

The Devil in the Details

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Bible Text: John 8:41-49; Matthew 16:21-23

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I want to speak to you this morning on the subject that I have entitled, “The Devil in the Details.”

You know, this controversy that we have been involved in over that blasphemous opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* has opened, I believe, the eyes of certain Christians, certainly it has been revealing even to our own eyes, to some of the realities that we might not have been that aware of.

First of all, how many claim to be Christians and proclaim they are Christians, but don’t know the gospel and don’t know the Lord Jesus well enough to detect a false Jesus and a false gospel when it stares them in the face. How poor must be the preaching and the teaching of these poor people, that they can’t see the blasphemy and see the profanation and see the lies put into Jesus’ mouth by this performance.

And then, how many of the preachers have shown themselves to be hirelings, in it for the pay? And when the devil turns himself upon the flock and begins to tear at them, they flee to their studies. They are nowhere to be seen. They have not spoken up. They have taken no stand.

And how far we have come down the road in the embracing by the common people, the ordinary—not the academicians, not the pointy headed people who live in ivory towers—but of all the decent people who walk the streets of our community, how far we have come down the road of embracing this post modernistic world view, that says that everyone should be comfortable in their own truths and perfectly equanimous with everyone else’s truth; and that we don’t go to church to hear sin preached against, we go to church for religious teaching, as if those two are incompatible.

And the worst sin you could commit—in fact the only sin you could commit—is to stand up for the truth, not just for your opinion, not just for your viewpoint, but to stand up and proclaim what God’s Word says without apology—that is the worst sin that you can commit, to preach against sin and to call out people for public and notorious sin. How many, we see, are willing to say and write outright falsehoods in the public press in a shameless sort of way and to contradict clear and unambiguous evidence to the contrary.

It reminds me of that scene in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where the man and the woman argue about whether it is the sun or the moon they are looking at. Perhaps you remember that humorous incident.

But take, as a great example, this attack that was published this morning in the paper by Mrs. Tammy Gaede. She starts out by saying that we ought to have followed Jesus' teaching to judge not and to go privately to people who have offended us first without airing it about in the public. And then she turns right around and immediately violates her own religious teaching by accusing us falsely of using their parking lot without asking permission and not paying our fair share. She accuses us falsely and she misrepresents us. And she does so by making a public accusation without first checking with the people that she is going to accuse, just like she admonishes us that we ought not to do. And how foolish she must appear to find out, now, that we do have permission to use the parking lot. And she has falsely accused us on that matter. She has done so publicly without making an attempt to ascertain the truth of the matter.

But you see how easy it is for people to misunderstand the Scriptures, and to employ a double standard, and to do so shamelessly and publicly and not even be, apparently, aware of it.

Interestingly enough, she does not point out the fact that she was personally approached, and in a very Christ-like and very humble and very considerate letter from our church, where we begged her not to have any part in this blasphemous production. We did what she suggested we should do. We came to her in private, and she called us up to complain about it! How dare we send her that letter to her private, personal address that is in the phonebook!

I mean, the hypocrisy and the public dishonesty have certainly abounded in this controversy in ways that we might not have expected at first.

But listen to this particularly egregious statement that she makes—not about us, but about the opera and about the Lord Jesus. She says this, “I pray that this play will bring so many to Christ, and that they will receive salvation. I pray that many eyes will open to what the original intent of the play was written for: that being what happened to Christ way back when and what he gave -- his gift of salvation for all of us.”

Now she knows perfectly well—because I personally explained it to her on the telephone—that the play was not intended by its authors to convey what Christ did and how he brought salvation to those who trusted him, that it was written—and I quoted to her—it was written for the purpose of describing the Lord Jesus as confused, as not knowing why he was to die, as not being the Lord of glory, but just being a mere man.

She knows perfectly well, she has been confronted personally and privately with that fact, and yet she prints this lie in the newspaper. She has no shame, does she, at telling stories that she personally knows are false and that we have publicly documented and privately (in conversations with her) documented.

And, you know, she claims to be a regular attendee at North Greenwood Baptist Church, but she doesn't recognize blasphemy or lies about the Savior. She doesn't recognize a denial of the gospel, and she gives to the writers of the play motives that she knows are false and misleading.

And then, of course, Mr. Nail, Glenn Nail, he repeats this false allegation about the purpose of the play. He wrote this in a letter to the editor: "The writers of *Jesus Christ Superstar* did not intend to challenge or contradict the gospels and I don't believe that they had any serious pro or anti religious intentions in writing it."

Well, isn't that interesting, because the people who wrote it said that the gospels were flawed in their presentation of Judas and Jesus, and that they intended to portray the Lord Jesus as a mere man and not as God, and that neither of the writers believe he is God, and their intention was to communicate he was mixed up and confused about who he is.

Now surely Mr. Nail knows this, because it has been emblazoned in large print all over the newspaper. And, in fact, we approached him personally and privately with this information, and yet he repeats this false characterization that this play is not meant to be an insult to the true gospel teaching of the Scripture.

Now it is interesting, isn't it, what a contradiction we see between what Mrs. Gaede says about the purpose of the play—which is to convey the gospel of salvation—and what other people have said is the purpose of the play. We have been criticized for confusing the play with the gospel. Why, what did the man who had all the courage to sign his name "The poor man's Paul Revere" write? He wrote this: "I have noticed over the years church goers have a hard time distinguishing between fact and fiction. They seem to always come up in arms over silly fictional stories like *Jesus Christ Superstar*. They talk about these fictional stories as if they were real. It makes me wonder if they are secure in their own beliefs. They call it fiction for a reason. It is not real. Wake up and take your heads out of the clouds."

So who are we to believe? Mrs. Gaede, who said that the purpose was to convey the truth about what Jesus did in salvation? Or Mr. anonymous Paul Revere, who says it is fiction, it isn't true?

And then we come to another person, Mrs. Sandi Wheatley who had this to say: "Most galling were statements that G.L.T. is misrepresenting *Jesus Christ Superstar* as true gospel when we have stated repeatedly that it is a play."

And then Mr. Bobby Vandevender, who says, "It appears to me that many of our parents have failed in teaching their children the difference between art and religion resulting in quite a bit of confusion and ignorance about art amongst today's adults. I wasn't aware of this ignorance until I began receiving weird pamphlets in the mail from Grace Bible Church in which art and religion are completely confused, with neither art nor religion being properly represented."

So, again, some of the people involved in the play ask us not to hold it to any standard of truth about the gospel because it is mere art -- it is a mere play -- while others declare that its purpose is to convey the gospel in the hope that many will be saved as a result of watching it.

So, you see, we have a dispute there, a distinction.

And, you know, it is interesting, isn't it, this accusation that we don't know the difference between art and religion. But we do know the difference between art and religion, and we also know that art is subject to the same moral laws against slander and the same prohibition against blasphemy as any other area of life. The artists would like to think they have an exemption in their work, and sometimes even in their own personal lives, don't they? They think that they should be exempt from God's law for the sake of art. And they think they should be able to portray falsehoods and blaspheme the name of God, and it's all ok because it is art, not real life, not religion, so they can get away with it.

But we are not confused about the fact that artists and their art are subject to God's wrath when they profane the name of the Lord and when they dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ, just like people who are in any other profession or walk of life. What arrogance it is to claim an exemption from God's moral law because you title yourself an artist and you title what you do "art"!

But, you know, we have talked about the purpose of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. We have talked about how Tim Rice said what his purpose was, again, to show Jesus is mixed up and confused about who he is. And we have talked about how they twisted and they lied and they distorted the facts and the statements that are made. And they did that in order to convey the falsehood that Jesus is just a mere man and not God. And they have lied about Mary Magdalene and they have lied about Jesus' conduct.

They have lied about Judas' motive. And this is the really telling point, isn't it? In order to convey their false view of Christ, they had to take Judas' motive and twist it around to the exact opposite of what it truly was. They claim that Judas' motive was that he was concerned that Jesus wouldn't repudiate the kingdom and it was dangerous not to. Whereas the Scriptures tell us plainly that Judas was a thief. He had been stealing money from Jesus and from the disciples. And he was upset, not because Jesus wouldn't repudiate the kingdom, but because Jesus wouldn't *embrace* the kingdom. That is what he was upset by. It was the end of his money making days. And when he saw that Jesus was intent on going to the cross to save his people, Judas had no part in that for he didn't believe who the Lord Jesus really was. He didn't believe he had come to save his people. And so he cashed out and he sold out the Savior for 30 pieces of silver.

And then, of course, we have talked about how the play lies about the Lord Jesus. And then two Sundays ago we talked about how sad it makes us to see the work of the Lord Jesus, his careful, diligent, perfect obedience to the Father's will, they have made a

mockery of it. They have lied about it. They have undermined it. And yet that perfect obedience, which he strove mightily to attain and which he did attain -- he was made in human flesh, yet without sin, the Scriptures tell us. They have made a joke about it.

But more sad to us than that, they have denied that he had the full knowledge of the horror of the death he would die for the sake of his people. They have acted like he didn't understand why he went to the cross, when the sad thing is, he knew perfectly well all his life, and he lived under that dark cloud, knowing he would be made sin, he who knew no sin would be made sin in the place of his people at Calvary. And they have lied about it and claimed he didn't know. They have robbed him of his life of sorrow and grief that he bore in our place and for our sake.

And then we have talked about how dangerous it is to misapprehend Christ, to not know who the real Jesus is. They meant the play to blaspheme the Christ of the Bible, to deny his deity, to portray him as confused and unsure, why he had to die. And yet people view this blasphemy and come away claiming it is reverent and tasteful and honoring to the Lord Jesus!

The problem with them is their ignorance of the true Christ of Scripture. Without that knowledge, they are incompetent to detect the counterfeit Jesus of this rock opera.

In John's gospel the first chapter, the apostle describes the fact that the world knew not Christ nor did it receive him. Of course the world knew the man Jesus and thought it had received him. But in reality it knew him not for who he really is, the king of glory, the Creator of all things, God incarnate in the flesh, a glorious Savior, the Son of God, the Lamb sent to be slain in the place of sinners.

To know Christ, but not to know his true nature, is not to know him at all!

The fact is that those who see *Jesus Christ Superstar* and think it honors Jesus, are most likely lost and on the road to hell, because they have not received the Lord of glory as he truly is. And the Scriptures warn against the spirit of antichrist which would preach another Jesus, a false Jesus which many will rush to embrace. And believers are warned also in Scripture against supporting or encouraging any person who does not adhere to the true doctrine of Christ.

Woe betide those who embrace a false Savior, for wrath is determined against them! The only hope they have is to reject the false Christ of this play, take up the real Jesus, the Savior, the King, the Lamb slain for sinners.

And that brings me to this final question. Where do all the lies come from? What motivates the lies? What is the source of the lies?

Let's just review, quickly, the lies they put in Jesus' mouth, ignoring all the other lies, just the ones that they place in the mouth of Jesus, the ones that Randy Weeks utters on that stage night after night.

He has him saying this to his disciples:

If you knew the path we are riding,
you would understand it less than I.

Imagine suggesting that the Lord Jesus doesn't know what path he took or what his course was, he who always knew the provident workings of God almighty, he who was the second person of the trinity, being confused about his future.

And then there is this false accusation he puts in Jesus' mouth. He says:

There's not a man among you
who knows or cares if I come or go.

Why would the play put such a lie in Jesus' mouth, when manifestly his disciples and Mary Magdalene and the other people who followed him dearly loved him, and dearly cared for him, and were hurt and disturbed by the prospect of him going to the cross?

And then they place in Jesus mouth these blasphemous words when the people come to him in faith for healing:

There's too many of you. Don't push me.
There's too little of me. Don't crowd me.
Heal yourselves.

The Lord Jesus was so solicitous to heal those who came to him in faith. He had such compassion, and yet they would lie about him in this way.

And then at the Lord's Table, they portray Jesus as holding a big pity party, making all sorts of false accusation, expressing that there is no hope, that he must be crazy to think anyone will remember him after he's gone, and announcing that they don't care as much for his body and his blood as this bread and wine are worth to them.

Exactly the opposite of how the Lord Jesus predicted that he would be remembered by his people, and that they would remember what he did for them, how he went willingly to the cross for them, and promising to celebrate again with them when he came in his Father's kingdom. He was making plans for his exaltation and the exaltation of all his people under him in glory!

And then these statements that they put in Jesus' mouth when they come to take him:

Don't you know it's all over?
It was nice, but now it's gone.
Why are you obsessed with fighting ...?
Stick to fishing from now on.

And yet the Lord Jesus had called Peter away from fishing for fish and told him he would make him a fisher of men. And he never told him to go back to his old profession and stop following after the Savior.

And then they have Jesus saying these blasphemous words to Pilate:

I have got no kingdom in this world.
I am through, through, though.
There may be a kingdom for me somewhere, if I only knew.

How foolish it is to suggest that Jesus would say such things, when he had already been making assignments of thrones to his apostles. You remember what he said, that you will sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel in my kingdom. How foolish to suggest he didn't know that he had a kingdom, when he had already declared the place settings for his people. He said, "You will eat and drink at my Father's table in my kingdom."

And they have him saying in Gethsemane:

I have changed.
I am not as sure as when we started.
Then I was inspired.
Now I am sad and tired.
I want to know. I want to know my God.
I want to see why I should die.
I would have to see if I die what will be my reward.
I would have to know. I would have to know my Lord.
Why should I die? Can you show me now that I will not be killed in vain?
Show me just a little of your omnipresent brain.
Show me there's a reason for your wanting me to die.
You are far too keen on where and how and not so hot on why.
After all I have tried for three years,
Why, then, am I scared to finish what I started?
What you started. I didn't start it.
Take me now before I change my mind.

Now, no person that is a believer can hear those words put in the mouth of Jesus and not know they are lies and blasphemous, and yet many people in this community think that this is uplifting and glorifies God and is a great presentation of the gospel.

And this is the "salvation" that Tammy Gaede tells us about in the paper this morning, that she prattles on about people getting this salvation from this play.

This is the "glorifying of God" that people have talked about when they go to this play. This is the "deeply moving" stuff that people have gone on and on about, that this play's supporters parrot.

Well, what did Jesus say? What was his testimony about those who would deny his true purpose in going to the cross for his people? In Matthew's gospel the 16th chapter we read this morning at verse 21:

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.¹

“Get thee behind me, Satan.”² Jesus called Peter Satan when he denied the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross.

And this is the truth. Here is the truth about where the lies about the Lord Jesus come from. They come from the devil. They come from the mouth of Satan himself. Those who deny the will of Christ to die for his people, those who would object and who would try to take away that will of the Lord Jesus expressed to Peter and to the disciples here, those who would deny that will that he had, to die for his people and be raised again the third day, those people who deny his will and his knowledge of what he came to do, Jesus calls them Satan.

That is what he calls them. And you may be lost and a hater of God and deny that Jesus knew what he was here to do. Or you may be a Christian who is ignorant like the apostle Peter. But if you question the Savior's desire and full intention to go to the cross to save his people and be raised again from the dead in power and glory, you are acting as an agent of Satan himself, and the Lord Jesus would rebuke you like he rebuked Peter.

Let us be clear. Every person who participates in or supports this blasphemous play that denies the Lord Jesus' willful, obedient, knowing, deliberate death to save his people has committed an open and notorious sin against almighty God. And we are going to call you out for it and beg you to flee the wrath of God and turn to the Lord Jesus for repentance and forgiveness.

You know, the Lord forgave Peter. He forgave Peter his satanic blast against him. Oh, how deep and how gracious and how loving is the Lord Jesus to those who come to him in sorrow and faith! It must have eaten at Peter the rest of his life the horror of what he did when he said those words about the Savior's death! And we plead with our neighbors to be reconciled to Christ while there is still time, and while there is still peace available through the blood of Christ.

¹ Matthew 16:21-23

² Matthew 16:23

But, you know, the lies about the Lord always originate with Satan. The first lie ever told in the world, recorded in Genesis three, was told by that serpent the devil to the first woman Eve. Remember, he told that lie, “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”³

Isn't it interesting that the first lie told was to accuse God of making a law that he never made? God never said you couldn't eat of every tree. He said you couldn't eat of one tree. And, of course, Eve corrects the devil, doesn't she?

And then he follows that up with the second lie about God in the garden, “Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”⁴ The second lie he told was to deny the judgment that God had promised for those who broke his law.

You know, the antidote to lies by the devil is revealed by God's response to them, isn't it? What did God say in the Garden of Eden? The first thing he did, he came in and he reiterated the truth of the judgment against sin. He pronounced the curse on the earth, pronounced the judgment of Satan, he pronounced the curse on man and on woman and he told them that they would die just like he had promised they would, for they had eaten the forbidden fruit and broken his law.

The first thing God did to rebut the lies of Satan was to reiterate the truth of his judgment against sin. And the second thing that God did to rebuke the lies of Satan was, he preached the gospel, didn't he? He promised there would be a seed that would come and crush the old serpent the devil and would save his people who trusted in him.

And this is the antidote that we ought to use when Satan works his lies in our community and in this performance or in any other way. We need to repeat and proclaim God's truth however it was lied about, to reiterate it, to take our stand in support of it, especially to reiterate God's judgment against sin when it is denied and when it is called into question. And then we need to preach the gospel, to rebuke and to repudiate the lies of the devil against our Savior.

The Lord Jesus recognized that the denial of his deity and of his purpose to save is demonic in nature. In John's gospel the sixth chapter at verses 65 we read this:

Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake

³ Genesis 3:1

⁴ Genesis 3:4-5

of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.⁵

You see, the reason these two ideas are juxtaposed here, this proclamation, Peter's testimony about the truth of who the Lord Jesus is in all his fullness—he is the Christ, the one who is sent to redeem his people, the one who would be made a curse for them and taken as a Lamb to the slaughter in the place of his people, the one who would rule in power and glory—the reason that that testimony of the truth about Christ is juxtaposed with Jesus' statement that one of you is a devil is because it is that very testimony that the devil would deny in Judas. It is that very thing. The very flaw in Judas was that he bought the lies of the devil that repudiated the core of that testimony that Simon Peter proclaimed in this incident. The one who wouldn't believe the truth about Jesus, that one was a devil and spoke for the devil and his mind and heart were controlled by the devil.

But in another place Jesus makes it abundantly clear, what is the source of lies against himself. John's gospel the eighth chapter talks about how they wouldn't believe the testimony that Christ gave of himself and his works proclaimed that he was of the Father. In John eight at verse 12:

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.⁶

They wouldn't believe the record of the Scriptures. They wouldn't believe the record of the Father proclaiming him to be his Son in whom he was well pleased. They wouldn't believe the testimony of his works. They didn't believe the truth about the Lord Jesus.

And then at verse 41 this well known passage. “Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.”⁷ This is a slap at the birth of Jesus, an insult to the regularity of his conception that they made against him and a personal insult against the Lord Jesus.

“Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.”⁸ You see, Jesus corrects their false statement about his birth and his parentage and his origin.

Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth,

⁵ John 6:65-71

⁶ John 8:12-13

⁷ John 8:41

⁸ John 8:42

because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.⁹

You see, the devil is the first liar. He is the originator of lies. And Jesus says that those who tell lies about him -- about his person, about his deity, about his work of redemption, about his honor and his entitlement to be followed and obeyed -- those who tell lies about him are doing so because they are children of the devil, because they are repeating the works of their father the devil. They are repeating the lies of the one who is their spiritual father when he speaketh a lie. He speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Those who blaspheme Christ, who deny his deity, who refuse his teaching, who slander his birth, Jesus says they are children of the devil because they act like the devil and they repeat the devil's lies about Jesus.

You see, the devil is in the details of this play. He is the source of all those lies about Jesus. He is the one behind the lies about Jesus in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. And we ought not to be timid to label these lies, to label the author of these lies and the true spiritual father of those who speak these lies. Whether they be like Peter or whether they be like Judas, it is the devil that speaks through them against the Lord of glory.

You know, the epistles warn repeatedly about the lies told by those who speak for the devil against Christ. I was struck by how many times in the epistles the writers, especially Paul, warned about the deception of Satan in the mouths and actions of those who taught falsehoods about the Lord Jesus, particularly about his person and his deity and the purpose of the gospel of salvation.

In 1 Timothy three verse 16 we read this. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."¹⁰ You see, he talks about this mystery of the incarnation and how God is manifested in the flesh in Jesus Christ, and all of these glorious things about his person and his work. And then immediately he goes into the next chapter:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;¹¹

No doubt these doctrines of devils will include the denial of what Paul has just finished affirming at the end of the previous chapter, that which Paul just explained about the Lord Jesus, these false teachers and false preachers would deny. They would do it under the spirit of Satan himself.

⁹ John 8:43-44

¹⁰ 1 Timothy 3:16

¹¹ 1 Timothy 4:1-2

Paul likens those who preach a false Jesus to ministers of Satan in 2 Corinthians 11 verses three and four:

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.¹²

And then at verse 13:

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.¹³

You see, this is the explanation for why so many people think that this blasphemous production is such a blessing, is so deeply moving. It is because Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, doesn't he? He doesn't go around pawning off things that people won't accept as true. He pawns off lies that people will readily embrace.

His false gospel and his false preaching is like rat poison. The rats don't eat it because it tastes horrible. They eat it because it tastes wholesome and it is appealing to them. They don't understand that it is laced with poison. That is the way that Satan works. He masquerades as truth. He masquerades as beauty. And what he delivers is lies and falsehoods and death and corruption.

And we are involved, the Scriptures tell us, in a momentous spiritual warfare against all that opposes the Lord Jesus. And that warfare goes all the way to a warfare against the devil himself.

In Revelation chapter 12 there is a description of this warfare and who it involves. In verse seven we read:

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world¹⁴

¹² 1 Corinthians 11:3-4

¹³ 1 Corinthians 11:13-15

¹⁴ Revelation 12:7-9

You see, there is the deceit. There are the lies. There is always a description of lies whenever you see a description of Satan and the devil.

He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.¹⁵

You see, God's angels are warring against Satan and they will defeat him. And they will cast him down and there will be great exaltation and rejoicing. And you see what it is that defeats him. It is that salvation that comes from the Lord Jesus. That is what defeats him.

But notice what is our hope, what is our strength, what is our means of victory. We overcome the devil and his lies by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony.

This is the power that we have. This is the privilege that we have, that the Lord Jesus' blood at Calvary cleanses us of all unrighteousness and saves us to the uttermost. And we can plead that blood and nothing the devil does can touch us. And then we can overcome him by the word of our testimony.

What is the word of our testimony? It is that we believe and trust in the blood of the Lamb, and that we take comfort and rely upon it totally, a reiteration of the truth about Jesus and the truth about the gospel. That is one of our tools against the devil to defeat him in every way.

What a privilege we have, that we have been given, the blood of the Lamb as our shield and as our Savior, that we have been given the right to testify to the saving power of Christ against the lies of the devil himself!

You know, there is the Lord's final solution -- he has one, he has a final solution to the blasphemy of Satan, to the lies of Satan. There is going to come a time when the devil's lies are going to be shut up. In Revelation 20 at verse one.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more.¹⁶

¹⁵ Revelation 12:9-11

¹⁶ Revelation 20:1-3

You see, there are the lies again. It always comes back to the devil lying about the Lord Jesus and about the truth of God. “That he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.”¹⁷

You see, that is going to be Jesus’ interim solution to the devil, isn’t it? When he comes back in power and glory to reign on this world, he is going to lock the devil up. The father of lies will be in torments and in chains.

What will become of those who seek to parrot his lies? I submit to you that it will be a bad day if anyone stands up before the Lord Jesus in his power and glory and cries out, “Superstar.” Or cries out, “Hey, J.C., won’t you wave at me.” I don’t think they will be doing that then, will they?

Because there is a verse that comes later in the chapter that describes what happens when the devil gets cranked up one last time, doesn’t he, and he comes to deceive again, to tell more lies. And people follow his lies and embrace his lies. What is the result? What happens to them?

Oh, read about it in verse seven of Revelation 20.

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations.¹⁸

There he is lying again. “...which are in the four quarters of the earth...to gather them together to battle.”¹⁹

So he is going to get a bunch of people to follow his lies, to repeat his lies, to embrace them. And imagine how foolish this is. Here they have seen the Lord of glory. They have seen his power. He has reigned 1000 years. He has brought all the cures and all the comfort that medicine could never even imagine. He has brought peace and productivity and true worship and many, many millions, probably billions of souls come to believe in the Lord Jesus, and yet there will still be those who embrace the lies that the devil will freely spout again.

What does it say? They “compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city...”²⁰ And here is how God deals with people who mouth the lies of Satan, who repeat them, who follow them, who embrace them.

Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the [old] devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire... for ever and ever.²¹

¹⁷ Revelation 20:3

¹⁸ Revelation 20:7-8

¹⁹ Revelation 20:8

²⁰ Revelation 20:9

²¹ Revelation 20:9-10

This is the danger of blasphemy. There will come a time and a place in this world one day when those who repeat the lies of the devil about the Lord Jesus are consumed in the fire of the wrath of God. And they dare not utter such thoughts in his presence without being liable to instant incineration at his wrath. And those who appear before the Lamb's throne will never have the temerity, I assure you, to repeat the lies of the devil in person before the Lord they lied about in this world.

But what is our duty? What is our duty? In 2 Timothy two we see this exhortation for God's people in the face of all this.

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.²²

You see, we have a duty to use all of the Scripture to approach people with compassion, pleading with them in Jesus' name to be reconciled unto God, to set aside the lies they have told about Jesus, to embrace the truth, to escape the Father of lies, the devil, whose servants they are, and become bound unto the Savior by his blood that he shed to save sinners.

There are a few words of comfort and encouragement to believers who are in our condition, who stand up against the lies that the devil and his servants have told about our Savior. What did Jesus say in Luke 6:22?

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.²³

Jesus says there is profit in standing up against the lies of Satan and for the cause of Christ and that when we receive any sort of reproach—be it ever so humble or ever so hard—that we ought to leap for joy because your reward is in heaven.

Are you leaping for joy? I hardly think we should leap too high, because we haven't really received much of a slight at all, have we, compared to what others suffer.

There are people in this world today who, for the cause of Christ, are drawn down unto death, are in imprisonment, in torture and even in martyrdom. And yet even for that Jesus would say to them, "Leap for joy. Great is your reward in glory."

²² 2 Timothy 2:24-26

²³ Luke 6:22-23

But, you know, the Lord's Table helps us to put everything in perspective. The Lord's Table demonstrates, it puts the lie really, to all that talk they have had over there in that theatre, because it demonstrates that Jesus knew what he was talking about when he said, "Remember my body broken for you. Remember my blood that is poured out as an atonement for you at Calvary." He knew *why* he was going to die, and he memorialized *why* he was going to die, in a memorial that memorializes why he *did* die, doesn't it?

This Lord's Table puts the truth about the Savior all back into perspective again. And then, secondly, I want you to notice that we are given the privilege to personally participate at this table in the rebuke of the blasphemy when we remember why he died for us.

They said of Jesus that he complained no one would remember him. And we are here to say we put the lie to that, don't we, because we remember him. And an unknown host of saints have remembered him and will remember him. And we look for that day when we will see him and remember with him and celebrate with him in glory one day.

And this table reminds us also of how his body and his blood are our portion and our very life in so many ways, in so many ways. In his body and blood is our pardon, is our atonement, is our release, is the cause of our justification. It is the bringing of peace between us and a once offended God. In his body and blood we see our title to eternal life, but also this. In his body and blood around the Lord's Table we receive our encouragement to stand fast.

In Hebrews chapter 12 the writer exhorted the saints this way:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.²⁴

When we partake of this feast we understand that nothing that happens to us, nothing that happens to us, no little indignity that befalls us, no hardship, no dishonor, no lie like Mrs. Gaede told about us in the paper this morning, none of it can ever begin to compare with the contradiction of sinners that our Savior suffered when he went to the cross!

When we see the Lord Jesus in agony and blood at Calvary for our sake, and how opposed he was and is, we have to realize, this table ought to demonstrate to us, the blasphemy against the Lord Jesus that is taking place in that theater next door. That is a greater wickedness than if they took us all out and strung us up. It really is, because it is against the Lord of glory.

²⁴ Hebrews 12:1-4

And so let's put our focus on the Savior's honor, not on our own.

And that is what this table should do. It should focus us upon the Lamb of God, the Lamb of sacrifice that God sent to be slain for us. Oh, the writer of that song said it best:

On Calvary we've adoring stood
and gazed on that wondrous cross;
Where the holy spotless Lamb of God
was slain in his love for us.

Let's give thanks for the Lord's Table. It reminds us of what Jesus did for us. And let's say, "Lord Jesus, we love you because you first loved us, and you purchased our pardon on Calvary's tree." Let's give thanks, first, for the bread that reminds us of his body broken for us at Calvary.

Oh God our Father, we rejoice that we can gather around this table in the name of your Son the Lord Jesus and that we can worship and adore him for who he really is, that we can repudiate the lies told about him, we can demonstrate through our testimony that he was who he said he was, that he is receiving the glory now and that all the suffering that he suffered for us is past. Thank you that we can be a part of that throng of people who crowd around him and own his title and praise his name. We thank you for the bread that reminds us of his body broken, that he went to the cross to suffer as a sacrifice in our place and that you spared not your own Son, but delivered him up for us all. Thank you for the bread that reminds us of the body broken. Thank you for the opportunity that we have. We thank you that you have prepared this great feast for us. And, as the writer says, "You have sweetly forced us in, or else we would have still refused to taste and perished in our sin." We think of that statement by the Savior to Peter that, flesh and blood has not revealed the truth about Jesus to Peter, but his Father in heaven revealed it. We thank you for that day when you revealed to us, when you showed us your Son, you caused us to believe, you drew us unto the Savior. How we bless and thank you for it and we thank you for his precious body broken for us on the cross. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Scriptures tell us after they had supped he took the bread and he broke it and he blessed it and he said, "Take and eat, this is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me."

Let's give thanks for the cup. I'd like to ask my father if he would give thanks for the cup that reminds us of the blood of Christ shed for us at Calvary.

It says he took the cup after they had supped and he blessed it and he said, "Drink ye all of it. This cup is the New Testament in my blood for the remission of sins. Do it as often as you do it in remembrance of me."

The Scriptures tell us as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we do preach the Lord's death till he comes.²⁵

Let's sing number 185 in the black book, "Tw'as on that night of deepest woe when darkness round did thicken," number 185.

²⁵ See 1 Corinthians 11:23-26