

Don't Give Demons Too Much Credit

by Shane Idleman

Don't give demons too much credit, and remember that Satan is the ruler of this world, opposing and trying to destroy every work of God.

Duration: 46:12

Scripture: Genesis 6:1-4, Isaiah 14:12-15, Matthew 28:18, Luke 10:19, Romans 8:37, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Ephesians 6:12, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8, 1 John 4:4

Topics: "Authority in Christ", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of not giving demons too much credit, explaining that they are evil angels who have sinned against God and are limited by His authority. He discusses the origin of demons, their influence in the world, and the misconception that they possess equal power to God. Idleman encourages believers to focus on the gospel and the authority given to them through Christ, rather than being distracted by demonic activity. He reminds the congregation that while demons can influence, they do not have ownership over believers, and ultimately, God is in control.

Transcript

The message this morning is don't give demons too much credit. Don't give demons too much credit. And I was looking at many resources, Wayne Grudem stood out to me, so I said, you know what, I need to pass this out so you can see the outline that I'm going through.

This might help answer a lot of questions. I don't agree with everything in here, but most of it is very solid. And if you're listening online, you can simply search the internet for the Doctrine of Satan and Demons by Wayne Grudem, and the outline is there.

And some of these, I'm going to bring in my own additions to this as I'm going forward. So, let's start at the most important question. What in the world are demons? Well, demons are evil angels who have sinned against God and who are now continually working evil in the world.

And it's been throughout church history, even now, people mock this topic, don't they? Oh, demons, you guys have lost your cuckoo, cuckoo. Right, mm-mm, I'm not going there. Well, we know that there's evil, right? We know that there's good.

And we believe if there's a God, there's someone who opposes him in the spiritual realm. We live in the physical, but we understand that there is a spiritual. And the battle takes place in the spiritual realm,

especially if you take the Bible literally.

It talks about the weapons of our warfare are not AR-15s. They're the word of God, they're worship. That's how we pull down strongholds.

So that's what demons are. They are evil angels who have sinned against God and who now continually work evil in the world. Now, there are a couple different views.

Some people believe that Satan and the demonic realm were not created initially as good and they chose evil. Some believe that God actually created them evil to fulfill his purposes. And that would be a whole sermon on its own, but there are some theological challenges with that, with God being good and not the author of evil and different things.

But suffice it to say, what the majority of Christians believe is that they are evil angels, they were good angels, and these angels sinned against God and became evil. And I can't understand it, but that's what happened. So I'm going to talk about just a few different areas.

Number one, I'll letter this. Number A. Letter A. It's going to be a hard one this morning, right? Letter A, the origin of demons. The origin of demons.

And this is called demonology. What I'm talking about this morning. Demonology, it's a study of demons.

The reason I titled the sermon Don't Give Demons Too Much Credit is for exactly that reason. Don't give them too much credit. There's a lot of people who spend way too much time on demonology and wonder if there's demons here, and demons in that room, and people come in with demons.

And it's all about demons. Where we see in the gospel, it's all about Jesus, and Jesus preaching, Jesus proclaiming the good news, and oh, by the way, a demon cast out and back on track. You know, it wasn't this side conversation, and they took a lot of the time away from the apostles.

And I was reading the story, many of you know in Acts where Paul's preaching the gospel, and this woman keeps coming up. Oh, you are the servant of the most high God. And he's like, leave me alone.

We're preaching the gospel. You are the servant. And Paul finally said, you know what, enough of you.

Satan, come out of her. And he came out, and she made her masters no more money. And so they got upset at Paul.

And so we see them, the gospel being the primary focus, not the demonic realm. So under this topic of origin of demons, number one, between the events of Genesis 1, 31, chapter one, 31, and chapter three, a rebellion in the angelic world must have taken place. The reason people say that is because the language of, and I won't have time, that's why I left you the notes.

If you read Isaiah 14, it talks about, oh, you have fallen from heaven, oh, Lucifer. And he said he will be like the most high God. But the context there also represents that of an earthly king.

So you can read that chapter in Isaiah, and it portrays an earthly king. But there are overreaching principles in it as well where they could speak to Satan, Lucifer falling from heaven, causing so much trouble. And again, that's where people are a little bit divided.

Some would say that Isaiah 14 doesn't apply to Satan. And if it doesn't, then the hard part is we really don't know when he was conceived. What transpired? Did he transgress? Was he created evil? There's not a lot of scriptures talking about it.

But the majority of theologians believe that between Genesis 1 and Genesis 3, a rebellion in the angelic world must have taken place. Satan fell from heaven. That's where some of the angels went with him.

These fallen angels went with him. And that's why we have evil now working in the world. And then number two, angels are non-material and do not marry.

Correct? Jesus said they do not marry. They're not given into marriage. And they're spiritual.

They're not physical unless they reveal themselves. And that's a whole other topic on angels and different things. But angels are non-material and do not marry.

This casts doubt on the idea that the sons of God equal angels who married human wives. Now, many of you are going, what in the world is he talking about? Well, I'm glad you asked because have you heard of the Nephilim? No? Okay, some of you have, some of you haven't. Let me just read where this comes from.

And to sum it up, there's a belief that angels actually had children through women out of Genesis 6. And it's a controversial text. It's interesting. So that's what Wayne Grudem's talking about here.

He's saying because angels are non-material and they do not marry, it couldn't have been angels. It must have been the line of Seth, godly lineage that this passage is talking about. So I'm going to read it.

I think we actually can put it up on the screen because it is interesting. It gets a lot of feedback from people and a lot of debate. I don't know if we have Genesis 6 up there.

We might not, but I'll just read it. Listen to this. Oh, there we go.

Now, it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, so God created men and women, and the daughters were born to them that the sons of God, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men, that they were beautiful and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. So see, that's the question. Is the sons of God angels? Or are they men, people? It's just the line of Seth.

And that's really where the debate comes in. And then it says, And the Lord said, My spirit shall not strive with man forever. This is why he flooded the earth.

For he is indeed flesh, yet his days shall be 120 years, whether 120 years of Noah preaching or 120 years of our lifespan. It can be applied either way. There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward when the sons of God, see, so the sons of God came into the daughters of men and they bore children to them, and they were giants.

So if you take this literally, that's interesting nonetheless. Right? We look at T-Rex bones and we're like, what would we do? Well, if you're 12 foot tall, that wouldn't be as big of an issue, would it? Just take a spear right through that T-Rex and their arms are like this, so they probably can't fight very well. But again, I'm not getting off into crazy land here.

It's an interesting topic that giants were born. They believe that Goliath was part of this group of people. I think he was nine foot tall, somewhere in there.

So this is where it gets interesting. Did angels impregnate women? And here's where we see these giants walking on the earth and that men became depraved. So that's the real question.

Sons of God. Are they men or angels? Now that word, sons of God, banai ha-elohim. And it's actually, that's what it means, banai ha-elohim, the sons of God.

Now, if you look in Job, one, it's interesting because the Bible says the sons of God came and presented themselves before the Lord in heaven. Satan came and said, God said, have you considered my servant Job? So the sons of God came before God, which included Satan. So in that context, you could see that sons of God could be the angelic realm.

If the context and the wording there is the same. So as not to get too confusing, let's just say there's two different camps. Either the sons of God or the lineage of Seth, the godly line of Seth.

And one problem I kind of have with that is because Seth was a sinner. It wasn't a godly line here and an evil line here. Man was sinful, all of them sinful.

And I don't, in case you're wondering, I don't have a strong opinion on this because when great men of God are divided, who am I to take a strong stance and say, yep, this is exactly what it says. But based on what I read and everything I just taught, the sons of God in the Hebrew, the context, looking at other scriptures and where it comes in. Giants were in the land.

Something happened there that was dramatically different than what we see now. I can see the possibility of that being one of the answers to this. That the angelic realm somehow impregnated women if that is what happened.

Verse five, Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent and thought of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth and he was grieved in his heart. So the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man, beast, creeping thing, birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Now on this topic, let me read what Chuck Missler wrote. The strange events recorded in Genesis 6 were understood by the ancient rabbinical sources as well as the Septuagint translators as referring to fallen angels procreating weird hybrid offspring with human women known as the Nephilim.

So it was also understood by the early church fathers. These bizarre events are also echoed in the legends and myths of every ancient culture upon the earth. It is the offspring of these peculiar unions of Genesis 6-4 which seems to be cited as the primary cause for the flood.

Now that's a little longer than I wanted to stay camped out there but it gives you an idea of what people, some of the debates out there of angels, can they manifest themselves and become physical and different things. But we don't know. We do know though that Jesus said they do not marry and they don't give into marriage.

So on this point, here's the application. Don't give demons too much credit. They still need God's permission.

They still need God's permission to do anything. Like Satan, like this little kid coming to God or coming to your father. You know, can I go harass Job? It's up to God.

God said, have you considered my servant Job? He's righteous. You have permission to do this to him but not to do that to him. You can do this but not that.

So see, that's where I really want to get this point across because some people believe, they feel that God and Satan are equal opposing forces going at each other. And that's really not the case. God owns you, not the devil.

So the devil just tries to influence you. Right? Come on. Come on.

Influence. But there's no ownership there. And usually he works through the lust of our flesh.

Right? What's craving to the flesh. Back to what I said earlier. If I have a Snickers bar or a carrot, I'm enticing my five year old.

Come on. Come get this carrot. No way.

No way. You want the Snickers bar? They'd hop right up and grab it. Because there's an enticement there.

That's how the devil works. So, letter B. Satan as head of the demons. Satan is head of the demons.

I can't spend too much time here even though I'd like to. This is where the word Satan comes from. He is head of the demonic realm.

He's God's enemy. And in your handout, you can have all the different scripture references. Other names for Satan.

The devil. Diablo. Right? The serpent.

Beelzebub. Ruler of this world. The prince of the power of the air.

The evil one. That's his name. But what I want to take from this are a few things.

The world's mindset is controlled by the ruler of this world. So that's what you have to remember when it comes to the things of the world. When the Bible says, love not the world, nor the things that are in the world.

For all that's in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life, is not of God. So you think, I don't understand. He's not necessarily talking about material things.

He's talking about the world's mindset. For all that's in the world, the way the world thinks is not of God. And we see that, right? And everybody says, oh, look at the media.

It's twisted. prince of the air, the radio, the TV shows, everything. What's going on? The prince of the air.

The controller, the influencer of this world. That's why the Bible says, come out from among them and be separate. See, and as much as I would love a Christian nation, it's just, that's probably not going to happen because, and I'm not being negative, but the prince of the air controls all of the world.

So you can have Christians within a nation. You can have Christians within a community. But the overreaching mindset, the overreaching principle there, is that Satan controls all of that.

John Calvin tried to do that in Geneva, Switzerland. And you can read on that if you're interested. Satan has control of this dominion right now.

Ultimately though, under God's dominion. So keep this in mind. The dominating influences are often satanic.

So that's why we warn kids, hey be careful what you listen to. Let's not just warn adults. I mean kids, what about adults too? Be careful what you allow into your home.

Be careful what you allow on your iPad. Be careful what you watch. Because those influences are often satanic in nature.

And they influence you. They influence me. The more we watch, the more we allow that influence.

Because here's the thing, entertainment is really approval. When something entertains us, it means we approve of it. And that's why Paul said to the Philippians, he said, Finally brethren, whatever things are pure and honest and noble and upright, meditate on these things.

But when we meditate on sexual depravity, on darkness, on witchcraft, on all these things, and that's what's entertaining us, that's what's cool. Right? That's what's going to influence us. I was watching just briefly a documentary.

Some of the kids went on this rapper named Logic. And he had a kid come up on stage, 12, 13 year old kid, and he knew the song and he started letting him sing all these F words and all these songs. I guess the mom thought this was great.

But that's an example of the influence that's going to be happening, that happens in our culture. The prince of this air, the prince of the radio, the prince of the TV, the media, all these things. There's good things in there, don't get me wrong.

But as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. If you were to tell me, if I were to spend time with you for a week or maybe even a month, or vice versa, and I saw your schedule, I saw where you spent a lot of your time, your money, your resources, your mind, where it went on Facebook, on YouTube, on the media, it would reveal what and who you worship. It would reveal what influences you.

And that's why it's ironic, so many times Christians, and I'll have people say, they're Christians, say, but Shane, I just, man, worship music, it's kind of boring. You know, I like, and they'll name it, and I'm like, oh, you like that. Did you catch that? You like that.

See, it's a different spirit ministering to your spirit. The darkness likes the darkness. Boy, oh boy.

Stay there too long. Often you'll see that power plays, Satan is head of the demons, Beelzebub, the serpent, all these things, power plays are often demonic. Do you ever see power plays taking place? Struggles for power, right? I mean, all of our nations are power playing, to get that power that Satan wants you to go, and you get that power.

It's interesting, when I was in corporate America, right, and CEOs and different things, it's all about power. And position. You step on people to get what you need.

Now in ministry, it's the opposite. People step on you. And you just gotta surrender and humble yourself.

And it's not about climbing a ladder. It's not how high you can go. It's how low you can go.

And we see these two opposing world views. Man says, exalt yourself. Pride is an asset.

God says, no, humble yourself. Humility is the asset. So you have these opposing forces that are going back and forth.

Right and wrong. Truth and error. Good and evil.

Light and darkness. Because Satan is the ruler of this world. So just keep that in mind next time.

Why do you think a company spent a million dollars for 30 seconds during the Super Bowl? Or a minute during the Super Bowl? Millions of dollars on advertising. Millions. Why? Because of influence.

And that's what you're seeing. You see a lot of the tension in the nation right now, correct? Racial tension. All these tensions.

It's being fed and fostered by the enemy of darkness. By the world's influence. That's where these risings are coming from.

Media, racial, no respect for police and authority. Where's that coming from? It's the enemy trying to come in and cause division. And that's why as believers we need to be careful with what we post on Facebook.

Be careful. Do we encourage others? Do we build them up? Yes, we fight for what is right. But we also fight for reconciliation.

For love and unity. That's the heart of our message. So the enemy is going to try to stir all these pots.

And he's not going to win in the end, correct? Thank God. And then letter C, the activity of Satan and demons. Now I've spoke before on strongholds.

Demonic strongholds. So you can search our website for that message and how those work. But I'm not going to talk about this this morning.

I'm going to talk about the activity of Satan and demons. Number one, Satan was the originator of sin. He's the influencer of it.

Number two, demons oppose and they try to destroy every work of God. Did you know that? That's why I kind of pray to myself a lot. I don't want these guys knowing what I'm doing.

And they come in and they want to destroy God's work. And it's interesting. I've seen this so many times.

God will bring a wonderful person to the church, right? Wonderful. Fulfill the spirit of God and then the devil will bring somebody. Man.

What happened? Things are going great. And now we have chaos breaking out over in this area of ministry. What's going on here? It's these opposing views.

And forces. If you get a chance, listen to Wednesday's message we sent out in the bulletin. I talked about this.

Because the number one way I believe that demons oppose the work of God is through discouragement. And depression. Right? Discouraged.

Lack of motivation. Because when you're encouraged, just by the word encouraged, there's encouragement. You want to do things for God.

And I truly believe the number one weapon of the enemy is discouragement. If he can get, who knows how many, let's just say 40 million around America, let's say real Christians, right? Not just name. Let's say 10 million believers in America.

If I could just silence their voice. If I could just discourage them. If I could just make them be quiet.

So he comes in and he will discourage you. Oh, you're going to work on your marriage, huh? You're a failure. Your parents were a failure.

This isn't working. I'm trying to do everything I know to do and actually my marriage is getting worse. Discouragement.

And he brings that in. Like I said a few weeks ago, running alongside of the sovereignty of God is the devil trying to trip the runner. Sitting next to the architect is the devil with an eraser.

Standing next to the builder is the devil with a wrecking ball. That's what he does. You have tremendous encouragement.

But then he comes in with discouragement, right? He just wants to discourage the work. Yet demons are limited by God's control and have limited power. Praise God.

Demons are limited by God's control and have limited power. We read in Job, now this is interesting, that the devil could actually affect the weather. He brought weather and storm and a large wind that caved in the home of Job's kids.

He also brought, I believe it was raiders from south, east, west, north. We're not sure. I didn't reference it.

But they brought raiders in to kill and steal and take his wealth, Job's wealth. So does that mean Satan controlled these areas? No, he doesn't control them. But God can allow them to happen.

Now this is the greatest mystery. Because I wish a creation, it would have been a perfect creation. We're living in utopia now.

But for some reason, evil, we're not living in utopia, right? We're living in heaven and hell mixed together because the enemy is working to try to stop God's plans. Wayne Gruden put it here, we should not think that demons can know the future or read our minds. God alone can know the future.

And there's tons of references there for you. Now again, people believe, some people believe that the demonic realm can read our minds. I'm a proponent that I believe that they can plant thoughts into the mind.

Where do you think suicidal thoughts often come from? He's just planting thoughts. Why don't you end this? Why don't you make things easy on yourself? You'll never get back on track. And that's where one reason I help people and try to, and we have to be very careful these days with all the medications that are prescribed.

Because they actually change your mental mindset. And you can research this. Don't take my word for it, but a lot of the mass shootings, these shooters, they're on certain types of antidepressants.

And you can read the warning labels on these. It's about this long. So you're taking antidepressants for depressants.

One of the side effects is suicidal thoughts. The actual side effect of what you're taking. And because you open that realm up, pharmakia, or we go to the word pharmacy.

In the Bible, it really means witchcraft and sorcery. And I'm not saying some, you know, I'm truly, I believe that some things are good. God allows us to be able to take some things.

If somebody needs a balance or serotonin levels or chemical imbalances, and you're careful with this. But now physicians prescribe them like candy. And why is depression increasing? Why is suicide increasing? Be careful.

Look at all these different areas. Demons can observe what goes on in the world and probably draw conclusions from observations. Number four.

Number four under letter C. There have been differing stages of demonic activity in the history of redemption. This is important. There have been differing stages of demonic activity in the history of redemption.

In the Old Testament, there's no clear instance of casting out demons. Is that interesting? In all of the Old Testament, written over probably 1,500 year period, there's no casting out of demons in the Old Testament. There's a lot of demonic activity, witchcraft and different things.

But then you get to the ministry of Jesus. One big aspect of his ministry was actually casting out demons. So see, Jesus didn't come to the earth.

Now you've got Jesus and the demons. Now they're going to battle it out. No, no, no.

Jesus comes on over them and over their authority. The demons even beg. We know who you are.

You're the Son of the Most High God. Don't cast us to the abyss just yet. Don't cast us to the plate of outer darkness just yet.

Please, Jesus, have mercy on us. The demons are saying, have mercy on us. Throw us into the swine.

Throw us into the pig. Jesus said, you have permission. And they start to argue with him.

Jesus says, basically, shut up. Out of that man. And there's no power struggle.

Jesus isn't going like Star Wars. There's power struggle. My power is greater.

Whose power is greater? He just says it. He just says it. And the demons have to leave.

You are the Son of the Most High God. What surprised me most, and I read this passage often, is Jesus actually, I would love to hear this sermon he preached in the temple. You've got just dead, boring church.

They're reading the scrolls. They're reading the word of God. But if you're not reading it by rabbis filled with the Spirit of God, it will be dead.

It will fall on deaf ears. And I remember a story. It was about the revival 60, 70 years ago in some of the islands off of Scotland.

And Duncan Campbell related this story. He said he had a dream one night. And he dreamed that somebody was preaching God's word.

And he walked closer and closer. As he finally got close enough, he realized it was the devil. And he sat there and he listened for a little while.

And he came up to the devil afterwards. And he said, Why are you preaching God's word? And he said, Oh, Duncan, don't you understand that the greatest weapon I have is the preaching of God's word without the Spirit of God. Churches right down the street, different areas, they have this sitting around.

But it's void of the Spirit of God. Anybody say, You know, I read this. It's just boring.

It's dead. I don't get anything from it. I'd rather just go get a root canal.

Why is that? It's dead. Because you're dead inside. But then when you believe in the same Holy Spirit that authored this book is now residing in you, now it speaks to you.

Not in some weird language, but it speaks to you. I understand that. I see that now.

I understand that. So back to what I was saying. Jesus goes into the temple.

He grabs a scroll. He's reading from Isaiah. And he says, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.

Upon me. Epi, E-P-I. It's a preposition meaning overwhelming upon.

The Holy Spirit comes upon a person. Jesus said, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. And he has sent me to loose those who are captive, to set those free who are in bondage, to open the eyes of the blind.

And in this setting, in these temples, when he's preaching, a man cries out, We know who you are, Son of God. See, when true biblical preaching infused by the Spirit of God will upset the demonic realm, people say, I've got to get out of here. I can't handle this anymore.

I can't handle the worship. I don't want to hear this message. Because it's piercing.

It's dividing. The Spirit of God is working in the hearts of people. It has to be, the Spirit of God is moving.

And the demonic realm hates it. And they cry out, Leave us alone. You ever talk to people, Leave me alone.

I don't want to talk about that. This, this, this, I just gotta, I gotta vent for a minute. Okay? I would love to talk to, say, atheists, or agnostics, or unbelievers, or the church down the street, or different.

But as soon as I want to talk about the Bible, nobody wants to talk about it. No, I don't want to talk about that. Well, hold on.

If you have the truth, and I'm an heir, wouldn't you want to talk about it? Don't talk about it. Get that away from me. Don't talk about that in my house.

Well, let's see. No, I don't want to hear what the Bible says. What do you mean? Because the truth of the Bible, literally God's Word, being infused by the Holy Spirit of God, that's what they don't want to hear.

That's why they want to remove the Bible. Why are people so upset about the Bible, if it's fake? Can you imagine Disneyland trying to get into the school districts, and saying, hey, we want to teach you about fairies, and wizards, and all these things, and the school, nobody's, oh, of course, big deal. But when you say, hey, we want to, we'd like to get the Bible into the, why? Because it's a spiritual battle.

The weapons of your warfare are not physical. They're spiritual. And that's why I truly mean, you need to start your day in worship.

And in the Word of God, that's how you go to battle. What's that song? When I'm surrounded, I'm surrounded by Him. You ever say that? I'm surrounded.

I can't go on. But then I realize, wait a minute, I'm surrounded by Him. And like Elisha, we need to cry, Lord, open their eyes, so they can see the armies of angels encamped around them.

That's your victory. That's your strength. Stop giving.

Stop giving the demons too much credit. Stop giving them too much credit. I see people run around their house, the demons are after me, the demons are after my children.

Yeah, they are. Yeah, but not, they don't have to win. You stand, and you guard them.

God just says, I'm looking for a man or a woman to stand in the gap and intercede and pray. It just breaks my heart because I see so many parents struggling, and we all struggle as parents, don't we? But I say, you've got to pray. Take time and pray for them fast.

Oh, I can't do that. I'm hypoglycemic and I'm busy. I thought I was hypoglycemic too until I realized I was addicted to sugar.

That was the problem. But see, we have all these excuses. We're blaming the devil for things.

The devil's after my finances. No, you're a terrible spender. The devil's after me in this area.

No, stop going to Carl's Jr. and McDonald's. Stop. No, the devil's after my marriage.

No, you're being mean to your spouse. Those F-bombs you drop are not the devil. He doesn't make you do it.

Boy, oh boy. So what we see here with Jesus is two kingdoms clash. Two kingdoms clash.

We sing that song on the day that death surrendered to the mighty cross of Jesus Christ. See, it's more than just the cross and sin. You have to understand that death, hell, death, and the grave actually surrendered to Christ.

They had to surrender under the mighty weight of that cross. It was a turning point in history. And I truly believe that's tied to the famous verse that a lot of people aren't familiar with or they don't understand where it says, the kingdom suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.

Their spiritual upheaval occurred on that day. Because you have people in the Old Testament now you have, as a believer, you have the spiritual authority. If you're talking to someone, you know they're filled with Satan.

I mean, you can see it in their eyes. You don't have to cower back. Like, oh, okay, okay.

You actually have authority over them. Satan, you can't do anything to me. Greater is he that's in me than he that's in you.

And you have that position of authority. Yes, there's fear sometimes or you're worried. But you have that spiritual authority within you as a believer.

So it does beg the question right now, what is your relationship with God? What is your relationship with Jesus Christ? Do you truly know him? Do you truly have that relationship? Because my concern is a lot of people, especially in America, a lot of people know about Jesus but they don't know him. It was interesting. Some people tried to cast out a demon in the New Testament and the demon went crazy and drove, I think it was seven men, seven men of Ziva, drove them out of the house.

Seven people tried to cast out a demon. They ran out of that house naked. This guy's crazy.

But they should have known early on, right before it happened, they said, Jesus we know and Paul we know, but who are you? Because they said, we cast out the devil in the name of Jesus by whom Paul preaches. There's too many people in our churches who were raised in Christian homes who know about Jesus but have never experienced his saving power. They need to repent and they need to believe.

That's all you need to do this morning. You need to repent and say, I'm a sinner. Hey, I'll join you.

I'm a sinner. Without Christ, I am lost. And that's why people get a little bit excited during worship.

Because they went from the children of darkness to children of light. They saw the darkness. They saw, I was on my way to hell, I'll tell you right now.

And then they see now they're on their way to heaven. You experience God. I believe that's what sets Christianity apart from all other religions on the planet because it's not a religion.

Religion is man trying to reach up to God. Relationship is God reaching down to man. And in this relationship, when you are born again, you're actually changed from the inside out.

There's a passion about you. People will die because of Christ. They're being slaughtered across the globe because of Christ.

They're not denying it because God has radically changed their life. In other religions, there's a disconnect. They're always trying to do good works.

But there's never a passionate relationship. So that's my encouragement even to kids this morning. If you don't know Jesus, if you only know about him, all you have to do is repent and say, I need him.

I need that saving power. I need that saving grace in my life. And then also we see in the new covenant, authority over the demonic powers were given to the 12 disciples and also to us.

And again, do not give them too much credit. They have already been defeated. They have already been defeated.

This I have to remind myself often. God lives outside of time. Do you know that? God's not going like this.

He lives outside of time. Hell, death, sin, and the grave have already been conquered. The shed blood of Jesus Christ was ordained from the foundation of the earth.

God has already dictated how the story ends. The devil's already gonna lose. You can't change it.

You can take that to Vegas. Bet everything. No, actually don't because that's not good.

But if... Don't even go to that. I'm gonna get in trouble. So I'm gonna stop.

But they've already been defeated. Satan has already been defeated. So you're fighting a battle with somebody who in the end is already going to be defeated.

And you fight him through life. Yes, he might get some right hooks in. Right hooks.

He might trip you up. You might fall. You might feel discouraged.

But in the end, we know who's going to obtain the victory if we hold fast. That's why I've talked about before. Having done all, stand.

That's all you need to do. Stand. Stand.

Stand. Discouragement will come. Stand.

That's the hardest. Had I never known this was going to happen to me, I would have not taken this position. I would have just kept... Because all this encouragement... You should see the letters that come in.

Now I'm on this watch, on this conservative watch, and I'm this kind of person and negative, negative discouragement. You'll never do this. And discouragement comes in.

Encouragement comes in. Discouragement. Encouragement.

The enemy's trying to sidetrack. That's why you say, you know what? Come hell or high water, that's where I'm going. I know what God has told me.

We're open to constructive criticism. But at the end of the day, we just keep walking. Just like Jesus on the road to Calvary.

Can you imagine the song we sing? He just held that position because of the sin of the world. He was holding the cross, being spit upon, kicked, ridiculed, and He just kept walking to Calvary, to Golgotha. He went to the place of the skull.

He just stood there. He let them beat Him some more. And He was nailed to the cross.

And He just hung there because He saw the end result. He wasn't chained. Can you imagine? Can you imagine being swayed? Being swayed by how you're going to... I mean, that's why the Bible says He literally wept tears of blood in the garden knowing where He was going.

And to go through all that. I mean, if I was Jesus, as soon as that first guy hit me... Okay. You're a frog.

And angels... 10,000 legions of angels. Come on, let's take care of this. But see, He kept the end result.

That's why you've got to keep the end result in mind. That's why you keep praying for your children because you see the end result. That's why you keep contending for your marriage because you see the end result.

That's why I have to keep preaching until I can no longer do it because I see the end result. Yes, with every victory, with every wonderful service, there is demonic realm working against us as well. For every person that says, Thank you, that encouraged me.

You get another one that says, Well, that was incorrect theologically in this point of persuasion based on Calvin's theoretical position on the doctrine of man. Oh, well, I didn't see that. Thank you.

And to come and discourage. So close with this. Letter D. Our relationship to demons.

Demons are active in the world today and not all evil and sin is from Satan and demons, but some of it is. Occasionally, Jesus or Paul would cast out a demonic spirit that was causing significant hindrance to proclaiming the gospel, but that is not usually the pattern of ministry. It's what I said earlier.

The emphasis was simply on preaching the gospel. That's the emphasis. Preaching the gospel.

And the demonic realm will try to distract. I remember I was at an event. I was preaching.

I was outside. And this lady's just on the side over here. There's a prayer team over there and they're trying to help her and she's definitely demonically possessed.

So just say, Okay, we'll pray for you. Thank you. Now back on track with what the message is.

You're not going to distract. You're not going to upset what God is doing. That's what they try to do.

So always remember that. It's always about the gospel. People like signs and wonders.

Don't look for signs and wonders. Look for the gift giver. Don't always look for gifts and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Look for the gift giver. You follow Him and see what happens. He's the one that will bring miracles.

He's the one that will change things if you follow Him and Him alone. So let me end again with this point. Don't give the demons too much credit.

They are never the emphasis. They are never the emphasis. Like I said earlier, many people feel they're surrounded.

They can't go on. But then like the song says, I'm surrounded by you. It may look... Can you ever feel this way? I can't go on.

I can't go on. I'm surrounded on every side. I'm hard pressed on every side like Paul.

I'm hard... You ever hit those walls everywhere you go? I'm hard pressed, but Paul says I'm not crushed. I'm perplexed. I'm perplexed, but I'm not forsaken.

God will never leave you. The Bible says I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you.

And we allow discouragement to come in and sidetrack us from what God is doing. Because I've learned that the tighter you hold on, the closer you stay to the shepherd, the better you'll be. Have you ever thought about that? That little sheep that he went after, he wandered from the shepherd.

So if this represents the shepherd, here's where I'm staying. Right here. You got me? Come on.

Take care of him. But what we do... See, it's not that bad. Hey Neil, it's pretty good over here.

And we just, you know... The camera guy's going to hate me for this, but... Oh Luke, you're there. And we're just... And then look what happens. Right? But there he is.

What happened? Shepherd, what happened? You strayed from the shepherd. You want to be easy target for the enemy? Stray from the shepherd. But if you want to be close to the shepherd, come back and run.

Here's what the approach should be. You can't take me. He's got me.

He's got me. There's no greater power and greater authority. Okay, it's going to be time to go to the second service in a minute.

So let's just pray. And the worship team's going to come up. But I'm deadly serious about that.

That's where we get in trouble. Is it not? Right? Because here's that voice, Shane. Remember your old lifestyle? Remember Mickey's big mouth? Smoke some weed, buy an eight ball? Don't you remember that? Going back to that? See, it calls.

It calls you back away from the shepherd. Well, it's okay. This isn't bad.

And then before we know it, we're in the enemy's hands. We wonder what happened. Stay close to the shepherd.

And I love that picture. It can never get old. You ever see those footprints on the beach? Lord, where were you? Where were you? It's just my footprints walking in the sand.

Where were you? I needed you all those times. And Jesus says, those are my footprints because I'm carrying you. That's the truth of the matter.

So look to him. You don't have to fear anything, even death. Death does not have its sting that it should.

Because all a person is saying is, I'm going to kill you. Well, I'm going to be with him quicker. I mean, that's the mindset.

We don't desire that. But we shouldn't live in fear because that's another tactic of the enemy. Discouragement and fear.

Discouragement and fear. He'll use both of those against you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/31/SID31958.mp3>
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