

Freedom is not free; the price has been paid in blood!

April 2, 2017 – Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins

Last week, I gave an overview of the book of Esther and the plot by Haman, a descendent of King Agag who hated the Jewish people during the reign of King Saul. We are entering the Easter season and I want to continue with a theme appropriate for the upcoming celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Many people have asked me why God placed the tree of good and evil in the midst of the garden where Satan could use it to tempt the first children of God. Why did he create a tree that would cause sin to enter the world if a person ate of it? The Utopia that humanity would have enjoyed forever was destroyed by Satan deceiving Eve and enticing her to eat of a tree that God had forbidden his first children to partake of.

The answer is God's value he places on freedom. The Bible is filled with examples of free will and personal responsibility. God didn't create man to be a puppet with no recourse, but he created him in his own image with the ability to make choices, to be creative, to be a thinker and to have fellowship with his creator where love would be reciprocated between man and God. God desires worship from his creation and man is commanded to love God with all his heart, with all his soul and all his might. Mark 12:30. This has to come from the heart and a willing choice in order to please God.

God and his enemy Satan, the rebellious angel, have two separate goals. God desires to give those who love and serve him eternal life and rewards that cannot be comprehended with the human mind. His blessings are multiplied on his creation. Satan's agenda is to destroy God's creation especially mankind because we are God's masterpiece. Satan planned on using Eve to broaden his revolt against God, but since God is all powerful and all-knowing, when he cursed the serpent he put enmity between the woman's seed and the serpent's seed thus thwarting Satan's plans. Genesis 3:15

Satan promises are nothing more than lies veiled in a skin of truth. He promised Eve that she would be just like God knowing good and evil so her knowledge would be broadened. He planted the seed in her mind that God was withholding something from her that would be beneficial to her. Adam and Eve's knowledge was all goodness, loving care, happiness, peace and harmony. They knew nothing about lies, discord, fear, sorrow, pain, death, and heartache, or even hard labor. Satan placed doubt of God's wisdom in Eve's mind and she accepted not realizing the scope that her disobedience would encompass. Disobeying God's commandment brought them in contact with evil and brought curse and death to the world. Adam also lost his position and Satan stole it and made himself god of this world. He is a master deceiver but he at one time was God's masterpiece among the angels of God in heaven. There he convinced a third of the angels in heaven to follow him in rebelling against God's throne so he could overthrow it. Revelation 12:4 they were cast out of heaven. Satan was an angel of light called Lucifer, son of the morning.

Look at Isaiah 14:12-17.

The NIV version reads like this: “O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!” There are five “I wills” that tell us what Lucifer’s goals were as he prepared his army of angels to go to battle.

“I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God. I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

In Ezekiel 28:11 there is a description of Satan before his rebellion against God.

“You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God, every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings (tumbrels) and mountings (flutes) were made of gold on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.”

We are given choices and the Bible says that we cannot serve both God and money. Matthew 6:24. We have the freedom to choose which path we will take in life and that choice will determine our eternal destiny. Matthew 7:7-13. Jesus tells us to ask, seek and knock. Those that do will find him. He tells us to choose the narrow gate that leads to life. In Matthew 19:16, a rich man came to Jesus and asked him what good thing he needed to do to enter into the kingdom of God, Jesus answered him, “Keep the commandments.” He asked “Which ones?” Jesus answered, “Do not murder, Be faithful in marriage, Do not steal, Do not tell lies about others, Respect your parents, and Love others as much as you love yourself.” The man replied that he had kept all of these. Jesus then told him that if he wanted to be perfect, go sell all that he had, give the money to the poor and he would have riches in heaven. Jesus told him “follow me.” When the young man heard this, he walked away sad because he was very wealthy. He made his choice.

Moses, God’s chosen man, who led God’s people out of bondage from slavery from Egypt, warned the people over and over again to choose life! “Choose the God of your forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” He warned them concerning the consequences of rebelling against the commandments of the Lord and choosing to serve the idols of the heathen. They would lose their freedom and they would become slaves and bondservants to foreigners who would rule over them if they chose to follow and worship false gods and the lifestyles of God’s enemies.

If you read Joshua 24, Joshua declared the history of the Jewish people and why they found themselves in slavery to heathen nations. It was always directly linked to the worship of false gods and forsaking their Creator. Even though they had disobeyed God, God delivered them when they cried out to him for deliverance. Joshua spoke about the outcome of rebelling against God. He told them to choose who they would serve for themselves, but for him and his house, they would serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15.

The prophet Elijah, in 1 Kings 18, confronted King Ahab whose wicked wife, Queen Jezebel led the children of Israel into Baal worship. God had withheld rain for three years as a punishment for his people following the heathen worship of Baal.

God sent Elijah to prove to the people that Baal was a false god and that Jehovah was the only true God by answering Elijah's prayer and sending fire from heaven to burn the sacrifice, the altar and licking up the water in the trenches. In verse 20, Elijah asked the people, "How much longer will you try to have things both ways? If the LORD is God, worship him! But if Baal is God worship him." He allowed the prophets of Baal to go first and set up their altar to Baal to see if their plea would be answered. All day long they cried, but Baal didn't answer. 1 Kings 18:39. When the people saw how God answered Elijah's simple prayer and fire came down from heaven and there was nothing left of the sacrifice, the altar or the water, they cried out, "The Lord is God! The Lord is God!"

The Bible is God's Word and through the reading of the Word, faith comes. That is why Satan tries to discredit the Bible in every way that he can so people will be blinded from the truth. False religions discourage people from reading God's word. They desire to teach their false doctrines taking freedom away from people to make their own decisions to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong or to study for themselves in order to find the truth of God's Word for themselves.'

A year ago this month, the Wycliffe Association announced they were launching ten new Bible translations in regions that have no Bibles available to them in their native languages. Four of their translators were murdered in a raid of their office in the Middle East and their works were burned and destroyed, but the project is still moving forward not because it is safe, but because it is the right thing to do and it is God's will for his word to go to the ends of the earth. The translation is cheaper and faster, but not safer. Satan tries to control with fear and is determined to stop the work of God. Freedom always has a price tag on it. William Tyndale was born in 1494 and was a leading figure in Protestant reform. He was well known for translating the Bible into English. The authorities lost their control over the people's minds as they were now able to read the Bible and choose for themselves how they should live and they were no longer bound by ignorance. The opposition was fierce and many were beaten in public squares, tortured and killed if they were found to have a Bible in their possession. Tyndale was tried for heresy and executed in 1536.

King James authorized a translation of the Bible known as the King James Bible and this English version proved to be a source of strength for those who didn't want to give authority over to a church hierarchy any longer. The founders of America were influenced by the Bible towards "individual freedom and equality of men." They felt it was important that people have the freedom to follow their own destiny by an authority they believed to be divine rather than have government aristocrats make the choice for

them. The Bible is a precious book, inspired and protected by God who is the author and warns against anyone adding or taking away from the words of the book.

See Revelation 22:18. The book of Revelation is the only book that specifically promises a blessing to the reader. In Revelation 1:3, it says this: “God will bless everyone who reads this prophecy to others, and he will bless everyone who hears and obeys it. The time is almost here.”

There is a movement to take over America by those who are false teachers and follow false prophets. There may come a day in the future when the Bible will be banned from our society. There are many universities and schools that are teaching false religion to our youth and those who object and stand for the word of God are being persecuted by professors who give failing grades and suspend students from the school. We live in a day where Satan has heightened his war against the truth of Jesus Christ and the Word of God. We don't know when Jesus Christ will return to this earth, but he calls us to be faithful, be diligent and to study God's word that we might not be ashamed and that we may be able to teach the true message to others. Read 2 Timothy 2:15.

False teachers and false prophets will be thrown into the fire of hell along with Satan and his angels. Death and its kingdom were thrown into the Lake of fire also and all people whose names are not written in the book of life. Read Revelation 19:19, 20:10, 20:14-15