

Scripture Readings:

Matthew 28: “1 Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. 4 And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. 5 But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. ...

11 Now while [the women] were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. 12 When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' 14 And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." 15 So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.”

I Corinthians 15:1 “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. 8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. ...

12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up--if in fact the dead do not rise. 16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

“Satan Attacks the Empty Tomb”

And other modern attacks on the faith

As we have considered the temptations of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke we have looked at what the Bible teaches about Satan and at the specific temptations that Jesus faced and how He responded: Learning from His great example!

This week we will continue with this little mini-series with a look at Satan in action today!

In the past weeks we have learned:

- ❖ That Satan is a fallen angel, powerful but defeated by Christ: Bound but angry that he has only a short time!**
- ❖ We learned that even the arch-Angel Michael only rebuked Satan in the name and power of the Lord.**
- ❖ We saw the exorcists who used the name of Jesus without faith defeated by the demons.**
- ❖ We saw Jesus use the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God to confound Satan with each and every one of his temptations saying... It is written!**

This brings us to our message today:

- What types of temptations does Satan bring to us today?**
- He is chained and cannot deceive the nations or have access to the throne of God as we saw in Job**
- But his influence can still deceive us, which is why I want to look at three areas where he has focused his attacks today: The resurrection of Jesus, God’s Creation and the Sanctity of Marriage.**

This ‘mini-series’ on Satan and his work is in a small way a response to the Discovery Channel running a special on the Tomb of Jesus.

I heard a talk show host discussing it and asking: “If the body of Jesus were really found, would it affect your being a good Christian?”

I was shocked by what I heard – or rather what I did not hear!

- **I Hope to avoid sounding too angry**
- **Hope we don’t have major problems with our members in these areas... If we do we need to talk!**
- **Hope a discussion of Satan’s vicious attacks will help us protect the future generations:**
- **Note that modern humanists don’t worry about us having more children because they are sure they will “get our kids!”**

According to the Scriptures Satan is bound but can still deceive and confound us if we are not filled and led by the Spirit as Jesus was!

Listen carefully to these contrasts and warning from God’s Word:

- **Colossians 2: “6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. 8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”**
- **Romans 12: “1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

So with these warnings in mind, let us consider how we are in danger of “being taken captive” by Satan’s ploys and being conformed to this world, the old creation!

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to our faith: We saw this in the readings this morning, we have seen it down through Church history and we continue see it as we prepare to celebrate the Easter season!

The wisdom of God v. the deception of the world is the same battle that has raged down through the ages and Satan continues to challenge our faith

- **How do we respond Biblically?**
- **What would be the Biblical way to answer such a talk show host?**

We should answer with Paul that if Christ is NOT risen then, “we are of all men the most pitiable.”

You see, the only honest part of the entire two-hour special was in the opening minutes where they explained about there being two versions of the first Easter morning given in the Gospels:

We read them in Matthew this morning.

We, as all people down through the ages, must choose who to believe:

- **The eyewitnesses who saw the Risen Christ and went on to face violent deaths rather than to recant! -- Or –**
- **The eyewitnesses who were paid to lie!**

This is why all of these various attacks: Jesus Christ Superstar; the Da Vinci Code; now the Empty Tomb and whatever comes next must be confronted with that simple statement “It is written...”

- **These soldiers were eyewitnesses and they were paid to lie: That is what God’s Word says!**
- **If we were to discover in some old broken pot sworn affidavits from them, it would NOT change a thing!**
- **We could actually expect the early enemies of the faith to falsify a burial tomb for Jesus! AND spread all the nasty rumors we still have with us today!**

Paul states it plainly: No Resurrection, NO Life, we are of all men most pitiable

These are the lessons we should learn from Luke's account of the temptation of Jesus!

1) Respond with the Sword of the Spirit: Believe on the Lord Jesus or believe a lie!

2) DO NOT waste your time engaging in the wrong debates: Like trying to poke holes in their theory or looking for or depending on evidence outside of God's Word!

Another focused attack from our enemy in the past two hundred years has been on God's account of His creation of the world in six days!

➤ **Satan has used that old ploy from the garden: 'Hast God said that He made everything in just six ordinary days?'**

By and large the Church has fallen for this ploy hook, line and sinker!

Rather than simply stating "It is written..." we have debated the age of the earth, the fossil record, the death of stars billions of light years away, and even tried to be sneaky ourselves by rationally appealing to "Intelligent Design" as a reason to believe in SOMETHING about a creator!

We have gone on to interpret the first chapter of Genesis in just about everyway possible:

- ✓ **Day-ages**
- ✓ **Gap theories**
- ✓ **Framework hypothesis**
- ✓ **Just some nice poetry**

Every way it seems, OTHER than the plain reading of the text!

[Ask kids about morning & evening: What does it mean?]

... AND the way that the Bible itself demands that we interpret this important chapter

**All we needed to say was
“It is written”:**

Exodus 20 “11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

It does not say, in six eras or six other types of days, but in SIX DAYS, just like the six days we are to work before our day of rest!

And just in case we don’t get the point God has Moses repeat it in chapter 31: “16 Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. 17 It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.’ ”

God clearly reveals Himself as the creator and sustainer of all things! As the church has given ground to this foundational truth, the entire structure of our faith has suffered!

And finally, we have the assault on the institution of marriage: As we have faced obscene divorce rates, rampant sexual immorality, the aggressive homosexual agenda:

We as a church have again been taken way off the mark with many side debates.

- **Does divorce really hurt children?**
- **Is homosexuality a genetic problem?**
- **Do young people run wild because of hormones?**

Instead we should simply reply: “It is written...”

Genesis 2:18 And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." ... 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

- **Marriage is a divine institution that brings joy and completion to man and woman!**
- **ALL sexual activities outside of its bounds are an abomination!**

It is REALLY just that simple!

So why are Satan and the world attacking along these three fronts?

Just as he hoped that his temptations in the wilderness would destroy Christ's work to save His people from their sins, Satan still hopes to derail His Body, the Church from His Great Commission!

- **Remember: They expect our kids to be with them at the end of the day!**

That is why having the proper Biblical responses for these critical issues is SO important?

The contrasts could not be more stark!

**Resurrection: -- The Gospel
v. most pitiable**

**Creation: -- Creatures made in the Image of God
v. acting like animals**

**Marriage: -- Divine life
v. serving our sinful lusts**

Just as Jesus did, we must confront the enemy with "It is written..." and then go forth to demonstrate these great truths in our lives:

- **We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus not just on Easter but EVERY day of our lives!**
- **We celebrate the wonder of God's creations and being made in His image!**
- **With obedience to God's Word in our marriages we can demonstrate to a watching world the great love of God for His people!**

We can see just how important this is by remembering those sober words of Paul when he addresses our responsibilities in Marriage in Ephesians 5:

“22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

Obviously, when we give ground on the Institution of Marriage we lose much more than just a political battle!

ALL three of these areas are vitally important battles and the reason Satan has focused on them is to take us and/or our children captive!

- **We must learn to respond Biblically:**
- **We must teach our children to respond Biblically!**

This morning we will sing Psalm 83 as our hymn of response reminding us that we should regularly join with Jesus in saying:

“Get thee behind me Satan!”

Communion meditation:

Revelation 19:1 “6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' ”