam and Eve, the lie at the heart of it all is I can choose what's right for me.

And boy, do we see this in our world today. I get to decide what I want to do. I can decide what's right and wrong. I can decide for myself the things that are important to me and how I want to live my life.

I can be literally my own God. That's what it means. That's the consequence of saying I can choose what I want. I can choose how to live.

It's a way of saying I can be my own God. And it is the ongoing, meaning it's active in our world today. We see it all around us. It is this ongoing epic battle of good versus evil that we see.

[10 : 52] And we see it on display in this story where they're saying about Jesus that his power is coming from this prince of demons.

And Jesus has an answer for them, and it's an answer from logic, and it makes perfect sense. And it's like, you guys need to figure this out. This is actually the sin of what we know as the unpardonable sin.

That's a question that I get very often is, Rich, what is the unpardonable sin? This is it. It's not even a sin that's available to you and I today to commit, thankfully, in that sense.

It is the sin of saying that what Jesus was doing during his earthly ministry was instead of crediting the Holy Spirit, instead of saying that Jesus is of God, to say instead he is of Satan.

And Jesus said that that was the unpardonable sin. But this is how he answers now in Luke 11, verse 17. But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls.

[12 : 10] Boy, we see this at work all around us. This is not something that's new to us. You can see it as a nation. You can see it in individual households and in communities, in churches.

Anywhere there's a relationship where you have people who are divided against themselves, that relationship, that family, that community, that nation cannot stand.

And so Jesus is making the point, Listen, if I, as a demon, am casting out demons, that doesn't make sense. That's not how this works. Okay?

That just doesn't fit. And if Satan is also divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.

And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? In other words, you have priests, you have people who are in ministry who actually go about the business of casting out demons, or at least attempting to do that.

[13 : 18] And if they are successful, by what power are they successful? Is it because they're in compliance with the demons? And they would never say that their people were doing that.

Of course not. No, it's because they're representing God. And Jesus would say the same thing. Therefore, they will be your judges. They will say that your claim is worthless, that carries no merit.

But if it is by the finger of God, by the hand of God, that I cast out demons, and the kingdom of God has come upon you. In other words, if I can so easily do this, and it is by the hand of God that it actually happens, then you're standing in the midst right now of the kingdom of God.

You are standing. The kingdom of God has come upon you. It is here he is looking at you in the face right now. That's what Jesus was saying.

And that's his whole purpose. That's what he's come to do, is to declare this message. The kingdom of God is at hand. I'll go to the drums. The kingdom of God is at hand. And even in this, he's saying the kingdom of God is at hand.

[14 : 29] Here is proof of this. Here is proof of what I'm saying is true. I am casting out these demons. Even demons that you say are too hard to cast out because he's mute.

It doesn't matter. I'm doing all these miraculous things. Why? Because the kingdom is here. The kingdom of God is at hand. Now he goes on from here, and he begins to even clarify this even further.

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace or his home, and his goods are safe. But when one stronger than him attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoils.

We get this, right? That a strong man guards his home, guards his palace, all the treasures that he has within it. But someone stronger than him comes against him and defeats him.

Then he takes everything, including the man's armor and his treasures and everything. Okay? We get that. We understand that concept. So whoever is not with me is against me.

[15 : 39] And whoever does not gather with me scatters. And with this statement now, Jesus kind of destroys this whole idea of neutral ground.

There is no such thing. You're either for him, you're either with him, or you are against him. And if you are not for him, automatically that makes you in the category of being against him.

You might say, well, I haven't made a decision. And Jesus says, well, yes, you have. Even by your indecision. Even by your declaring that, no, I'm on the fence.

No, I'm still neutral. No, I'm still waiting for more signs. No, I'm still waiting for more information. I need to investigate this further. Jesus says, okay, but understand, you are not neutral.

You are not in the middle. You are on the side of the enemy. Understand that. If you sit here today and you would say, well, I am not yet a Christian, that makes you automatically someone who is lost and is bound for hell.

[16 : 49] That's the truth. And so you need to make up your mind. You still have time while you are still alive to make up your mind. But currently, if you are not trusting Christ as your Savior, if he is not your Lord and Savior, then you are lost.

You are without Christ. And you need to make up your mind. You need to decide. There is no neutral ground. Verse 24.

So when the unclean spirit has gone out of a person and it passes through waterless or arid places, seeking rest and finding none, it says, well, I'm going to return to my house from which I came.

This is the person who has been demon possessed and then through their own self-effort has managed to rid themselves of this in their life.

So it's not that they're trusting God. They're not trusting Christ. They're just turning over a new leaf. They've dedicated themselves to a new resolution.

[17 : 54] They've started something new in their life to make a change in their life. And this demon recognizes, okay, well, life out here outside is miserable.

They live to possess people, to oppress people. So, and when it comes back now, it finds the house swept and put in order. In other words, this person has done it.

They've turned over a new leaf. They've made some success in their life. But that's just an open invitation for this demon.

It goes and it brings seven other spirits, even more evil than itself. And they enter and dwell there. This is the plight of people without Christ.

Without Christ, you can work on your life and make it as good as you possibly can, but it still leaves you open to destruction. And the last state of that person is worse than the first.

[18 : 59] They're even more miserable than before. The man gets taken away and put into jail, put into prison for crimes that he's committed.

Maybe he's been addicted. And while he's in jail, he discovers the Lord and he trusts Christ as Savior. But is it real or is it just a jailhouse thing?

And he gets out. And once he gets out, he's like, okay, I'm living for the Lord. I'm going to do it. I'm going to survive. I'm going to...

Only to find out three weeks later, he's back right in the same pit from which he came. And it's even worse than it was before. Why? It's because there was no genuine transformation in that person's life.

And they've ended up being worse than when they first started. We see this happen in the world around us.

[19 : 58] Now, the interesting thing now is Jesus is saying this. He says he said these things as he said these things. A woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts at which you nursed.

And the response of Jesus is interesting when she says this. It's almost like a change in the subject. It's like Jesus is teaching about some very serious matters of darkness and demon possession and how we gain victory over it.

And this woman just pipes up and says, hey, blessed is your mother. And he said in response, blessed rather, not so much as mother, blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it.

It's almost as if Jesus is saying, why do you got to keep bringing her up? Why do you got to keep bringing Mary up? Stop it. It's not about her.

It's about what he has accomplished. It's about what he has done. And it's about your response to that. And so we ought to heed what he is saying when we do this.

[21 : 10] Now, in all of this, I want us today to spend a little bit of a time having a glimpse of the unseen world, of pulling the curtain back a little bit to see what we don't normally see around us, to understand that this is what's happening all around us all the time.

And so we need to be aware of this. So there's two stories, one in 2 Kings, one in the book of Joshua. And I'll start with 2 Kings first. In 2 Kings chapter 6, the prophet Elisha is at work in this time frame.

And you have the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel. Capital of Judah is Jerusalem. The capital of the northern kingdom of Israel is Samaria.

And to the north of Israel is another nation called Aram, or we call it today Syria. And the king of Aram, or the king of Syria, would often carry out raids against the northern tribes, against the northern kingdom.

But the problem was Elisha was supernaturally able to obtain where those raids were going to take place. And he would inform the king of Israel, Hey, the king of Aram's coming, and he's coming to such and such town.

[22 : 35] You need to be ready for him. And they were. And they would defeat those raids, and they would hold them back. And the king of Aram was getting mad because he thought someone in his own private meeting room, where they're devising their plans, he thought someone was betraying him.

And they're like, No, nobody's betraying you. It's that guy Elisha. And he's like, Elisha, we've got to take him out. Well, somebody find out where Elisha's at so we can go take him out.

Well, they found out that Elisha was in the town of Dothan. And so sure enough, they sent their army to Dothan to find Elisha and to take care of him so that they could go on and raid Israel.

Well, that morning when they showed up in Dothan, Elisha's servant went out that morning, and this is what he found. When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city.

Oh, no, my Lord, what shall we do, the servant asked. Because he's freaking out. He's like, Whoa, this army is out here. We're done. We're toast. And Elisha responds this way.

[23 : 56] Don't be afraid, the prophet answered. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them. And the servant is, I'm imagining here, like, okay, I can count all the horses and chariots, and there's two of us.

Do the math. So Elisha prays and said this as he prayed, Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see the eyes of his servant.

So that he may see. Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked, and he saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

That's a little curtain pulled back to see what no one else could see, that the angel armies were there to protect Elisha all around.

By the way, the movie chariots of fire comes from a phrase like this. Do any of you know that movie, chariots of fire? A few of you.

[25 : 05] It's got to be probably of a certain age. I don't know. And so, Lord, open up his eyes so that he can see what true reality is.

No one else could see these angels and their horses and their chariots. But Elisha could see them, and now his servant could see them. And what do we do?

What do we, how do we handle this? And Elisha walked out. And they're blinded. Actually, God, he prayed that God would blind them.

And God did, blinded them temporarily. Elisha walks out, and basically, he said, these are not the droids you're looking for. He says, this is not the city that you're looking for.

Let me show you where the city that you're looking for is. And so they followed him blindly to right downtown Samaria, surrounded by the armies of Israel.

[26 : 14] And Elisha said, okay, Lord, open their eyes. And they were like, oh, shoot. Now, the king of Israel, like, all right, Elisha, it's time for us to kill them.

No, no, no. God brought them here. Why don't you feed them first and let them go? So they did. They fed the army a feast, let them go, and then the conclusion of the story is they never again attacked the cities of Israel.

A little glimpse of what's going on in this world around us. Joshua chapter 7, there's another story. Joshua had crossed the Jordan.

He's the new leader of the nation of Israel. They crossed the river Jordan, and the first city they come to is the city of Jericho. If I could liken it to, like, maybe Grand Rapids, right?

Big fortified city. Walls are strengthened. Ain't no way that little old Israel is going to defeat them. You know, they can't come against the walls. They don't have the trained soldiers.

[27 : 19] They're not ready for it. And so Joshua's, okay, Lord, what are we supposed to do? And the Lord basically gives them instructions to say, okay, for a week, just march around the city one time, and then on the seventh day, march around it seven times, and then blow some horns.

Joshua, I can imagine Joshua coming back to his generals. What are we supposed to do? Well, basically we've got to put a band together. And they do this.

And they blow the horns, and all the walls of the city come down, and they go in, and they completely destroy everything within the city of Jericho. And they were given instructions when they went into the city to destroy everything that they found there, not to take any spoils.

It was unheard of. If you destroy a city, if you destroy a people, you take the spoils, the gold, the silver, they're animals, everything. That's just what you did.

That's how it worked. And God said, no, those are the way that the Scriptures refer to it. These are devoted things. In other words, they're set apart. It's almost like the word sanctified. They're set apart for God.

[28 : 34] And they're actually set apart or devoted for destruction. In other words, I'm going to take care of you. You don't have to worry about the spoils. Just leave that for me.

I will destroy it. This is what needs to become of these pagan people and their pagan practices and their idol worship and their violence and all the things that they were guilty of committing.

God is using the nation of Israel to bring judgment upon these cities and these pagan practices. And he's saying, no, it's got to all be destroyed. So they defeat the city of Jericho, no problem.

And the next city to come up on the map is Ai. Luddington, we'll call it. It's like, oh, Ai is nothing.

It's all spread out. There's not many people there. No big deal. Just give us 2,000 or 3,000 soldiers. We'll be fine. No problem. Joshua's like, okay, take 3,000 and go.

[29 : 34] So the army goes to Ai, little Ai, and Ai defeats them. And they turn around and run tail and retreat and hide.

36 men died of their own army, died in this battle. And Joshua's like, I can't figure this out, Lord. What are you doing?

We can defeat Jericho like this and now you're not with us anymore? What is going on, God? If you're not with us, we're done. We're toast. It's not going to work. And Joshua got on his face before God.

And the leaders of Israel got on their face before God. And they're dumping dust and dirt on their heads and just repenting over it. They don't even know what. And so God tells Joshua, get up.

Well, here, I have this for you. God tells Joshua, get up. Why have you fallen on your face? Israel, it's real simple, Joshua. Israel has sinned.

- [30 : 34] They have transgressed my covenant that I have commanded them. They've sinned against me, against the righteous and holy God. They have taken some of the devoted things, the things that had been devoted for destruction, that had been meant for destruction, set apart for destruction.

They have stolen them, lied about them, and put them among their own belongings. This is what they have done. That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies because they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable.

It's the same phrase, devoted to, liable to destruction. Israel itself has now been devoted to destruction because of their sin, because of what they have committed.

What's going on with this? I will not be with you anymore, God said, unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.

You've got to weed out. Who was it who took the things out of Jericho that were devoted to destruction? So the next day they got up, and God directed them to put all the nation into their 12 tribes, and then supernaturally God let them know that, okay, it's this one tribe, it's this tribe of Judah.

- [32 : 04] So just the tribe of Judah was selected. Everyone else got to go home. And so now they're dividing the tribe of Judah into certain clans, and they narrowed down, and they picked one clan, one family.

Find out one guy in his family, Achan. Achan was the one who committed this deed. Achan was Achan.

It's really bad preacher humor. I get it. Achan was the one who was guilty. Then Josiah said to Achan, Buddy, what did you do?

My son, give glory to the Lord, God of Israel, and give praise to him. And if you look in the footnotes, it will show you that give praise to him can also be translated confess to him.

Tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me. It was obvious. Achan was found out. I mean, they went through this whole supernatural process of narrowing it down to him.

- [33 : 09] Achan knew he was done. Achan answered Joshua, Truly, I have sinned against the Lord, God of Israel, and this is what I did. When I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them.

And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath. Sure enough, they sent men to Achan's tent.

They dug it up. They found all of it there. Achan and all his family were destroyed. And all the devoted things were destroyed.

How many times are we like, God, why won't you change? God, why won't you move in my life? Why is this still happening to me? God, why won't you help me?

Why won't you answer my plea? And maybe the question we ought to be asking instead is, Lord, what have I done?

- [34 : 38] Are there some devoted things in my own life? Buried in my own tent. Maybe, you have this on your notes, maybe God is not at work in your life because you've got part of the world buried under your tent.

God, why won't you?

When you pull back the curtain of what's really happening in your life, maybe God is not at work because you've got some things going on in your life that you know don't belong there.

Maybe it's God saying, Rich, what do you have buried under your tent? And there is spiritual warfare going on all around us.

And maybe it's not a lack of God being active. Maybe it's a lack of obedience on my own part. That's what's happening.

[35 : 56] And then I want to also talk to you about different weapons for different battles. I mentioned earlier that sometimes you'll see or hear some wild things happening in different parts of the world.

Over in India, you know, somebody's raised from the dead or somebody who has a demon in them and it's cast out or some miraculous thing or some demonic thing that's happening.

Why does that kind of stuff happen in places like India? Why does that happen in places like some remote parts of South America? Or why is it happening in some other third world countries?

But not here. Why don't we see that kind of stuff here? You ever wonder that? Why don't we see things like that here? And I think part of it is because we're not as susceptible here because those places are full of spiritualism.

They believe in the spiritual realm and the spiritual world around them. And they follow pagan gods and false gods and false idols.

[37 : 10] And they leave themselves open to that, open to the fear of that. Whereas here in our country, we like pay 50 bucks for a ticket and a box of popcorn and some pop.

And we're entertained by it, especially this time of year, right? We like to watch that stuff. We're not afraid of some demon come scrolling on our window in the mist on the window.

We're like, I'll pay to be entertained like that. It's something that we have kind of dismissed as can't really happen.

It's not really true. It doesn't make sense. And so we just dismiss it. And so the thing that we wonder here is what does God do in our midst?

What does God do in our country? Or what does Satan do? I'm sorry. What does Satan do in our world to defeat us?

[38 : 13] And I think it's a whisper. I think it's a whisper of, hey, Rich, it's all about you. Hey, Rich, you can decide for yourself.

Make it about you. Make it about what you want. Make it about how you want to live. Make it about success. Be consumed with materialism.

That's all that he has to do in our world to get our attention, is to see that all the stuff that we have around us, and we think that that's all that there is, is just the world around us.

And we miss it. We don't even see it in our own world. Satan can say, man, I've got several channels on your TV that will make your house mine.

You've got things on your phone. And time spent on your phone that I've got your attention, and I know what will push your buttons.

[39 : 24] And I know what secret sins you have in your life. And that's all he needs. And you belong to him.

And we wonder why is God at work. And maybe God is saying, Rich, you've got to clean this up.

You've got to get rid of this disobedience before I can be active in your life, before I can begin to answer prayer.

You want me to be active in your life. You want me to be answering prayer. You want me to move. Rich, where's your obedience?

What about the secret sin that you're hiding? What about this greed that you have? This need for more? The stuff that consumes us.

[40 : 27] And it's all around us. John 10.10 says it this way. The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. That's what he does. That's what he majors in.

And for us, for you and I, he doesn't have to create some elaborate thing to do that. He can just whisper in our ear and get our attention and draw us away from God into the things of this world.

Jesus said of the Pharisees who were challenging him, You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning. That's all that he wants to do in your life, is to keep you away from God.

And he's successful at that. That for him is murder. That for him is what works. Listen, God is not trying to make you evil. I mean, Satan is not trying to make you evil.

Satan is not trying to make you evil. He's just trying to keep you dead. Spiritually dead. That's all he cares about. And if you are a Christian, if you're a follower of the Lord, then he just wants to take you out of commission.

[41 : 38] He wants to make you worthless. He wants to make your testimony worthless. And he will do that by any means necessary. And for us, for you and me, it's just the things of this world that we find so attractive to take our attention off.

He is a liar. And he is the father of lies. Any lie that we see around us, we know that it comes from him, from the father of lies.

Ephesians chapter 6 tells us to be ready, finally be strong in the Lord, in the strength of his might, put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

Because they're real, and we don't see them. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers, over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

This is the battle that we face. This is what we are up against. First Peter chapter 5, be sober minded, be watchful, he tells us.

[42 : 49] Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a lion, like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. And he seeks to devour you. Peter is writing this to believers.

He's writing to us, and he's saying, be sober minded, be watchful, resist him, firm in your faith, because you know that he is coming.

And so with that in mind, you have on your notes, three questions to ask yourself. When it comes to this spiritual battle, first question, where is there evidence of the enemy's work in my life?

Now listen, if you're a believer, you already know the answer to this question, because you have the Holy Spirit within you, who in a sense is saying to you, Rich, Rich, you know that what you're doing is wrong.

Rich, this thing that you're looking at is wrong, is dangerous. Don't go there. Don't do that. You already have within you the Holy Spirit testifying to you, that when you do this thing, that you are committing sin.

[44 : 10] And do you just let it go? Or do you respond to it? Do you repent of it? Where is there evidence of the enemy's work in your life?

Second question, how have I been aiding the enemy? Are there places that you go? Are there sites that you look at?

Are there conversations that you have? And you know that these are places of temptation for you? Then you've got to find a way to knock it off.

You've got to find a way to get it out of your life, to cut it out of your life. And you need to do that. You need to understand that these things are evil, and they are devoted things that need to be destroyed in your life, in order for you to have the kind of relationship that God intends, with you as a believer.

Third question, do I really want to get rid of all my sin? Or, are there some pet sins that I'm just going to hang on, thank you very much?

[45 : 29] I'm just going to hold on to them. Nobody has to know about them. I get that God knows, but I can kind of put that out of my mind, and still go down that road, and still commit that sin, and play that game.

And when you choose to handle your life that way, you have to know that God is not fooled. God will not be mocked. And you need to address these sins.

Three more things that you have on your notes, thinking clearly about this world behind the curtain, this war that's at hand.

There are only two kingdoms. These are things that we've said before. There's only two choices, two kingdoms. There's no neutral ground. It's one or the other.

There's no in-between. Secondly, one kingdom will win. One kingdom will lose.

[46 : 38] Actually, there's even a better way to say this. So if you're willing and able to cross through some things on your notes, the better way to say this is one kingdom has won.

The other has lost. God's eyes.

In terms of God's history, it's already happened. The final nail in the coffin of Satan was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That sealed his doom.

That was it. And so this is what is going to happen. For us, it's still future tense, but it's happened that the battle's been won.

The victory is ours. It belongs to him. Why in the world would we ever stand for or choose a losing proposition here?

[47 : 40] I don't get that. And both kingdoms, if you will, are still recruiting citizens. It's still active.

It's still ongoing. And for Satan to win the recruitment battle, as I've said before, it's not that you have to declare that you're evil or that you're with Satan or that you're worshiping Satan or any of that.

It just has to keep you on the side that says no to God or I'm not ready. He's won if that's your position. So, understand, this is the stakes.

This is what is at stake. This is the battle that's going on around us. And so, as the title of the sermon would ask or would declare, choose this day whom you will serve.

Joshua's declaration at the end of his book as he was getting ready to pass on and go to heaven, he said to the people of Israel, choose this day whom you will serve.

[49 : 02] And that's a choice that all of us need to make. And if you've not made that decision, then may today be that day that you say yes to him.

I will trust him, Jesus Christ. I will trust in Christ with my life. Let's pray. Lord, today I thank you for the clarity of the subject matter and what we learned at, what we've learned today.

Lord, we know that there is a battle that's taking place. we've seen it around us, we've seen it take place in the devastation of people's lives and choices that people make.

But, Lord, I pray that we would truly understand for our own selves what is at stake, that we cannot play with sin, we cannot tolerate it, that when we recognize the sin in our life that we need to cut it out of our lives, that we need to repent of it and stay away from it and trust you with that area of our life.

Lord, give us wisdom, give us clarity to see what is happening around us and in our lives. Lord, we love you.

[50 : 38] We pray for those who have not yet made that decision to trust Christ. Help them to see their true state of where they stand and I pray that today that people would recognize their need and that they would trust you with their lives.

Lord, we love you. Again, we praise you. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.