

Beware! There are Traps set for you!

Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins - April 29, 2018

This morning I want to speak about the subject of riches and the clever schemes in which Satan snares a soul. No one is excluded from his list; he is on the alert to snag every soul that he can for as long as he can. Thus it is important for us to read God's word so we can recognize and adequately fight against his suggestions thus avoiding his traps. Ephesians 6:10 lets us know that we fight a spiritual battle; we need the Word of God in our hearts!

In Genesis chapters 1 and 2, you will find the character of Satan. His schemes remain unchanged and for those who refuse to allow the Holy Spirit to guide them and fail to read the Bible so they can understand his schemes and recognize his voice, they will fall under his spell. Many people don't believe in the power of Satan. They scoff at Jesus Christ, the great I AM of the Old Testament who came to this world to overcome Satan and to remove the curse of sin so that all who believe in Jesus Christ will be overcomers in this world and will be rewarded with everlasting life in the hereafter. It will seal their doom!

There are three things that Satan uses. He needs nothing else for these are adequate to destroy a soul. They are as follows: The lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. Throughout the Bible every instance of failure in a person's life was connected to one or more of these snares of Satan. Eve looked at the fruit, saw that it was good for food and desired to eat it so she would be as wise as God. Satan deceived her into thinking that she would enjoy life far more if she had knowledge of evil as well as goodness. Eve became discontent with being under God's care in a perfect environment and under his perfect grace and care for her. Satan appealed to her curiosity and desire to be as God.

Matthew 4:1-11 tells the details of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness after his baptism by John and revelation from heaven that Jesus is the Son of God and his Father in heaven is pleased with him. The Spirit led him into the wilderness to spend 40 days fasting and to be tested by Satan. Satan tempted Jesus with lust of the flesh by saying, "if you are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread." Jesus used the Scriptures to defeat Satan. Satan used the lust of the eye to tempt Jesus. He showed him all the kingdoms of the world and promised to give them all to Jesus if he bowed down and worshipped Satan. Again, the Scriptures were used to defeat Satan. The pride of life was last and Satan took him on the pinnacle of the temple and told Jesus that if he was the Son of God to jump and allow the angels of God to rescue him. This was to show his power. Jesus said "The Scriptures say you shall not tempt the Lord your God." Satan then left for a time.

Today I want to focus on the topic of greed. Look at 1 Timothy 6:10

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God flee these things: and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life whereunto you are called and have professed a good profession before many witnesses."

Greed is a sin that has afflicted our world from the beginning of time. It ruins and destroys families, relationships, and becomes a tool that Satan uses to deceive and destroy many people. Mark 4:19 tells us that it causes people to be unfruitful.

Jesus gives the key that will keep a person from falling into the trap of greed from Satan's suggestion. It is found in Matthew 6:33. It reads like this: "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you."

That was the admonition that Paul gave to young Timothy. Paul followed that path for himself. If you read the letters that Paul wrote, you will learn that he was a tent maker and he earned his own living with his occupation and labor. He wrote that he didn't seek anything from anyone for himself; he depended on the provisions that God gave to him to sustain him. See 1 Corinthians 9 and Acts 18:1-5.

In 1 Kings 21:15, a man named Naboth had inherited a vineyard adjacent to the palace of King Ahab. The king approached Naboth and asked for the parcel of land so he could make it into a vegetable garden because it is near and next to my house. "In exchange I will give you a better parcel of land or I will pay you what it is worth in money". But Naboth said, "The Lord forbid that I should give my inheritance from my father to you." So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because Naboth refused to give him the parcel of land that he had inherited from his father. Ahab lay on his bed and refused to eat his supper because he was upset that Naboth would not give up his land. His wicked wife, Jezebel, came in and asked him why he wasn't eating and what was troubling him. When he told his sad tale to her, she told him to get up and eat and be merry for he was in authority over Israel and she would get the property for him. She had a plan that worked for she had Naboth attend a celebration that was disguised as a time to honor Naboth, but evil men were set in place to accuse him of blaspheming God and the king and the people then took him out and stoned him to death. After the deed was done and word reached the queen that Naboth was killed, she told King Ahab to take possession of the land because Naboth was now dead. As soon as he heard the news, he arose and went to take possession of Naboth's land. The word of the Lord came to Elijah telling him to meet King Ahab in the midst of the vineyard that had belonged to Naboth. He was to ask, "Have you murdered and also taken possession? The LORD says that where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, so also they will lick up your blood in the same spot."

Ahab asked, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" Elijah answered that he had found him for he had chosen to do evil in the sight of the LORD. Elijah continued prophesying to Ahab the calamities that God was going to bring on him because of his evil ways. Also his wife Jezebel would be eaten by dogs by the walls of Jezreel. Because Ahab humbled himself before the LORD, some of the calamities took place after his death. God sees all and there is a price to pay for sins carried out against others due to greed.

Let's look at the story of the prodigal son. The first thing I notice is that the son doesn't want to be under the authority of his father, and doesn't want to work within the family to

benefit the family unit. Luke 15:11. He wanted everything to be handed to him without any effort on his part to increase the wealth of the family. He asked his father to give him the portion of his inheritance even while the father was still alive. Greed is destructive and it causes people to value riches above everything else. People are used for a greedy person's personal gain. Selfishness inhabits the hardened heart and a greedy person justifies his selfish ambitions to salve his conscience. This son, not considering the hard work that his father had labored for many years, took the money as if he somehow deserved it, put it in his pocket and headed down the pathway to debauchery and moral decay feeling like a million dollars. He had no thought about leaving his father and his older brother to continue earning their livelihood and working every day to finish chores that provided the family with wealth. He went to a far country and wasted his possessions with prodigal living. After he had spent all, a famine came to that country and he found himself in a very bad position. He had little work experience, he was a foreigner of that land, and he had not built a reputation of caring for his neighbors. His temporary friends had all left him when his money ran out. He ended up being hired to feed pigs for a farmer and he was reduced to eating pig food for no one gave him anything.

Verse 17 is very important and it reads like this: When he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father and tell him that I have sinned against heaven and against him and I am no longer worthy to be called his son. I will ask to be made like one of my father's hired servants."

He had a different view of home. His father not only did above and beyond what he was required to do for his sons, but he also was more than fair with his servants. He treated them with respect and gave them a fair share of the proceeds that came into the household. When the son returned, his father saw him even as he was still a distance from home. He ran to meet him, wrapped his arms around him and kissed him. He commanded that the best robe be brought and put on his son, sandals be put on his feet, and the family ring be put on his finger. The father celebrated by killing the fatted calf and inviting guests to a party to celebrate his son's return. His son had learned that wealth alone isn't enough to bring satisfaction to a soul. His father had his priorities right and his son returned because he knew the love and character of his loving father. The Father valued his son more than all he owned in land, money, servants and gold. He didn't consider his reputation or the shame that the boy had brought to the family. All he saw was that the one he loved had come home a different person than when he left. God is looking for those who have gone astray, but are willing to acknowledge their errors and have a desire to return to him. He will take the broken pieces of their lives, put them back together again and will make a vessel of honor for his glory. Believe and receive! The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When a person is Christ centered rather than self-centered, their love for God will cause them to care for their neighbors. The word of God says that God loves a cheerful giver. He blesses those who are willing to give of their time, talent, money and whatever God has blessed them with. We didn't bring anything into this world and we sure can't take anything out with us when we die. We are told to invest in heavenly treasures where moths and rust cannot destroy. See Matthew 6:19

I read a story of Corrie Ten Boone that really touched my heart. She was from a Dutch family that hid Jews from Hitler's soldiers during World War II. The family was caught and placed in prison camps and they were treated very poorly just as the Jews were. Her family all died there with the exception of herself. God spared her life and she became a messenger of God's love, mercy and forgiveness. However, while she was imprisoned, the food was very scarce and she had smuggled some vitamin drops into the prison to sustain her and her sister to prolong their lives. Other women around her pleaded with her to help them also. She was hesitant at first thinking that these drops wouldn't last very long but the hardship around her caused her to set that thought aside and to share what she had. The most amazing thing happened. She didn't run out of drops. Every day she would give them to those around her and every day there was enough to go around. God rescued her in an amazing way and she travelled the country preaching the gospel to the lost all the days of her life.

The more you give; the more you receive. The more you show love and caring to others the more it multiplies. Jesus Christ shines through his children and causes others to desire it. We are the salt of the earth and if we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us people will desire the salt that they see in our lives and be drawn to the living water that never runs dry. I will spring up into everlasting life.

God is a giver! Love causes us to give just as he has given to us! Love is stronger than hate and light overcomes darkness always.

In the night time as I was riding in the airplane, I looked out into the darkness. Looking down I saw tiny lights all over the ground below. Darkness cannot overcome light. We have something that this world cannot give and it also cannot take it away. If you are a child of the King of Glory, your name is written in the Lamb's book of Life and there is nothing that can separate you from the love that is in Christ Jesus. See Romans 8:38.

Nothing in this world can satisfy our souls like the love of Jesus Christ. Give what God asks of you and you will receive more than you can ever give out! I have proven God's generosity and his love; it is real and his promise is to never leave us nor forsake us. Eye has not seen nor ear heard what God has prepared for those who love him.

See 1 Corinthians 2:9. Everyone who has trusted God with his life has never been disappointed. God takes care of his own. Blessed be the name of the LORD!