

ChristReformationChurch

Tillamook, Oregon

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com

www.lightfordarktimes.com

Living as Exiles in a Hostile World– The Epistle of 1 Peter

Part 33 – The Lion on the Prowl

April 23, 2017

Sermon Text: 1 Peter 5:8-11

Scripture Reading: Matthew 26:31-41; 69-75

1 Peter 5:8-11 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (9) Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. (10) 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. (11) To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Following Christ is a serious business. Many people who claim to be Christians seem to expect their experience to be a party and they demand that their churches show them a “good time.” Unpleasantness simply has no place in their theology.

But this is certainly not what we find in the Bible, and Peter is making that very plain to us here in this 5th chapter of his first letter –

Be sober-minded; be watchful

Why?

Your adversary the devil prowls around...seeking someone to devour

Remember who is warning us! Peter! As we have already heard in the Scripture reading this morning from Matthew 26, Peter was warned *by Christ*, to be watchful, to pray and ask the Lord to strengthen him and give him wisdom to withstand the imminent attack about to come. Peter didn't heed

that warning. He fell asleep. And then just as Jesus told him, Peter denied Christ not once but three times that very night. This “bold” fisherman who had just boasted that he would never, ever fail to stand with Christ ends up chewed up and spit out by Satan. Here then Peter is really telling us “watch out, or the very same thing is going to happen to you.”

Matthew 26:75 And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Our Adversary

The Bible makes it quite plain that behind all the hatred the world has for Christ and for Christ’s people, is this evil being variously called the Devil, Satan, the Accuser, and so on. You all know about the very first time he appeared on the scene, though we are not told what his origin is:

Genesis 3:1-5 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" (2) And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, (3) but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in

the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" (4) But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. (5) For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Right off, there he is. And notice very carefully what his two methods were:

- Lying
- Destroying

You shall not die was the lie. Death as a result of sin was the destruction. And he is still at it today. Satan is actively in the business of lying to human beings and seeking to destroy them. Make no mistake, Satan is incredibly subtle and devious and he never rests. Listen to Christ Himself nail it as he confronts the “clergy” of his day -

John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

See it? Murder. Lying. It is in his very DNA and it is in the nature of all who belong to him. *Satan wants your soul destroyed. He wants your family destroyed. He wants your nation*

destroyed. And he is actively deceiving and lying to get this all done.

Matthew 7:13-15 "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. (14) For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. (15) "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

A Closer Look

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (9) Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

"The real enemy of Peter's Christian readers is the devil himself. Christians must resist him and to do so effectively demands that they recognize how dangerous he is. Peter likens him to a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" [to get our attention]. [Beale and Carson, Commentary on NT use of the OT]

There is an Old Testament background to this imagery in the 22nd Psalm [NOTE: Read the entirety of Psalm 22

and notice that though written some 1000 years before the time of Christ specifically describes the details of the crucifixion!] -

Psalms 22:12-13 Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; (13) they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.

We know that Satan was very much involved in working to destroy Christ. For example:

Matthew 4:1-3 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (2) And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. (3) And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

Furthermore, Satan was the energizing personality behind Judas Iscariot's betrayal –

Luke 22:3-4 Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. (4) He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them.

And now this same enemy comes at us. Lying. Destroying. Lying with the purpose of destroying.

Let me put this question to you –
Do you think that you are pretty good at discerning truth from lies? That is to say, do you consider yourself to be wise to the devil's schemes?

Well, before you get too comfortable, listen to this:

2 Corinthians 11:1-15 I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! (2) For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

(3) But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

(4) For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

(5) Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. (6) Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things. (7) Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I

preached God's gospel to you free of charge? (8) I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. (9) And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. (10) As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. (11) And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! (12) And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do.

(13) For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. (14) And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. (15) So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

Do you understand that Christ is the only Way we can be put right with God? The ONLY way. His atoning death on the cross for our sins. His perfect obedience to God's Law for us. Faith alone in Christ alone as our Savior, the Son of God. There is no

other way. There is no other way needed.

So what do you suppose Satan is going to try to do in the way of destroying men and women and children, taking them to hell? *He is going to lie and deceive in order to prevent us from seeing Christ. He is going to do all he can to tell us things like:*

- All religions lead to God
- God is love and would never send anyone to hell
- Christ was a good and holy man, but no, He is not God
- Our “good” deeds will make God accept us

And on and on it goes. And these are some of the more obvious lies from Satan. He has bundles of them far more deceptive than these!

Satan has always and will always work to keep human beings from coming to faith in Christ as their Savior –

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. (4) In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

It’s pretty clear that by “the god of this world” Paul means Satan. Satan’s

kingdom is that of darkness and by his lies and deceptions he works to keep people in the dark – to blind them to the fact that the Son of God has come into this world to save us from death and hell and sin –

Hebrews 2:14-15 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, (15) and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Satan wants to keep you blind to Jesus Christ. He wants to keep you deluded into believing one or more of the lies he enslaves people with. And he wants to do this to destroy you in hell.

Think through again very carefully about how Paul shows Satan was working there among the Christians at Corinth –

- He was crafty and cunning just as he was with Eve in Eden.
- His goal was to lead them away from their devotion to Christ.
- He did this by sending his agents in among them, claiming they too were Christians.
- These counterfeits preached “another Jesus,” were animated by “another spirit,” and

announced “another gospel” which was a lie.

- And the people received them gladly!!! Why? Because they liked the power and “glory” these guys used. They liked their charisma and charm. They thought, in contrast, that Paul’s humility meant he wasn’t as important as these fellows.

So they ended up rejecting the true Apostle Paul and the true gospel and the true Jesus for a counterfeit. Satan had duped them successfully and unless they turn from that deception, they would die in their sins.

Notice what else Paul says. Listen to him again –

**(13) For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.
(14) And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.
(15) So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.**

Church History and the Devil

Have you ever studied the history of the Christian church? If you have, then you know that really quite early on the church at Rome began to rise in importance. It’s Bishop began to be

seen as superior to other church leaders. And ultimately, what happened? It became what we see today – the Roman Catholic “church” with it’s Pope and cardinals and priesthood and mass and sacraments. A huge, counterfeit of Christ, you see. Satan is behind it all. And look how many people insist that this is really Christ’s church.

We need to be done with the naïve and dangerous notion that someone who claims to be a Christian surely must be one because they are soooo nice, or soooo holy looking, or because they know sooooo much about the Bible.

Satan is a master at wearing all these disguises and you can be sure that he is quite the master of theology. Let me suggest this to you:

While the devil certainly works his lies and destruction through various agents in the world such as:

- *Evil dictators who kill Christians*
- *University systems that forbid even the mention of Christ or the Bible*
- *Evil politicians who do all they can to silence Christians*
- *The entertainment industry that becomes a propaganda machine*

*for every sordid immoral
practice imaginable*

....nevertheless, the Devil's favorite theater of operations has always been and remains, the visible Christian church. Christ met the clergy which he called "children of the devil" in the Temple. So it is today.

Little wonder then that the Apostle John warns us as he did. Notice as I read that he is NOT talking here about people who make no claim to Christ at all. No, John is talking about people who claim the name of Christ for themselves and even insist that they have been sent by Christ to teach others -

1 John 4:1-6 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. [See it? They CLAIM to be from God. They claim to be His commissioned prophets. Just tune in your TV religion channels for an example!]

(2) By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, (3) and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. [This does

NOT mean they do not claim to be of Christ. No, what it does mean is that they "confess" a "Jesus" but it is another Jesus of their own making].

(4) Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (5) They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. (6) We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

There it is then. Ample warning. Be sober. Be vigilant. Don't be naïve and believe every "nice, holy" guy who comes along. Test them. See if they square up with Christ's example and Christ's truth.

And most will fail the test.