

Satan is defeated at the cross

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Date: 20 March 2016

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[0 : 0 0] I'd like to turn your Bibles to John chapter 12 and verse 31 and 32 following. So John chapter 12 verses 31 and 32.

The reading, as you can see, is short this evening. And bearing in mind what it teaches is the reason for keeping it tight.

So John chapter 12, beginning at verse 31 to 32. Remember this, it might just be worth setting the scene of where we're up to.

That Jesus has really experienced a great deal of unbelief by the people. There's a lot of oppression that Jesus has done a lot of healing. He's just about to go into the room. And then we have the upper room discourse from John 13 onwards, you know, where Jesus washes the disciples' feet and his teaching there to them, which is very intimate teaching.

But this, this in many ways sets it up. So Jesus says in verse 31, now hear God's word. Now is the judgment of this world.

[1 : 2 2] Now will the ruler of this world be cast out. Verse 32, and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

Well, I'd like us to pray. I can remember David Earnshaw once said that, you know, the devil can drop into a congregation quite easily, reminding us that he can disguise himself as an angel of light.

Not that we're to think of him as a person, but the fact that, you know, his disruptive influence can, can sort of turn up anywhere. And so let us just pray that our minds would be fixed on Jesus and not get led astray by anything other than Jesus.

Let's pray. Father God, it is a big deal, a real big deal to listen to the words of Jesus. And here we learn something about the cross that perhaps we don't think of that much, or at least as much as we perhaps should.

Lord, because here we see the victory of Christ, and here we see a wonder which we should just remember daily, that we could recognize and remember that we are yours and we belong to you and we are safe in your arms.

[2 : 5 1] And as Jesus prays later on, that we would be kept from the evil one. Not that we would be taken out of this world away from the evil one, but that we would stay in this world and be kept from him.

So we pray this evening that our minds and hearts would be kept from Jesus, that we would be kept from him and his influence over our life, not just tonight, but of course going forward.

But Father, allow us to see your wonderful truth, the wonderful truth here contained in your word. And we ask that, please, in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Well, there have been several films made about this person, Satan. I don't necessarily recommend watching any of them.

There have been several songs written, not necessarily in honor, but recognizing what Satan can actually do in the world.

[3 : 57] One film in particular, or at least the strap line for the film, I've never actually seen the film, but you get to hear of the clips, was this, that the greatest trick that the devil ever pulled was convincing the world that he didn't exist.

And in many ways, I guess, as a Christian, we would fall into that category. I mean, how much thought do you give to when you wake up in the morning that actually you could be in a real, quite serious spiritual battle?

Bearing in mind that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but that we actually wrestle against spiritual forces. I mean, when was the last time that you prayed against that? When was the last time you prayed for protection against that?

When was the last time you even gave it any thought that actually what we might be going through as a church in particular moments or seasons, or what you might be going through as a person in a particular moment may actually be down to something you can't feel, you can't touch, but through discernment of God's Word, you know that it's there.

That what is happening at this point, that this is a spiritual issue, this is a spiritual battle that I am in. Now, a lot of Christians are, here's the deal, if you don't give it any attention, if you don't pay any attention to that, are you led astray?

[5 : 24] Potentially. Were you going to be led astray first? Well, it's going to be in your prayer life. One of the first things that if the devil has managed to be crafty with you, one of the first things to go will be your prayer life.

And I'll quote the verse which will speak that. It speaks about a devotion to Christ. Now, we wouldn't consider necessarily that we are under the influence of Satan when we're not praying, but that's what's happened.

Okay? His schemes and his craftiness has worked, not necessarily his magic, but worked his stuff so that we don't pray.

Something we've been led astray from that kind of devotion. Well, last week we went from the garden to the cross and Jesus' words on the cross.

Tonight, we're looking at Jesus' words about the cross, something that will happen when Jesus gets to the cross. He will be lifted up, but in being lifted up, the ruler of this world will be cast out.

[6 : 30] And the point that Jesus is making here is the cross does something more than just forgive you of your sin. Okay? The cross does something much more than just forgive you of your sin.

It deals with the enemy. And so, Jesus is getting us to think about this, that he is dealing with the great enemy, the devil.

So, God is doing more than just forgiving us. He is defeating what he calls the ruler of this age. And so, Jesus is speaking about what will happen on the cross, one of them being, that Satan will be defeated, that he will be cast out, the ruler of this age will be cast out.

And the second thing is, is that as the ruler of this world is cast out and Jesus is lifted high, he will draw all men upon himself, all men to himself.

Now, one of the things you have to do at this point is just to stop and think about why they're in that order. I mean, why does, I don't want to say, why does 31 come before 32?

[7 : 33] Well, that's quite obvious. Hopefully, it's quite obvious. But why does Jesus say that the ruler of this age will be cast out? And then Jesus says, when I'm lifted high, he will draw all men to myself.

So, in the middle of the two statements of the ruler of this age being cast out, you have this image of someone being pushed away, someone being sent away, someone being cast out.

But then on the other side of the cross, Jesus being lifted up, you have this image of people being brought in. Okay, do you see the picture? Yeah, you've got it? So, bang in the middle of those two images of pushing away, casting out, and drawing all men to himself, you have Jesus, bang in the middle, being lifted up.

Now, why is it in that order? Yeah. Well, it's in that order because of something that Jesus previously taught, which we'll get to look at at a moment. Now, there's a couple of important things that we need to consider, and that is, firstly, what could Satan do before the cross, and what can Satan do after the cross?

Because I think many Christians believe that Satan can do the same after the cross that he could do before the cross, that Satan can get up to the same kind of stuff after the cross that he was doing before the cross, as if that the ruler of the world hadn't been cast out, that the cross didn't do anything to him.

[9 : 04] And so, Christians end up attributing things to Satan that are true of him pre-cross, but are not true of him after the cross.

But because some Christians haven't made that distinction, they sort of give Satan and the devil credit that he can do things now like he was doing before.

And that's just not the case. You've got to remember, the cross here, according to Jesus, is a decisive blow on the enemy. The enemy is defeated. He is cast out.

And that's what we will see going forward. And so, I really do want you to consider that this is a spiritual issue, that these are spiritual forces. But I also want you to consider that Jesus deals with it on the cross.

That doesn't mean that we're not up against any kind of spiritual forces now. Paul says in Ephesians that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood. We actually wrestle against these spiritual forces.

[10 : 04] That when you read it carefully, we're not to do anything. When you put on the whole armor of God in Ephesians, what is the one thing that you're to do apart from put it on?

It says so that you'll be able to stand against. It doesn't say go out and pick a fight. It doesn't say go out and wage war on the devil. It doesn't say anything that's sort of offensive, as in make an advance.

It simply says stand still. God will protect you. Remember, the armor of God is God. Remember, you can go back and listen to that sermon. The armor of God is God.

God protects you as you stand still against these kind of spiritual forces. So, Satan at the cross was defeated.

He was also cast out. But nevertheless, he can, if given the opportunity, and the emphasis here is on if given the opportunity, get up to all kind of mischief.

[11 : 05] But I want to put the emphasis, and I want you to recognize that the emphasis is on if given the opportunity. But before we go any further, I want to make it absolutely clear who Satan is in relation to God.

Okay? So, despite popular belief, Satan is not the opposite to God. Okay? How many cartoons have you seen where you get these, you know, an angel on one shoulder or a God on one shoulder, and you get Satan on the other shoulder, and you get this picture growing up as you're watching TV, and, you know, you get these cartoons and that, that the devil is God's opposite.

But this is clearly not the case, and it's clearly not the case that the Bible even portrays that kind of message. The first thing that we need to recognize is that the devil is not the opposite of God with the same powers, but only bad.

He doesn't have the same powers. But more importantly, the devil, remember, is a creation. God is uncreated. So, you couldn't get any more different between the two.

And what you have is you have Satan, who was created, remember, first as an angel, a beautiful angel. But as an angel, he grasped for the uncreated's position.

[12 : 35] So, if you go down to Isaiah 14, what you will read, if you remember that all angels are created, and that God is the only uncreated person, you begin to notice just how sinful it is.

Because what you'll find is Satan, as an angel, who is created, is grasping, wanting to be higher than the uncreated God, which is in Isaiah 14, 12 to 15.

That's what's actually happening. It also says that at that point, before he grasped for what wasn't his, that he was absolutely blameless.

But the moment he decided to grasp for the uncreated's position, he wanted to be higher than God. In other words, he was putting the uncreated God below creation, which is reversing the order.

And so, he wanted that position. And the moment he wanted that position, it tells us in Ezekiel 28, verse 15, that at that point, unrighteousness was found in him.

[13 : 39] Okay, so remember, the devil is created, but created good. He went bad by grasping for the uncreated's position. So, we conclude, quite clearly, hopefully, that Satan is a creation.

Not the opposite of the uncreated God. Okay, we don't believe in that. We believe there is one God, and only one God.

And Satan is a created angel who went bad by grasping for God's position, or rather, grasping for a position even above God himself.

He wanted to set his throne on high, which is another way of saying, I don't want your throne. I'm going to set one above you, which is going even further.

Now, when Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, we begin to see this really clearly, because one of the temptations that Satan did with Jesus was the option to bow down and worship Jesus.

[14 : 46] And when you do that, everything that you see will be yours. Now, what's the issue there? When Satan said, bow down and worship me, did he expect Jesus to stand up and play a guitar?

No, did he expect Jesus to pray? What was he expecting of Jesus when he used the word bow down and worship me? Well, what's worship?

This is where we really have to remember what worship is. Worship is the creation's response to the creator. Worship is what a creature does to the creator.

And so, true worship is the creature responding to the creator in the right way in all of life, for all of life.

That's proper worship. So, worship cannot be contained to this evening. Worship is what you'll do when you get home after this evening's fellowship.

[15 : 46] Worship will be what you do when you wake up tomorrow morning. Worship is about how you as a creature, someone who is made, responds daily to the uncreated God.

Now, now that you know that, now we begin to see what Satan is trying to do with Jesus. It's exactly what he was trying to do in Isaiah. He's trying to get God the Son, the uncreated God the Son, through whom everything was created, to bow down to him, a creation.

He's trying to do what? He's trying to reverse what true worship is all over again. He's trying to, in other words, he hasn't changed. He's doing the same thing that he's always done.

He's trying to make his position as a creation above the uncreated God. So, Jesus, you bow down and worship me.

He's trying to reverse the order of true worship. And so, Satan hasn't changed a bit. And now, Jesus says here in verse 31 that this world, okay, this world meaning the world pre-cross, and the ruler of this world pre-cross will be cast out.

[17 : 06] Okay? He can rule, and he gets away with his leading, his ruling, until the cross. And then at the cross, the ruler of this world is cast out.

But he is never the ultimate ruler. He's sort of like, I can remember growing up in school, and the teacher would pop out, and she would always put one of the pupils in charge of the rest of the class.

Now, depending on who that pupil was, she used to, she never used to have favorites, but she used to pick certain people, and it was obvious that she didn't pick certain others. But every now and then, even the good ones that she did pick would mess around.

And just imagine for a moment that the teacher's out of the class, and the pupil is there. The class, you know, everyone, the teachers said, you have to listen to this person.

But the pupil's not going to do what the teacher said. They're just going to do their own thing. Now, they can get away with it for a while. Okay, they can mess around. They can, you know, throw rubbers.

[18 : 05] They can write on the chalkboard. They can, you know, do all these kind of things. But they can only get away with it until the teacher comes back. You know, I had one teacher who used to say, you can expect me when you least expect me.

And not a single person in the class knew what that meant until she came back in the room. And everyone knew what she meant. We can expect her when we haven't got a clue.

She could turn up at any point and, boy, did she? And so what you have here is you have Satan sort of taking on this role of ruler of this world. Not because God is absent, but because God is a plan.

But in this time pre-cross, the devil is the strongman. And the devil's having his way. But the moment we get to the cross, he is cast out and defeated.

Now, why must this happen? Well, it must happen because of something that Jesus has already explained. Verse 32, we get an explanation that when he is lifted from the earth, that's when he is cast out.

[19 : 11] But also when he is lifted from the earth, he will draw all people to himself. Does that remind you of anything? Well, it ought to. In Matthew 12, Jesus has been doing what?

He's been casting out demons. And isn't it interesting that demons always recognize who Jesus is? You know, what will you do with us, O son of David? What are you going to do with us?

And Jesus says that by him casting these people out, the kingdom of God has come. Their kingdom has ended. Their rule over people's lives is gone. Now that the kingdom of God is coming into this world, the way that it demonstrates itself is by the demons having to vacate.

That Jesus comes and heals and expels demons out. Why? Because the kingdom of God has come upon these people. And so Jesus says this in explaining in Matthew 12, verse 29.

Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.

[20 : 25] Matthew 12, verse 29. Now let's just put that Matthew 12 into John 12, verses 31 and 32. What do we see? We see in verse 31, the strong man being bound.

Okay? And then in verse 32, Jesus, through the cross, is plundering the devil's house. Drawing all people to himself. You got the picture?

That's what's happening here. And so the reason why the devil must be cast out, the reason why the devil must be defeated and dealt with, is because the devil is the strong man of the age.

The devil is the strong man who has people in his house getting them to do what he wants them to do. But Jesus says that in casting out demons, that is the kingdom of God that has come upon them.

What is Jesus talking about? Well, he's talking about the cross is the decisive blow of the strong man. The cross is what binds the strong man so that the strong man's house can be plundered.

[21 : 29] And so Jesus here at the cross is defeating, is binding the strong man so that his house can be plundered.

And what that means for us is that the reason why we can proclaim a gospel and it work, the reason why we can proclaim a gospel and men and women, boys and girls come to faith in the world is because the world's strong man has been bound.

And we have every right and every opportunity to now plunder the devil's house because he has been dealt with by the Son of God on the cross.

That's what's happening when you evangelize. When you evangelize, you're plundering the devil's house. The strong man's been bound. He can do absolutely nothing to stop you.

He has been dealt with. He has been cast out. He cannot stop you. And so we begin to see that the cross does more than accomplish salvation and give you the forgiveness of sins.

[22 : 35] It is the very reason why we can evangelize in the first place. Not just because we have a message to tell, but rather because that message can be told effectively and powerfully and actually make a difference in people's lives.

Why? Because the strong man has been dealt with. That's why Jesus says what he says in Matthew 12. It's reference to the cross. If the devil is defeated then, what does that mean now?

I had a fairly lengthy conversation with a lady, not from this congregation and not even from Scotland, who really thought that she was being sort of picked on by the devil himself.

I pointed out to her that this was very unlikely, bearing in mind that the devil is only one person, and why would you in particular, out of all the people in the world, be on his hit list?

She then said to me, well, the devil can be bugging another person in another part of the world while he's bugging me here. And I said, no, you're missing the point. Why?

[23 : 43] Because the devil's a created being. He's not the uncreated God. He cannot be in two places at once. But what can the devil do? Well, the devil's a bit like a dictator on the run.

And we've seen a few of those, haven't we? Not that I want to name them to make an association, but we've seen a few of them in the Middle East where an army has come in. It has dethroned the dictator.

And the dictator sort of scarpers away. He creates trouble where he is, but he can't really do anything. He's a dictator on the run. His power and influence has disappeared completely.

And so the devil can perhaps cause a little bit of trouble, but he can't really do anything about it. The devil wants ownership. He still wants the ownership. He wants ownership of your attention.

He wants ownership of your material life and, more importantly, your immaterial life. That's what he wants. But he's only going to get it if you give it to him. He's only going to get it if you give the opportunity to him.

[24 : 52] And so the devil, after the cross, becomes the name by which the spiritual forces are recognized with. You know, it's the devil. But it means more than just one person.

It means an influence, the devil's influence in the world. It's really nothing much, but it can cause a little bit of disruption here and there. And the reason I say that is because of what James teaches us.

James says in James chapter 4 verse 7, that you can resist the devil and the devil will flee from you. So does that look like a person who has any power over you whatsoever?

Does that look like a person who has any power over a believer's life whatsoever? No. You just resist the devil and he will flee from you.

He has no power. The strong man has been bound. He can be resisted and he ought to be resisted. But the devil has schemes and lies.

[25 : 54] And I've always said, I believe the devil to be the best blackmailer in the world. You ever been blackmailed by the devil?

No. You do that and I'll let this get out. What about this? What about that?

Isn't it amazing how the devil can get such a hold on you that you feel that the life that you have is all that you can have because the devil's got you right where he wants you? And nothing good's going to come your way because you don't anything more to happen because if more happens, then the truth will get out and the devil just wraps you up tight.

Well, what the devil works on, of course, is not the fact that you're forgiven, but the fact that other people may find out. The devil is crafty.

He is a liar and he has his schemes, but the devil can be resisted. But one thing that the devil does more than anything else is distort the gospel.

[27 : 13] He gets you to think differently about the God of grace. He gets you to think differently about Christ who died for you to forgive you forever, to save you forever.

The devil is the one that sows the seeds that says, you know, perhaps you're not saved. Paul, fearing this for the church at Corinth, had this to say to them.

He was afraid that the Christians in Corinth would be deceived in the same way that Eve was deceived at the beginning of creation. And he said, fearing that through their thoughts, they will be led astray from a sincere and a pure devotion to Christ.

You see, one thing that the devil can't do is separate you from God. One thing the devil can do, however, is disrupt your relationship with God.

Okay, do we understand the difference? In other words, the devil can't break up the marriage between you and God. But he can certainly make it a bad marriage. Okay, he can't do anything about the eternal relationship that you have with God because God has saved you.

[28 : 26] He will keep you to himself. But he can certainly make your part of the relationship one where it is insincere and not full of devotion.

Hence why I said that when the devil has his way with you, the first thing to go is your intimacy with God. God and intimacy is nothing more than prayer. When the devil gets his way, the first thing to disappear in your life is a praying life.

And you look around and go, I thought it was me. I just thought, I just thought that I wasn't, you know, a good enough Christian or I just thought that I wasn't trying hard enough or I just thought that, you know, I've not put enough practice in him praying.

Well, that could be the case, but what if it's more the case that you have come under the craftiness of Satan just to get you to stop praying? And you've not had enough discernment to recognize that he's had his, dare I say, wicked way in a truest sense with you.

That's what the devil can do. He can't disrupt the relationship as in tear it apart, but he can disrupt the devotion, your intimacy with God. And so your prayer life goes.

[29 : 36] So do you pray? Would you be willing tonight to consider, at least consider, that it may actually be more than just a lack of effort on your part, but actually you need a little bit more discernment to recognize that one of the devil's schemes, or at least a few, has managed to get the better of you?

Is that at least possible? I've also said that one of the things that the devil does to get a Christian to sin is to remind the Christian that he can be forgiven.

Think about how twisted that is. But the devil reminds you of just how good God's forgiveness is just before you're about to commit the sin, because you know you can be asked for forgiveness afterwards.

So the devil lays it on thick. You can be forgiven. Don't worry about it. God's grace. God loves you. Okay? He uses all the graces of God to get you to do the very thing that you ought not to do.

He's very clever. Not that I'm admiring it. I'm just stating the reality of this.

[30 : 48] And so how does the devil manage to do all of this? Well, I think it's because we entertain him. It's because we give him the opportunity. We give the influence the opportunity.

In Hebrews, it says this about the word of God, that the word of God is both milk and solid food. But then it says this, more importantly, that Hebrews 5, verse 14, that solid food is for the mature.

For those have their powers of discernment trained, listen, by constant practice. Constant practice with what? Well, constant practice in the word.

So that they are able to distinguish good from evil. In other words, what the writer to the Hebrews is clearly pointing out is that the only way a Christian is ever able to tell the difference between good and evil is through the word of God.

You're unable to distinguish. You're unable to discern that level of distinction. Because the difference between the craftiness of Satan is not the difference between black and white.

[32 : 00] white. The kind of discernment Paul says you need to be able to distinguish what the devil is up to is the kind of discernment that can distinguish between white and off-white. It's very marginal.

Even a fool could distinguish between black and white, blue and white, green and white. But you need a little bit more discernment to be able to distinguish between white and off-white.

white. And it's those who are mature, who have the solid food, who practice in the word of God that are able to make those kind of distinctions.

Hence why reading and prayer are essential for devotion to Christ. And so it's not immediately apparent to most people that they are under the craftiness of the enemy because of their level of discernment.

But it is the case that when the devil has his way, he has his way because he has occupied your mind and whatever gets your mind gets you. Whatever gets your mind gets you.

[33 : 05] This is why we're told to fix our mind on the things above. And once he gets your mind, he leads you astray from a sincere faith and so your faith becomes insincere. And we all recognize what an insincere faith looks like in ourselves.

And then the next thing to go is our devotion to Christ because he can't destroy the fact that we're going to be married to God. He can't destroy that bond. He just disrupts the type of relationship that it has.

He destroys the intimacy. And so prayer goes immediately. And so let me conclude quickly. Satan is defeated.

But Satan is an opportunist. Okay? He's an opportunist because he can only do what you give him the opportunity to do. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

We no longer live in his house. We no longer live under his rules. The strong man has been bound. The strong man has been defeated. And now his house can be plundered.

[34 : 13] And in the same way we have been plundered by his house, by the gospel coming into our lives, that same gospel that we heard that we then take to other people is plundering the devil's house.

The strong man's been bound. These people are out there to be saved and drawn to Christ who is lifted high upon the cross. And so don't ever think that evangelism isn't working.

Don't ever think that there must be another way to be able to do this. That there must be another way than the way that God has designed it. just speak the gospel.

Just tell people about the Christ who died to remove their sin and to make them right with God. And what you will find happening at that point is that you are plundering the devil's house.

And you are taking people who belong in there and bringing them into the kingdom of God by the message of the gospel. His authority is none.

[35 : 16] But as Jesus says at the end of Matthew all authority has been given to him. Meaning that we have every authority given to us to go out and plunder the devil's house. Because the strong man is bound.

We are rescuing people for the kingdom of God. And for us who are there already for us who are already in the kingdom of God like us tonight you must remember that the devil is an opportunist.

He is a liar. He is a schemer. And he is full of craftiness. And the one thing that he is trying to do day after day with your life is to lead you astray from a sincere faith and from a devotion to Christ.

So the cross does more than one thing. And one of the other things that it does is that it defeats the devil for good. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.