



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

The Ultimate Villain

Invisible War: Winning Against Evil | Part 12

Tim Badal | June 21, 2015 | Various Scriptures



Turn to the book of 1 Peter 5. We're in the second week of our series entitled, "The Invisible War: Winning Against Evil." The focus of our summer is dedicated to this idea of the spiritual war that is going on around us. Last week, Pastor Steve opened this series for us by sounding the alarm and reminding us that we're all in a fight. This may not be the kind of fight that you may have in a boxing ring or the kind of fight where you are a soldier in a physical battle, but this is a spiritual battle that takes place in the heavenly realms and has massive ramifications on our lives in the here and now. The Bible is full of commands to be ready for this fight. We're told seven times to be sober-minded. Christians should not be so intoxicated by their own lives and activities, but they ought to always be on alert.

This New Testament idea of alertness is a military term for soldiers who are constantly ready for the enemy's assault and who are ready to protect everything that is important in their lives. I can't tell you how many lives I have seen swept away because people weren't ready for this battle, thinking that it wouldn't affect them and that it wouldn't hit close to home. Many Christians find themselves unaware of the battle that's going on around them.

So this is a reminder for us as a church to stop and take stock of the battle that's going on around us. We must be aware of the devil's schemes. He can destroy all that we have done for the cause of Christ in a matter of seconds. So our job is to be continually ready for the battle, to meet the enemy through the power of God.

Let me remind you what Pastor Steve told us last week. We are in a war and the question is: are you ready for what the enemy is going to throw your way? Are you ready for the battle that's going to hit you before you leave this place? The elders' prayer is that, by focusing some time on this subject, we might be equal to the task. So now we're on alert. Now we know the alarm has been set. The question is: what are we to be on the lookout for?

The next three weeks of this series are going to focus on our adversaries. We've already been alerted. Now we're going to look at our adversaries in the battle.

- This week we're going to talk about the devil and demons.
- Next week we're going to talk about the world, the system of ideologies and thoughts that seem to be so against everything God and His Word have to say.
- Finally, we'll look at the enemy from within: the flesh—our appetites and desires that tell us to go against the will of God and live in rebellion against Him.

But once we get through the adversaries, we need to recognize that we are a people who have victory in Christ Jesus. Though these adversaries are powerful and incredibly deceptive in their schemes, we need to remember that the battle's already been won. We have allies in this fight. That will be the next part of the series. We'll look at our allies who are fighting with us—our fellow believers, the Word of God and the blood of Jesus Christ. The final part of the series will look at Ephesians 6 and the armor of God that He has given His children to protect us in the fight.

With that as a backdrop, turn to 1 Peter 5:8–11. Though this is just our starting point, it is a good reminder for us. This is a very short, but famous, passage in the Scriptures where Peter—a follower of Jesus Christ who recognized the schemes of the devil—shares this through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To [God] be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Hollywood has a predicament these days. With all the new superhero action movies, Hollywood struggles to top themselves when it comes to creating a bad guy for a new movie. They struggle to find ways to make villains more vile and depraved than they were before. Moviegoers want their bad guys even crazier and more vicious than those in the movie they went to last month. Anything less than that won't cut it. One film critic shared in *US Weekly* magazine that directors are going to great lengths to create a villain who will make your skin crawl and whose every movement keeps you on the edge of your seat. We're looking for villains, he says, to push the limits of the scripts and even of the actors who play the part.

Many will remember the tragic story of actor Heath Ledger who landed the part that he had always been looking for. In the movie *The Dark Knight* (the second installment of the Batman series), Heath Ledger was given the part of the Joker. Now, the Joker back in my days of watching the old Batman TV show, was a villain you would laugh at. He was, in many ways, someone who was a funny guy, kind of crazy and a little bit quirky. But the Joker in this new series was a dark character. He pushed the limits and Heath Ledger wanted to take it to the full extent of the script. He began to study what it meant to be evil personified. He locked himself in a hotel room to read the script and try to understand all that he could about what evil would be like. The movie portrayed him as one of the darkest villains imaginable. He was scary. He made your skin crawl. He pushed the limits.

Heath Ledger learned a very, very tragic lesson. When you play with evil, you can't just play the part because it will corrode the very essence of your life. Heath Ledger—at the age of 28, while the Batman movie was still in editing—was holed up in an apartment in solitude, filled with depression and despair. He took a cocktail of six anti-depressant drugs that ended his life. A diary was found on Heath in his apartment and it articulated what he wanted to do in his part as the Joker. He wanted to be the ultimate villain. And while Hollywood may give out many awards and seek to rattle our cages when we go to the movie theater, we need to understand that no award for the ultimate villain can be given to any man or woman. That diabolical distinction is given to the devil himself.

Today we're going to spend some time looking at this villain. We're going to explore his life. I need to be honest with you, while Amanda and I were driving to church, she turned to me and said, "Don't you think it's a bit odd that you would spend time in the pulpit speaking about the devil?" Yeah, there's part of me that says this shouldn't be the time to talk about it. This is a time where we lift up and lift high the Name of Jesus Christ. Why would we waste time with a dog like the devil? But I recognize a couple things:

1. The Bible speaks to this.
2. There are many whom we love who are struggling because of the schemes of this evil one. The Word of God needs to be taught. It needs to be proclaimed, even when we have to dedicate time to a subject matter that I would rather not.

It's necessary for us as Christians to be aware of who the devil is and how he works because, as the text says in 1 Peter, he is looking to destroy us. He's looking to devour us, to tear us limb from limb. As we look at our texts for today, we're going to see four things that we need to understand about the battle we fight against this ultimate villain.

Defeating this villain begins by examining:

1. Our Tendency

Any time the subject of the devil and demons comes up, our reactions can be all over the place. We can:

Dismiss them as hocus pocus

We consign them to what is unbelievable. We consider the topic foolish or empty. Demons, the devil, and ghosts are stories told around campfires. They are a lot of fun to talk about during a sleepover when the only light in the room is a flashlight or a

candle. It's something that will rile people up and give us a good laugh when we scare them. There are many believers who will look at all the New Testament accounts where demons were present and say the reason for all this demon possession wasn't that there was a spiritual attack, but because of the finite minds of the people in the first century. They didn't understand mental illness. They think Jesus was a kind of shrink who righted the wrongs of mental illness and that there were no demons involved at all.

These types of people see the devil as nothing more than the bad side of your conscience, that devilish creature on your shoulder, telling you to do all the fun things that maybe you shouldn't do. Others view him as a man in a red jumpsuit with a pitchfork. Still others say he is nothing to worry about. That's a tendency that you may find yourself in, thinking, "Why do we even mess with this? This is nothing to be worried about. This is fun."

Dabble with it as if it is harmless

I'm always disheartened by Christians who think this stuff is harmless and dabble with it. These are Christians who love reading horoscopes; who get their fortunes told. They are Christians who watch shows and read books like, *The Walking Dead* or *Twilight* in the name of entertainment. They watch movies that are focused on dead people, vampires and zombies. There are even some who play with satanic devices like Ouija boards. You may say, "Well, that's old school." Now kids are playing a game called, "Charlie, Charlie" where they ask questions of the devil himself. All they need is a piece of paper and a couple pencils. Kids are falling prey to it all the time. Some of us see the devil and demons as just cute and cuddly creatures, things that we can play with, a broken down household pet that we can have fun with. You might think, "He may show his teeth every once while, but he would never bite you."

Peter had a better understanding of the devil. He says, "Hey, the devil is not your Labrador Retriever at your feet. The devil's not that little Chihuahua that you love. The devil is a roaring lion. He seeks to devour you." Some of us are playing games with this lion, thinking that he is something we can cuddle.

Every year we go to the Lincoln Park Zoo as a family. My favorite exhibit is the jaguar. He's behind bars and we can take pictures and show our children. But he roams about, to and fro. He looks at you and there's something menacing about it. It's like he's saying, "Just take these bars down for a second. Give me one second and I'll have the greatest lunch." He looks at the big, bald guy and he thinks, "Hey, I can eat on him for a while."

The devil is not a game we play with. He's not someone we cuddle up with. He has one desire in mind: to tear us up. If we're not careful we can fall into these tendencies.

Drift into hysteria

These are Christians who treat spiritual warfare as the only lens through which to perceive the world. People who hold to this position attribute everything that happens to the demonic world and to spiritual warfare. They will find a devil or a demon behind every bush. David Powlison said, "A great deal of Christian fiction, superstition, fantasy, nonsense, nuttiness and downright heresy flourishes in churches under the guise of spiritual warfare in our time." This is the false teaching that includes demon-possessed Christians, formulas for exorcisms, the binding of devils, the rebuking of demons and the mapping of a demon's physical location. These things have no foundation in New Testament teachings. In fact, in the greatest passage on spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6) none of this is present. The best thing that we can do as Christians is resist the devil, stand firm in the faith and put on the armor of God.

C.S. Lewis addressed this tendency in his book, *Screwtape Letters*:

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall. One is to disbelieve the existence of demons. The other is to believe them and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. The demons are equally pleased by both errors. They hail the materialist, who believes that nothing is happening and the magician who sees it everywhere with the same delight and joy.

So what does a balanced view of our understanding of the devil and demons look like? How should the Scriptures inform our understanding of our enemies?

2. Our Enemy

The Bible says much about this villain that we call the devil. I want to look at three aspects of our enemy. The Bible addresses his:

Identity

The Bible says that we've got an adversary: the devil. He's public enemy number one. He's the ultimate villain. Long before his days of being the ultimate villain, he was an angel named Lucifer. He was beautiful to behold. The devil, in the days before his fall, served as an angel in the army of God. He was and is a creation of God. He is not equal with God. He is an angel that God created. When the Scriptures open up with the phrase, "God created...and it was good," Lucifer was one of those good things. Lucifer was there in heaven with the angels, worshipping and praising the Name of God. Lucifer literally means, "shining light" or "shining one." The Bible describes him as amazing.

Turn in your Bible to Ezekiel 28:12–15 for a description of this angel, Lucifer.

*You were the signet of perfection,
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
You were in Eden, the garden of God;
every precious stone was your covering,
sardius, topaz, and diamond,
beryl, onyx, and jasper,
sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle;
and crafted in gold were your settings
and your engravings.
On the day that you were created
they were prepared.
You were an anointed guardian cherub.
I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God;
in the midst of the stones of fire you walked.
You were blameless in your ways
from the day you were created,
till unrighteousness was found in you.*

No created being in all of Scripture is given such flourishing and flowing words of absolute beauty. Lucifer was a sight to behold. Lucifer was at the top of the organization chart of angels. The Scripture tells us that even the great angels like Gabriel and Michael the Archangel were at best equals with Lucifer, if not a little less than him. In the book of Jude, a dispute takes place between the Archangel Michael and the devil. The Bible makes it clear that even the Archangel Michael would not bring a word of accusation against the devil except, "*The Word of the LORD rebuke you*" (Jude 1:9). This implies a sense of reverence, or at least an understanding that he was outranked by the devil. The only thing Michael can bring up is the One Who outranks the devil: God. He's the top.

Let me highlight a couple things from this passage. When God speaks of Lucifer's beauty, he describes a creature that was absolutely breathtaking. He didn't need diamonds. He didn't need fine jewelry because he was a diamond. He didn't need a spotlight because he shone like the noonday sun. He was glorious. He was a masterpiece. However, don't forget that the beauty and splendor of a created thing should always only point to the Creator, not to the creature. We need to stand in awe of God, not Lucifer, or angels, or even the pretty people we may be sitting next to. These created beings have all been given talents and opportunities to do great things. These things should always cause us to praise the Name of our Creator.

What was his job? Ezekiel tells us that Lucifer was on the holy mountain of God. This tells us about Lucifer's intimacy with God. He walked in God's holy presence. Not all angels were given that ability. Not all angels had that kind of access to God. He was given the title of "Guardian Cherub." This tells us about his ranking—he was at the top of the organizational chart of angels. It also describes his role. He was in charge of making sure that all other angels devoted themselves to the worship of God. He was the worship leader, who rallied the myriads of angels to worship and bow the knee to our God in heaven.

What would make this amazing creature go from such lofty places to the depths of evil?

Vanity

As we look at his identity, we see there's a fatal flaw in the devil: his vanity. Lucifer had it all, but one day he stood in front of the mirror a little too long. He looked at his loveliness. He looked at his beauty and began to think in his heart, "You're better than anything else out there." He began to forget his position as a created being. He began to imagine a world where people would not worship God, but himself. He became proud. Look at Ezekiel 28:17. "*Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.*"

The sin and vanity of the devil is alive and well in the human heart. One of the sins I regret in my life was at the beginning of my ministry here at Village Bible Church. Someone in this church came and said to me, "You have the golden touch when it comes to ministry. Everything you touch turns to gold." Instead of slapping that person silly, I got in the car and let the afterglow of that statement fill my heart. Not too long afterwards, God brought me low. It was as if He said, "Hey, Golden Boy, you think you can pastor? Try to preach with depression filling your heart. Try to lead when ministry is unraveling all around you. You think you're so good? Do it on your own." God had to give me some white hair. He had to break my heart and remind me that I am here to praise God. I can only do what God gives me the grace to do.

Many of us look in the mirror too long. We think we're God's gift to this universe. We think, "I'm sure God is glad that He picked me for His team. What would He have done without me?" We need to be very careful. The Bible makes it clear that when looking for an elder, we must be careful not to bring on young men, new converts in the faith. Why? Paul says that they may fall to the same temptation as the devil (1 Timothy 3:6). They may be filled with vanity. Because of the authority and identity that comes with that role, it can be easy to fall to the same vanity as the devil. Be careful, brothers and sisters, not to believe your own press clippings. Don't be blown away by your own splendor. When we do that, we are not imitating the God of the universe, we are mimicking the devil.

The devil liked what he saw in the mirror and thought, "Hey, why do I have to play second fiddle? Why do I have to make sure that people worship God? Why aren't people worshipping me? Why aren't people ministering to me?" One of the ways the devil works is by getting you to ask the question, "What about me?" The church is full of, "What about me?" That's the same question that the devil asked in eternity past. "What about me? Where's my praise? Where's my comfort? How are my preferences being met? What about me?" When you start asking those questions, it may not mean that you have gone the way of the devil, but you're asking the same questions he did.

So Satan begins with a question: "What about me?" His job was to make sure all the angels were devoting themselves to the worship of God. It began to bother him that the songs weren't about him. The talk around the table wasn't about him. Ezekiel 18:16 says, "*In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned.*" The devil used his position of rallying the troops to rally them in a *coup d'état* against heaven. How would he advertise it? In Isaiah the devil made some statements. The devil was thinking about how great he was.

Perhaps today you're thinking about how great you are. You might be thinking about how well you do things. You might say to yourself, "I can be prideful. Nobody will ever know." However, whatever is on the inside will eventually come out. I don't know how long the devil was thinking these things in his heart, but at some point what was happening in his heart made it to his mouth. He started making statements. In Isaiah 14:12-16, we learn what Lucifer said:

*How you are fallen from heaven,
O Day Star, son of Dawn!
How you are cut down to the ground,
you who laid the nations low!
You said in your heart,
"I will ascend to heaven;
above the stars of God
I will set my throne on high;
I will sit on the mount of assembly
in the far reaches of the north;
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High."
But you are brought down to Sheol,
to the far reaches of the pit.
Those who see you will stare at you
and ponder over you.*

The devil made five statements and God said, "Hey, I've been reading your mind the whole time. There's nothing that you can hide from Me." God sees every inclination of the human heart (Genesis 8:21). You think you're going to get away with a proud heart? Your spouse may not know about the pride in your heart. Your kids won't know. Your parents won't know. The police won't know. Your boss won't know it, but God does. God is not a King Who is absent from His throne. He is not unaware of what His subordinates are doing. God says, "I was reading your heart. I knew your thoughts before you even thought them."

What was the devil thinking? He's thinking, "I want God's job. I want to ascend. I want to be above everything. I want the throne." In Isaiah 14:13, he says, "I want to have all the people worshipping me from the far reaches of the galaxy. I want to ascend above

everything else. I want to be like God.” This is true in the spiritual world, and it's also true in the human world. We want to be God. We don't like what God has said. Like our ancestors Adam and Eve, we make deals with the devil to rebel against God and get our own way. So Satan makes these five “I will” statements. “I want to be God and the only thing standing in my way is God and I'm going to take Him out.”

You may say, “Well, that's just stupid. How could he even think that he could overthrow God?” Lucifer was incredibly powerful. He talked a good game. He was so impressive that one-third of the angels in heaven that worshipped God day and night—one-third of the myriads upon myriads of angels, 33% of millions upon millions of angels—thought that Lucifer could win in a fight against God. That's incredible! And it shows the amazing strength of Lucifer's deceiving power. You think that you can stand firm on your own against the devil's schemes? Those angels who resided in the glory of the One and only God were deceived into thinking God could be taken out. We need to be aware of the devil's power of deception.

It drives me crazy when some TV preacher tells people to rebuke and cast out the devil like he's a rag doll. They don't have good theology. One-third of the angels thought that the devil could take God in a fight and we think we can throw him around like he's a little kid. He's powerful. He's the ultimate villain.

What happened in that moment? I don't know how far God allowed the devil's rebellion to go, but we do know that one-third of the angels had time to make the decision to follow Lucifer. Turn back to the book of Ezekiel. In that moment of rebellion, God said, “That's enough. We're going to deal with this once and for all.” Ezekiel 28:15–19 says:

*You were blameless in your ways
from the day you were created,
till unrighteousness was found in you.
In the abundance of your trade
you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned;
so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God,
and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub,
from the midst of the stones of fire.
Your heart was proud because of your beauty;
you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.
I cast you to the ground;
I exposed you before kings,
to feast their eyes on you.
By the multitude of your iniquities,
in the unrighteousness of your trade
you profaned your sanctuaries;
so I brought fire out from your midst;
it consumed you,
and I turned you to ashes on the earth
in the sight of all who saw you.
All who know you among the peoples
are appalled at you;
you have come to a dreadful end
and shall be no more forever.*

God says, “You think you can rebel against Me? You think you can take My place? I'm going to launch you out of heaven into a place called hell.” In Luke 10:18, Jesus says, “I saw the devil thrown out of heaven.” Jesus was there in eternity past. Where was the devil thrown? The New Testament addresses this in 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6.

Where are they now? Vanquished from heaven, now in gloomy dungeons in hell. Be careful not to think that hell is the neighborhood of the devil, that he runs that place. Brothers and sisters, he is captive in prison, just like the rest of the demons. He's not the warden. He's not the supervisor. He's a prisoner. He's been vanquished. The text says that this vanquishment has a level of parole to it because the devil is still roaming around.

What is he doing? He is waging war from a defeated position. Why would he do that? The same reason why terrorists are attacking the powerful countries of the world. Do you think ISIS really believes that they can beat the United States? We have more bombs to drop on those guys than we know what to do with. ISIS doesn't think that they're going to take over through conventional warfare. They fight what is called an asymmetric war. They nibble and bite and cause skirmishes that demoralize the more powerful nations. They get people to believe that they're greater than they really are. That's why you see all these

beheadings. That's why you see all this propaganda. ISIS recognizes that they cannot win in a head-to-head match with a more powerful country so they perform these vicious acts to destroy the morale of the people in those countries.

The devil wrote the book on this. "I can't be God. He's already shown me that. So I'm going to make it look as if I'm winning this fight. I'm going to trick people into thinking that I'm going to win. I'm going to discourage them. I'll use a barrage of attacks to throw them off of their game." The devil is a master at this. How does he do this?

Strategy

The Bible tells us that the devil's first job is to deceive us. Second Corinthians 4:4 says, "*Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.*" He wants you to think that he is a nice guy. He wants you to think there is good in what he does. He deceives in order to blind unbelievers to the gospel. "Just keep doing what you're doing. Keep raising your family. Keep going to work. Just stay away from Jesus. Just stay busy with your vacations and your toys and all your things. Don't worry about God. Make Him a small part of your life or no part at all. In the end I'll have you."

He does this by telling lies (John 8:44). He is the father of lies. Lies are his native tongue. That's all he knows. Sadly, myriads upon myriads of people live according to his lies and do so to their own demise.

His second strategy involves division. He loves to divide. The devil seeks to ruin two relationships in this world:

1. Humanity's relationship with God. He has done this from the beginning. "Did God really say?" he said to Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-5). "You could be like Him. You don't need to play second fiddle. Be your own god. Do your own thing. Whatever feels good, do it. You are the captain of your ship. You don't need to look to anybody else. You don't need to be a subordinate. So tell God, 'Forget it. I don't want You. I want to do it my own way.'" He divides us and creates enmity between God and us.
2. He also seeks to destroy the relationships people have with one another. Once we ruin our relationship with God, our relationships with one another will be destroyed. After Adam and Eve's fall and rebellion against God, they covered themselves because they were divided. Not long after that, one son killed the other son out of jealousy. Nation will wage war against nation. Lives will be lost. The devil loves war. The devil loves hatred. The devil loves it when a young man can walk into a South Carolina church and shoot the people who are there. The devil loves that. He loves racism. He loves it because he can create division. He sits and claps with glee when a church divides itself. He says, "I have done something great." He wants to divide.

In John 10:10, he seeks to destroy. The devil desires to create destruction every day. He plans anarchy. Any student of history can trace the strategy of the devil, that activity of malignant power poisoning the streams of human history. He loves to be the mastermind behind the present world system in its lust for power, as well as political and economic intrigue. He loves the mantra, "Every man for himself. No submission!"

He wants to destroy human society through debauchery. Any student of sociology can trace the pattern in the cycles of human history. We have seen a world flooded with moral filth to an inconceivable degree. The devil says, "Just keep eating it up. Get farther and farther away from God,"

He destroys through apostasy. Any student of theology and church history will see heresies and apostasies that have recurred throughout the centuries. In our own day, there is an abundance of old heresies and heretical cults. The devil loves it. It's his trade.

It's easy to become disheartened by such a fierce villain. It seems that we're no match for him. I would agree that we're not. Martin Luther in his hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is our God" said this:

For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe
His craft and power are great
And armed with cruel hate
On earth is not is equal

And though this world with devils filled
Should threaten to undo us
We will not fear for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us
The Prince of Darkness grim

We tremble not for him
His rage we can endure
For lo his doom is sure
One little word shall fell him

The devil has no equal on this earth.

3. God's Victory

Luther was convinced of this incredible truth: we have God on our side. It is through God alone that we can have victory. In that same hymn Luther said:

If we in our own strength confide
Our striving would be losing
Were not the right Man on our side
The man of God's Own choosing
You ask Who that may be
Christ Jesus, it is He
Lord Sabbaoth His Name
From age to age the same
And He must win the battle

This is exactly what Christ did. I want you to see three ways Christ won the victory and how we can have victory over the devil. Satan has been defeated:

Strategically

The devil never had a chance. He was doomed to defeat. In the moment that God saw the devil's rebellious heart, God could have obliterated all evil once and for all from His midst, never to be heard from again. Instead, God consigned the devil to hell. God gave him free reign to wreak havoc around the world in the lives of sinners and believers alike. Why would God do that?

God takes the evil that the devil plans and He uses it for His glory. God says, "You don't scare Me, devil. You're not going to thwart My ministry, My goals, or My purposes." In Job 1:6, the devil comes and presents himself to God. Demons present themselves to God as subordinates. Luther calls the devil, "God's chained dog." He is God's devil. God uses the devil however and whenever He wants. He will continue to do so in order to bring Himself more glory, honor, and praise.

Prophetically

The devil must have been pretty banged up after the rebellion took place. He was no match for God. However, he found someone he could conquer in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). He found humanity. He went to the Garden and got humanity to do what he did: rebel against God; seek their own glory. When they ate from that forbidden fruit, the devil must have been filled with glee because sin could now be found in all of humanity. He must have felt like celebrating. And I'm sure he did.

However, in Genesis 3:15, God has the final word. He says, "You lost the second pride entered your heart, Lucifer. A day is coming when I will bring you down. I will show you what defeat feels like. You think you can mess things up and ruin My plans? You've got another thing coming. You think you can corrupt humanity? I'm going to use the humanity that you think you've corrupted. I'm going to redeem it and use it against you. The woman is going to bear a Son. He's going to show you that I'm the Boss. You're not going to know what hit you."

Galatians 4:4 says, "*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law.*" Jesus came. God says prophetically in the book of Genesis, "Devil, your day in court is coming."

Historically

Jesus would be born of a virgin. He would come to redeem those under the law. He would live a life of perfection. He would withstand the temptations of the devil. He would go to the cross; dying the death we could not endure, securing victory on that old rugged cross. Jesus Christ, once and for all, defeated the devil and destroyed all of his plans. The devil is forever the loser and Jesus is forever the Victor. And because of that victory on the cross, one day the devil will be defeated eternally.

Revelation 20:1–3, 7–10 tells us that at a time of God's own choosing, He will take the devil and throw him into a bottomless pit where he will be tormented day and night forevermore. Make no mistake about it: the devil is defeated. His lot has been cast. His demise is sure. What should we do until then?

4. Our Activity

Let me give you some application. How are we to respond when the devil attacks?

1. Remember Who lives in you. You're a child of the King. You're a soldier in the army of God. You fight for the General Who has already won the battle. Because you are His, His Spirit resides in you. You can have confidence that you need not fear the devil or his attacks. First John 4:4 says, *"He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."* You don't need to be worried when the devil attacks. You just need to turn to the Victor and remind the devil of his defeat. Remember Who lives in you.
2. Resist the devil's advances. James 4:7 says, *"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* He won't think about it. He will do it. Some of us need to start saying, "No." We need to tell the devil we won't play his games; that we want nothing to do with him and his temptations. God always gives us a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13), but we must always trust that God's ways are better than the devil's. We must resist him.
3. Respond with God's Word. In Matthew 4:1–11, Jesus is tempted by the devil on three occasions while in the wilderness. Each time, Jesus used God's Word. Jesus used the Word because it's the greatest tool, not only in His arsenal, but ours as well. We need to meditate on the Word. We need to study the Word. We need to apply the Word. We need to use the Word so that we might find victory every step of the way.

Let me close with a short story. There was once a chess champion who was on vacation in Europe. One day while visiting an art gallery, he came across a particular painting that mesmerized him. The painting depicted a chess game like no other. On one side of the chessboard was the devil, laughing, full of gaiety and frivolity. He had his hand on the board, getting ready to make a move. On the other side of the chessboard was a young man who was shaking and trembling all over. His knees were knocking. Sweat was coming down his forehead. Tears were pouring from his eyes and he was biting his fingernails. The chess champion deciphered the meaning of the portrait when he saw the title, "Checkmate," under the portrait. The devil was about to make his final move to win this man's soul. The devil was laughing while the young man was terrified because he knew he couldn't do anything about it.

The chess champion was so taken by this portrait that he studied it for several hours. Then he broke out into a smile. He went to look for the proprietor of the art gallery and asked, "Sir, would you happen to have a chess board here?" The staff scurried around and found an old chessboard. The champion put the chessboard at the base of the painting and set it up to duplicate the arrangement exactly as it was in the portrait. After he had set up the board, the man looked at the portrait then looked down at the chessboard. He did this several times, looking back and forth between the painting and the board. Then he turned the chessboard to the young man's side of the painting and said, "Young man, I wish you could hear me right now because it looks as if you could stop trembling and wipe your tears. I've got good news for you. I'm a chess champion and I know this game backwards and forwards. You are trembling for no reason. It looks as if the devil has the final move. But he's tricked you. You still have one move on the board. Your life can be transformed. The devil doesn't get to make the last move."

You see the human race is in the same position as the young man in the painting. We look at the devil and think he has won the chess game of history. Because of that, there are many who tremble in fear. However, we have a Champion Who will make the final move on the devil. The coming of Jesus Christ was God's greatest move in the spiritual chess game. Jesus defeated the devil for all time and eternally stripped him of all his power. Then He did the unthinkable: He called out a people for Himself, a church, which is His body. He has invested us with all spiritual authority under heaven to carry out the victory that Christ has won on Calvary. Because Christ has won the victory, Satan has already been defeated.

Our task now is to announce and declare the victory. Live in victory this week. Don't live in defeat. The devil's been defeated. Because of Christ in your life, you can have the victory, both now and in the days to come.