

Sonoraville Baptist Church
Sunday, February 6, 2011 – 11:00 AM
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Know Your Enemy - 1 Peter 5:8-10

Introduction: Unless you live under a rock, you probably know that tonight, the Pittsburgh Steelers will face the Green Bay Packers in Dallas, TX for the Super Bowl trophy. This event has become so big, that millions of people make it an unofficial holiday weekend in America. This morning, I want to use Super Bowl Sunday as a launching point for today's message about knowing your enemy.

One of the things I'm sure the opposing coaches have tried to drill into their player's heads is the importance of knowing who their opponent is. By scouting the opponent, by watching game film, looking for tendencies and formations, then practicing, the teams can be better prepared for the battle ahead.

We can use this analogy in a spiritual sense. The Bible is filled with comparisons of the spiritual life being that of a battlefield. One of the most familiar is found in Ephesians 6 where the Apostle Paul talks of the believer facing a *struggle against the power of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil* and being ready for *"the devil's schemes"* by putting on *"the full armor of God."* **Ephesians 6:10-17 (NIV).**

This word picture and others like it were written to let believers know that the nature of the Christian life is not all peaceful and stress free. Yes, we do have a peace with God that comes from knowing that we've been forgiven of our sin and our eternity is secure in Him. But our peace, forgiveness and eternal security has been bought with a price – a price that Christ paid for and secured on a cruel cross, battling a powerful and relentless enemy who is still active today. His name is Satan. And Satan is known by many names in Scripture. He's known as the Devil, the serpent, the thief, the god of this age, the prince of the power of the air, and as we read in our text for today, a roaring lion. *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."* **1 Peter 5:8 (NIV).**

But who is our enemy really? Do we really know and understand who the devil really is?

In the movie, *"The Passion of the Christ"* director Mel Gibson was asked why he chose to depict the devil by using a person that one couldn't clearly identify as a beautiful woman or a ugly man. Gibson said *"I wanted it this way because that is how the enemy is. Evil looks good until you turn it around a little and see the whole spectrum, then you see the ugliness."*

And that is the way it is. We tend to think of Satan as being some ugly creature lurking in the darkness. But, the reality is, Satan does his best work looking good. He counterfeits God. He uses things so close to the truth that they're almost unrecognizable as evil. The devil is so clever and cunning, he can make even strong believers unaware of his schemes and so they'll become just as vulnerable as unbelievers.

Now as believers we have God's gospel of grace to help us see through the devil's schemes. I'll mention more about that grace at the close of this message, but for now, we need to know that we have a way to help us become aware of who our enemy is, and how we can be prepared to defend ourselves against him.

The rest of today's passage, **1 Peter 5:9-10 (NIV)** says, *"Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast."* The Bible says the devil can be resisted, so today, we're going to see how we can learn to resist Satan and stand firm on our faith. The first key to resisting is... We must:

1. Know Who Our Enemy Is.

We live in a society that, for the most part, believes in evil but often dismisses its impact because people have been hoodwinked by writers such as Dante, into believing that Satan is a cartoon character who carries a pitch fork and wears a red suit with horns and a forked tail. Because of this image, a lot of people will only think of Satan as a fairy tale. Let's get something straight, Satan is real, and the Bible tells us that he was created as an angel named Lucifer. However, Lucifer did not believe God's word and was obsessed with self and pride; so he rose up against God and was cast out of heaven and condemned to a future in hell. Since that time he has been trying to rob God's glory from Him by deceiving mankind. He is dragging others down with him. Let's look at his profile so we can understand just who he is and what he's all about. First the Bible says Satan is:

A. A Fallen Angel. (Isaiah 14)

In Isaiah 14, Satan is described as having “*fallen from heaven*” and was “*brought down to the grave*” and was “*a rejected branch.*” At one time, he was a messenger of God, and a beautiful creation. But then he became full of himself and desired God’s praise. He wanted to rule his life.

In a way, Satan’s goal and desire is the same one that we all face. We want control. We want to rule our lives. We want the final say; As Christians we must realize no matter how much we feel in control, we are not. Satan was so full of pride he thought he could be God. Second, Satan is....

B. A Constant Accuser.

Job 1:6 (NLT) “*One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan the Accuser came with them.*”

Accusing seems to be what Satan’s does best. He accuses the saints before God. He continues to try to find fault. But when he comes with his accusations, Jesus, our advocate, keeps saying “*Now wait a minute devil! That sin has been paid for. It’s under the blood.*” So when Satan realizes that there is no way God will hear these accusations; he tries a different tactic – he comes to us and he whispers in our ears. “*You’re not worthy.*” “*You’re no good.*” “*God’s lying to you.*” He gets us to doubt ourselves and sometimes it works. We feel guilty. But we have to remember - Satan’s just an accuser; he’s not the judge, jury, or the prosecutor. So don’t allow him overwhelm you with guilt. Your sin has been dealt with and covered under the blood. But the Bible says Satan is also...

C. A Master Deceiver.

Revelation 12:9 (NLT) says that Satan is “*...the one deceiving the whole world...*” Satan does a great job of tricking us. He is an illusionist. He can make sin look so appealing. He tells us what we want to hear. But here’s one thing we need to remember - Satan has no power over our lives except what we give him.

How many people here are in sales? Salesmanship is big business, and many people are quite good at it. Some, could be classified as “*salesman extraordinaire*” meaning they could sell sand to an Arab, or air conditioners to Eskimos, or “*Change you can believe in*” to America. (I didn’t say that, did I?)

These kind of hucksters can get you all fired up where you’re willing to sign on the dotted line without thinking. Then they leave you saying, “*It don’t need that 5000 volume series of Time Life books. Why did I do that*” This is what Satan does. He makes us believe that sin is something that won’t hurt us; that fame is all glitz and glamour; that having an abortion is a painless way out of an unwanted pregnancy; that no one will ever know about that one-night stand or that affair. Satan will try to make us believe that money will solve all our problems; that one drink or one pill or one snort won’t hurt us. His lies are endless. He is the master deceiver. And finally the Bible says that Satan is...

D. A Counterfeit.

2 Corinthians 11:14 (NLT) says, “*...Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light.*” Satan will most likely never appear in your life in a way that scares you. He knows that the best way to get Christians and even unbelievers to follow him is to look good on the outside. Sometimes, it seems that Satan does better work in the local church than he does in the local bar, because he’s fooled a lot of church goers into believing that what they do on Sunday mornings is all there is to their Christian service. If that’s the case, you’ve fallen for a counterfeit. This is worship, not just service. The real service ought to go on beyond these walls. That’s the real thing! So don’t buy into Satan’s counterfeit church. Instead fulfill God’s purpose, and don’t be guilty of fulfilling the work of God’s enemy.

How do we change this? How can we recognize a counterfeit? We do it the same way bank tellers are taught to recognize counterfeit money. Tellers are made to handle, study, touch and feel the real thing so much that when a counterfeit comes through, they see it clearly. We need to know God’s truth, His word, and His purposes so well, that when we see all this counterfeit Christianity, we recognize it. We must be so familiar with Jesus that Satan is easy to spot.

We need to know who the enemy is – that’s the first key to resisting Him, but the second key to resisting is...We must:

2. Know What the Enemy Wants.

We need to be aware of Satan’s plan. It really has not changed. He wants two things desperately. First...

A. He Wants to Take God's Place.

In Isaiah 14:14 (NLT), Satan proclaimed, *"I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High."*

Now, the very first of the Ten Commandments says, *"You shall have no other gods before me."* (**Exodus 20:3 (NIV)**). So we see clearly that God demands first place. But still, Satan wants to take God's place. He knows he can't have it; but, he will try with all his might to attain it, so he comes to us and tries to get us to give him first place in our lives.

Now how can we tell if we're letting the devil have the upper hand in our lives? Well, it's pretty simple really. If you've given God first place; the He receives all your attention. You do everything for Him. But if you've been deceived by Satan, then you do for yourself, or for the praise of others. Remember, anything you live for other than God is called *"Idol worship."* But again, remember...the devil cannot take any more of us that we give him. Secondly...

B. He Wants to Receive Man's Praise.

When Satan tempted Jesus, his true colors showed through. He told Jesus in **Matthew 4:9 (NIV)** *"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."*

He wants every person's worship and praise. Now remember, we may be worshipping him without ever truly realizing it. We are worshipping Satan when we forget God in filling out our taxes, or when the teller gives us too much change back. When we want what we want and not what God wants; we are giving Satan just what he wants. So we must be aware of what our enemy wants He wants to take God's place and he wants man's praise, and he'll do whatever he can to try to get those things.

We,;, we need to know who our enemy is; and we know what he wants; but finally we must:

3. Know Where to Turn.

As a child I remember hearing stories about the devil and how mean and nasty he was and that I should always fear the *"boogie man."* Now, I don't know about you, but that scared me. Even after I became a Christian, if I thought the *"boogie man"* was nearby, I went and hid in a closet! That's the only way I knew to avoid the *"boogie man."* It wasn't until years later, while listening to John McArthur on the radio, that I heard anything about how to actually counter the approach of the devil. The Bible makes it clear that there are two things we can do when the devil throws his flaming arrow our way. First...

A. We Must Turn Away from the Devil.

James 4:7b (NIV) *"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* In the original language the word *"resist"* is *"oppose."* In other words, let him know boldly that through the power of the Holy Spirit, you are saying *"NO! I will not listen to your lies."* Satan does not like to be opposed; but, because he is powerless over the children of God he has no choice but to head in the other direction. The best thing you can do to resist the devil is to know God's word. Yes, we have to be obedient and pray; but, if you don't know the word of God, you have no real strength for resisting. You will eventually give in.

Jesus used God's Word as He was being tempted by Satan. He told him *"It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God "* **Mt 4:4 (NIV)**

That is how we are made strong - by obedience to God's word. And apart from it, we're powerless! We're like pawns in Satan's hands without the Word of God fortifying our lives.

The first key to overcoming the devil is to turn away from him and choose the opposite of what he throws your way. The second key is:

B. We Must Humbly Turn Toward God.

James 4:7a (NIV) says *"Submit yourselves, then, to God."* Turning away from the devil isn't enough. There must be a second part to that turning, and it involves turning to God.

The word *"submit"* here is a military term which means *"to voluntarily rank under."* This is exactly what one must do in order to be saved. We voluntarily place ourselves under the authority of God; we recognize Him as our ruler, and we become obedient to His Word as His servant.

Think of it this way...as sinners, we were once under the lordship of Satan and therefore slaves to sin and enemies of Christ. But as believers, we eagerly place ourselves under the lordship of Christ as His loyal subjects because we recognize the freedom He brings. Through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, He paid the price and took the penalty for our sin. He did this for us, not out of some prideful show, but out of a deep and unconditional love for

us. So when we turn away from the devil, we turn to the one who really cares about us; who really loves us; and who really wants the best for us.

Conclusion: Peter said that when we learn to resist the devil and stand firm in our faith, that *“the God of all grace...will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”* (1 **Peter 5:10** (NIV)). James calls it *“greater grace.”* **James 4:6** (HCSB). What is this greater grace? It’s God’s justifying, sanctifying, glorifying, loving favor He freely bestows on undeserving sinners and repentant saints who turn away from sin and turn toward Him in faith. God’s grace is greater than the power of sin – greater than the power of selfish desires – greater than the power of Satan. I can’t explain it except to say that God is on our side, and He wants us to break free from the stronghold that sin has on our lives. So, He gives us His...wonderful, and amazing and *“Marvelous grace of our loving Lord. Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt...Grace, grace, God’s grace. Grace that will pardon and cleanse within. Grace, grace, God’s grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin.”*

Isn’t God’s grace a sweet sound? Do you want to know how to resist the power of the enemy in your life? Step into God’s grace. Resist the devil, and turn toward God through the power and authority of His Word, and you’ll experience that wonderful, marvelous, and amazing grace that is greater than all your sin.