

Choosing Truth or Half-truths

I wanted to take a break from Luke for few weeks as we approach Resurrection Sunday on April 21st. As is typical when one wants to change the routine it is a good time for attack. Last week went crazy in a number of ways and I was praying, Lord want do I need to focus on for Sunday? This was my prayer as events of the week and time spun out of control. In the midst of all the craziness Joyce shared a devotional with me titled “The Enemy’s Plan Against You” by Lysa Terkeurst. As I read the devotional it seemed an appropriate subject - for we live in a broken world and if we dare to live faithfully to bring glory to Christ it makes us an enemy of the evil one and the evil one has always been an enemy of God and his children. Since the fall in the garden the heart of mankind has not changed, the only things that has changed over the 6000+ years is technology, but the heart of people remains the same. Please open your Bible to 1 John located right after 2 Peter. Let’s pause to pray for our time in God’s Word and then Brother David will read 1 John, chapter 2, verses 15 to 17.

Just as the heart of man has not changed since the Fall neither has the plans of the evil one. If we understand the methods of the evil one, we can better prepare for battle. Paul wrote to the saints in Ephesus and ended his letter with, ¹⁰“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.” (Ephesians 6:10-13) As Christians our lives are lived in this “present darkness” and we are to do battle. The problem is the battle can lie in deception and we need recognize the “schemes of the devil”. The devil has only so

many lies and schemes – he may dress them up a little different, but they remain the same. Satan uses either the temptation of pleasures or debilitating pain to control and keep one from God. We then need to pray for God’s spiritual wisdom to recognize the schemes of the devil. Studying the Bible, given to us by God the Father, gives us insight into what these schemes are.

Half-truth Lies

The fallen nature of man has people under the control of sin and one naturally seeks self-satisfaction. The result of the sin nature in people is as Proverbs teaches, “*Sheol the bottomless pit where the dead reside and where God is absent and Abaddon this is the name of the fallen angel from the bottomless pit. “Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, and never satisfied are the eyes of man.”* (Proverbs 27:20) We do not see Abaddon mentioned again until Revelation chapter 9, for now he is restrained, but in the future we read, “*And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. ² He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. ³ Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. ⁴ They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. ⁶ And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them. ... ¹¹ They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.”* (Revelation 9:1-6 & 11) Satan tempts’ people with things that satisfy the lust of the eyes and once achieved - turn to pain of the mind and flesh. This path leads to never being satisfied, always desiring more and never finding peace. Once the evil one has captured people

and brought them into the despair of this world; alcohol, drugs or death becomes a way to stop the pain.

John wrote of the solution, ¹⁵“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17) This is the simple truth the “love of the Father” can only be found through believing faith in Jesus Christ. Another straight forward and simple truth is, “Jesus said, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” (John 14:6) Satan does not want people to hear these simple truths or worse yet believe these truths, so he counters and fills the world with half-truths.

Please turn in your Bible to Genesis chapter 3 where Satan approaches Eve with the twisting of God’s truth. Satan is the master of half-truth lies. Eve says God told her and Adam that they would die if they ate the fruit from the Tree of Life. The first thing Satan does is to give Eve a half-truth or lie. A half-truth is a lie but it has a small element of truth in it so that it is believable. In verse 4, Satan says to Eve, “You will not surely die.” The truth of this lie is that Adam and Eve were not struck dead by God, but God said they would die and they surely died in 2 ways; first they died spiritually and lost their intimacy with God and secondly, they were mortal and lived out their lives and died a mortal death.

In the next part of the lie, Satan tells Eve in verse 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.” The truth of this lie, is it is true their eyes were opened to good and evil because they had not known sin, but the lie was framed to make Eve desire more than she had, to become more like God, as Satan said, “you will be like God”. The only man who was

able to handle this was Jesus, because he was both God and man and because of his perfection he has no problem with knowing and dealing with good and evil, and remaining sinless. Adam and Eve were not perfect as God is perfect and this knowledge would bring corruption and sin into their lives.

This lie laid the foundation of desire in Adam and Eve's heart for more, more than they had and for more than they could handle. Is this not how Satan deals with you and me? Look at the lies of most advertising - it sells everything by trying to make you dissatisfied with what you have and create a desire for us to want more. I remember being in advertising and marketing class in college and being told good advertising makes people want something they do not want or need and it creates a desire for what they cannot afford and will not use. This opens the door for us to break the 10th Commandment; ["You shall not covet..."](#) (Exodus 20:17) I have broken this because I decided I deserved more – new truck, boat, etc. Materialism has always been difficult for me and my only hope is the strength and power of Christ.

This is the same approach Satan took with Eve and the result we see in verse 6, ["So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate."](#) Satan's lies have the aim to make people dissatisfied with who they are and what they have. Then the lie is designed to create a craving for more, more to please our carnal fallen nature, more; money, power, sex, food, etc. These things when used within the confines as God instructs are good and for our benefit, but when used the way Satan entices people with, they become damaging, painful and toxic as Adam and Eve discovered.

This was Satan's same approach with King David. In the palace David was not focused on the battle or on God, he had too much time to spent in idleness. Satan took advantage of this and he created in David's heart a desire for Bathsheba. Once the desire

was there David plotted how he could have her and he committed adultery and murder. The result of this unhealthy desire the death of Uriah the Hittite, this was followed by the death their baby son, and David's kingdom would know no peace and even his own son Absalom tried to kill his father and take his father's kingdom. These temptations are what Satan used with Eve and David, and they are the same temptations Satan put before Jesus as recorded in Matthew chapter 4 "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.'" ... First the evil one tempts with physical need or desire and then moves one to dissatisfaction with who they are or their situation or their status, so the devil moves on in verse 5, "Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down" ... Satan wanted Jesus to be dissatisfied with his lowered state of being human. Jesus was human but he was also God and did not fall into temptation, he had come to earth with a mission that no fallen angel could distract him from. With this not working Satan then tempts Jesus with power in verse 8, "Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.'" Jesus who is both God and man is the only person with power far beyond Satan's and he responds to Satan's temptations rightly, ¹⁰ "Then Jesus said to him, 'Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve." ' " (Matthew 4:1-10) The evil one is indeed powerful, more powerful than humans and this is why we must rely not on ourselves, not on our own abilities, but on the power of God and by the grace of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Just as the evil one is powerful; he is also predictable. We see this throughout the Bible. The old saying, that if we do not learn from history it is bound to repeat itself, is true.

It is God who gave mankind desires and when we study the scriptures and live within the boundaries God has set, we are fine. When these desires grow past what God has set, it is then they separate us from God and damage us physically and spiritually. What we do not think about or want to admit is that when we move out of God's bounds like Adam and Eve, and David is brings separation from God and is what allows the evil one to have influence in our hearts, minds and lives. Satan enjoys our fallen state because it robs God of the glory he alone deserves. When Eve looked at the fruit, it tells us in verse 6, "it was a delight to the eyes" and the eyes are a window into our hearts and mind. When David looked a Bathsheba, not the first time, but the second and the third time is when the lust of his eyes could not be satisfied. Once we allow dissatisfaction and desire or as scripture says the lust of our eyes to make us seek beyond what God has said is right, then as the Proverbs states, "never satisfied are the eyes of man" and this begins the path of living outside the will of God. This is a slippery slope with only downward as its direction.

When we are tempted with physically appealing things outside of God's boundaries not only do we suffer but others suffer along with us. Adam did not protect his wife and they fell together. When we want material things that go beyond a biblical budget, things have to be sacrificed – tithing, needs of our families and of the poor. It is the influence of the prince of this world that is designed to appeal to our pride, materialism and ego that take our focus off God and we focus on the broken world. This is what happened to David and it was not until God took away the things David desired and God sent Nathan, as we read 2 Samuel chapter 12, did David come back to God.

What are other half-truth lies that have influenced so many? They all appeal to people's egos, pride, desire for power and control; this is so clear if one studies Islam, Mormonism, Buddhism – and the result is millions upon millions who believed in half-truth lies are condemned to hell for eternity. The safeguard is to test everything for proven truth, time honored truth, eternal truth because this approach shines light into the

darkness of half-truth lies. For God there is only truth and it withstands all assaults by the evil one. It is OK to question God and the Bible, if one is sincere in seeking truth, because truth will stand and when one sincerely seeks truth God will show them the way.

Truth

Jesus gives us the solution to the deception of the evil one's half-truth lies, turn in your Bible to John chapter 14 and I will read beginning at verse 1, Jesus says, **“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ... moving down to verse 6, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him. ... continuing in verse 12, Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. ¹⁵ If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”** (John 14:1, 6-7, 12-17) This passage is clear, it is straight forward, but it is not necessarily easy to carry out. To live the truth of God - first, one must believe in Jesus as the Christ. Which means we surrender our lives to him and this is easy to say but hard to do because of the pull of the world and its enticements. Jesus is clear without believing in him as the Christ, as one's Savior there is no way to be reconciled with God. Christ has power that Satan can only dream of and desire, but he does not possess. Jesus says the truth is, **“Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”** This does not mean asking for desires of the flesh and the world – like a new truck for fishing boat – you can tell where I can be tempted. Jesus says we are to live in the way that will bring

glory to God the Father and God the Son. How do believers bring God the Father and God the Son glory? The answer is in the next verse, verse 15, **“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”** Where do we find these commandments? From Genesis to Revelation there are the commandments of God and intermingled are also the laws of man. Jesus came to fulfill the commandments of the Father but he replaced the laws of man with a new covenant as the Messiah and as the Christ. How do we know the truth of God? Study his holy writing, his holy words, the Bible. But scripture is also clear the people of the world will not understand the words of God for they are spiritually dead and do not have spiritual wisdom to discern what God reveals. What is the solution to this problem? Jesus gives the solution in verses 16 and 17, **“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”** When you believe in Jesus, he breathes life into your soul and that life is the **“Helper”**, the **“Spirit of truth”** who Jesus gives not just while you live mortally here on earth, but Jesus says the Holy Spirit is given to each believer **“to be with you forever”**. For this process to work, for you to be given the faith needed, for you to live in this broken world, for you to have the strength to resist the evil one; we must die to ourselves, submit our lives to Christ and surrender our lives to the direction and desires to the will of God’s Holy Spirit.

Again, this is simple and straightforward, but not necessarily easy. As believers we have believed, surrendered and submitted, but the world and the desires of the flesh still pull at us. We are redeemed sinners, but we are still sinners. The strength to live for Christ comes from prayer, studying God’s Bible, the Holy Spirit and coming together as a community of believers to strengthen each other with heart felt repentance and confession when we fail. When we fail, we need to confess and repent by the power of the Holy Spirit that God has given to each believer forever. One of the first things we need to admit is Satan is more powerful than we are and it is beyond us to fight him.

This is why we must daily put on the armor of God and by his power do battle with the fallen world. This is the life of a believer in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior – turn in your Bible to Romans 8:33, as Paul wrote, “Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; ³⁴ who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written, in *Psalms 44:22* ‘FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.’ ³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:33-39) This is the life of a believer. We must prepare for battle every day and give our battle cry, the words of our Lord and Savior, Jesus, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.” (Mark 10:27) Prepare for battle and go into the world and overcome the power of evil through the power of Jesus! Amen!