



Sermon Notes, 14 March 2021

Term Spring 2021

Series 1 Peter (Trust, Surrender, Confidence)

Gatherings: the 11, the 5

Title 1 Peter 5:6-14

Preacher Paul Langham

Reading – 1 Peter 5:6-14

1 Peter 5:12-14

Note the honour paid to Silas, the way Peter regards Mark as a son, the invitation to greet one another with a kiss of love. It all speaks of the quality of relationship in the early church. How does our church measure up?

1 Peter 5:8-11

The devil is real. Does your view of the devil tally with what scripture teaches us? *see fuller notes below*

The devil can be resisted. Did you realise this? In what ways have you resisted him? Do you have personal examples you can pass on to others?

1 Peter 5:6

How do you respond to the words *humble* and *humility*?

Have you ever confused being humbled and humiliated? (Humiliation is done to us, humbling is done by us)

Humility means seeing yourself as God sees you, nothing more, nothing less ... have you ever denied or played down a gift or characteristic that you know God has given you? How can we handle this in a good way? Bill Johnson, leader of Bethel Church in California, has a helpful habit. If someone praises him, he simply says 'Thank you' and then, later, when he's praying, says 'Dear God, I think I was given something today that really belongs to you ...'

Read Philippians 2:5-11 and meditate on the humility of Jesus.

1 Peter 5:7

I mentioned that the word *cast* occurs only once elsewhere in the whole of scripture, and that's the event we know as Palm Sunday. It's not easy to see why the donkey is so important. Part of the promise and prophecy about the Messiah centred on him being *David's Son*, and this had become almost a title by the time of Jesus. The nation was waiting for a new king, in the line of David (hence Jesus' birth at Bethlehem, David's town) but whose reign would be eternal. In 1 Kings 1, we read that when King David wanted to have his son Solomon crowned king to succeed him, he had Nathan the prophet set Solomon on David's own donkey and lead him to coronation. And that's why the donkey is so important.

The donkey, then, symbolizes kingship, authority and power. It is also the means by which Jesus enters Jerusalem so setting in process the chain of events which would see Jesus led to crucifixion, as Saviour of the whole world.

His followers, we are told, *cast* their garments on to the donkey for Jesus to sit upon. So I imagine myself on that road, taking my anxieties as if they were garments (which is how they often feel!) and casting them beneath Jesus, onto the symbol of his kingship, authority and power ... and watch as he rides them into the City and on to the Cross.

What strategies have you found helpful in tackling anxiety?

It's important to note that some anxieties are of so deep an order that it is appropriate to seek help, usually beginning with a conversation with our GP. Christians must never feel they shouldn't turn to such 'secular' help. It is, after all, God who has given our wonderful medical professionals the minds to understand and the hearts to help.

THE DEVIL

INTRODUCTION

The devil has propagated 2 distorted extremes which he is quite happy for us to believe about him –

- the little red, horned creature of mediaeval folklore, still the stereotype in cartoons etc. – encourages people not to take him seriously
- the all-powerful, terrifying beast of the apocalypse, whose servants are everywhere and cannot be resisted – encourages fear & defeatism, resulting in a paralysis of Christian life

The truth is rather different. The devil is real, a personification of evil. As a created being, he is of the same order as angels and humans i.e. subject ultimately to God.

Devil comes from diabolos = to slander, accuse falsely, defame (in secular usage at the time of Christ, the term was used of a backbiter)

He is the enemy of God and God's people, and the cause of all evil in the world. He is also known as

- Satan (accuser)
- Lucifer
- the Serpent
- that Ancient Dragon
- the tempter
- the Father of lies

He has his own servants, called devils or demons, who are other 'fallen' angels.

ORIGINS & IDENTITY

Satan was originally an angel, probably the chief angel in God's original creation order. But he fell victim to pride, and tried to seize God's place for himself (which explains his temptation of Adam & Eve: *you will be God's equals* ...). He was therefore banished to earth and the realms of the dead (Isaiah 14:12-15). He is therefore the 'original sinner' (1 John 3:8). He is identified as the enemy of God, appearing as a serpent to ruin God's human creation (Genesis 3). The earth is his domain (Isaiah 14:12, Job 1:7, John 16:11), and, strange as it may seem, he has access to God's presence, along with the angels (Job 1:6). In Luke 4, he offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world. How come? Given the keys in the garden ... Jesus came to seek and save what was lost ... not just souls ...

CHARACTERISTICS AND ACTIVITY

1. he wars against God and the angels (Jude 9, Revelation 12:7)
2. he is the enemy of God's people (1 Chronicles 21:1; Luke 22:31)
 - he sows tares among the wheat (Matthew 13:39)
 - he removes the seed of God's word if he can (Luke 8:12)
 - he prowls around looking for victims (1 Peter 5:8)
 - he stands ready to accuse God's chosen (Zechariah 3:1)
 - he prompts evil action (John 13:2, Revelation 2:10)
3. he is the tempter (Genesis 3; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:2-13; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:5)
4. he is cunning and clever (Genesis 3:1; 2 Corinthians 2:11)
5. he is 'the Father of Lies' (John 8:44)

6. he holds the power of death (Hebrews 2:14)
7. he masquerades as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14)
8. he is able to produce 'signs and wonders' (2 Thessalonians 2:9)
9. he has power & therefore has human followers & is able to tempt and prompt us to do his will, but this power is limited, and we have to allow him to exercise it (or not, of course) (Luke 22:3; John 8:44; Acts 5:3; 10:38; 13:10; 26:18; 1 Timothy 5:15; James 3:15; 1 John 3:10)

DEMONS, DEVILS, EVIL OR 'UNCLEAN' SPIRITS

1. The Bible has no doubt that they exist
 - regular instances in the gospels & Acts (Luke 4:33; 11:24, 13:11; Acts 16:16; 19:15; 23:9); also in rest of NT (Romans 8:38; Revelation 18:2)
2. They also war against God and his forces - Daniel 10, John 8:44, Revelation 12:7
3. They know the truth about God - Mark 5:7; 9:20; James 2:19
4. They cause evil
 - occult barbarities (Psalm 106:37)
 - their weapon is fear (Job 4:15)
 - they teach falsehood (1 Timothy 4:1)
 - they can cause physical suffering (Luke 13:11)
 - they will inspire the antichrist (1 John 4:3)
5. They also perform false 'wonders' - Revelation 16:14
6. They may be, in cases, institutionalised - Zechariah 13:2; Revelation 2:9, 13; 3:9; 18:2

SO WHAT'S THE GOOD NEWS?

1. God is in ultimate control & even sometimes uses them - Judges 9:23; 1 Samuel 16:14ff; 18:10; 19:9; Job; Luke 22:31 (devil asks permission); 2 Corinthians 12:7
2. They are under sentence of destruction – Matthew 25:41; 1 Timothy 3:6; Revelation 20:2,10
3. The devil can be resisted (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9)

AND WHAT'S OUR RESPONSE?

1. Don't get involved in anything remotely to do with spiritualism etc. – Leviticus 20:27; 1 Samuel 28:8ff. This includes ouija, seances, horoscopes, hypnosis, fortune telling, tarot ...
2. Exercise the gift of discernment & bible knowledge – 1 Corinthians 12:10; 1 John 4:1
3. The devil only has real power if we allow him. So be on your guard
4. 'Don't give the devil a foothold' (Ephesians 4:27) – avoid sin
5. same test as for false prophets (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:14-22)
6. Use scripture to defeat the devil's wiles (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13)
7. Daily put on the armour of God 'so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes' (Ephesians 6:11)
8. Read 'The Screwtape Letters' by C.S. Lewis at least once a year. (The sequel, 'Screwtape proposes a toast', is also good value).

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 1 John 3:8