

Devil, the Founder of Sins — 3

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罪の創設者である悪魔(3)
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Matthew

4:1 After this, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

4:2 After fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, he finally became hungry.

4:3 Then the tempter came. "Since you are the Son of God," he said, "tell these stones to become loaves of bread."

4:4 But he answered, "It is written, 'One must not live on bread alone, but on every word coming out of the mouth of God.'"

4:5 Then the devil took him to the Holy City and had him stand on the highest point of the Temple.

4:6 He told Jesus, "Since you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, because it is written, 'God will put his angels in charge of you,' and, 'With their hands they will hold you up, so that you will never hit your foot against a rock.'"

4:7 Jesus responded to him, "It is also written, 'You must not tempt the Lord your God.'"

4:8 Once more the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, along with their splendor.

4:9 He told Jesus, "I will give you all these things if you will bow down and worship me!"

4:10 Then Jesus told him, "Go away, Satan! Because it is written, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'"

4:11 So the devil left him, and angels came and began ministering to him.

[International Standard Version]

Today, I would like to continue the brief discussion about "the devil as the founder of sins." There is no room for doubt about the existence of the devil as we can see from the Bible. Jesus as well as his disciples believed that the devil existed. James said;

James

2:19 You believe that there is one God. That's fine! Even the demons believe that and tremble with fear.

4:7 Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will run away from you.

James sent these words to the believers of his time. Peter wrote with the same conviction as James;

1 Peter

5:8 Be clear-minded and alert. Your opponent, the

devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

In addition to James and Peter, Paul also wrote about the struggle with the devil, the battle against him;

Ephesians

6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, relying on his mighty strength.

6:11 Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the devil's strategies.

6:12 For our struggle is not against human opponents, but against rulers, authorities, cosmic powers in the darkness around us, and evil spiritual forces in the heavenly realm.

It was not only James, Peter and Paul, but John also wrote the same thing;

1 John

3:8 The reason that the Son of God was revealed was to destroy what the devil has been doing.

The devil is the founder of all sins. It does not make sense for us to believe in Jesus but not in the existence of the devil. The devil is a personal, concrete character. It is not an abstraction of bad influence or evil strength. He exists as an entity. As we just read at the beginning of this sermon, it is described in chapter 4 of the Gospel According to Mark that Jesus was led by the Spirit. Where to? Into the wilderness. He was led to the wilderness in order to be tempted by the devil.

Finally, Jesus has won a sweeping victory. As it is written, when the devil left Jesus, angels came and began ministering to him. Jesus is the Victor. We believe in Jesus because we all understood from our own experience that the blood of Jesus can wash away all our sins and iniquities.

However, there are some conditions in order for our sins and iniquities to be forgiven. These conditions have to be fulfilled for the Lord to forgive our sins. These conditions must be met in order for our souls that have been possessed by the devil to be returned to the hands of the Lord. What are these conditions?

1 John

1:9 If we make it our habit to confess our sins, in his faithful righteousness he forgives us for those sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

What is explained in this verse is that we are forgiven when we come to the Lord, who is the light, and confess all our sins. Unless we confess our sins, the Lord cannot forgive them. We need to expose all our sins. Do we still try to hide them, or are we prepared to confess our sins sincerely?

The second condition is explained in verses 14 and 15, chapter 6 of the Gospel according to Matthew.

Matthew

6:14 Because if you forgive people their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

6:15 But if you do not forgive people their offenses, your Father will not forgive your offenses.

You are hopeless when this really happens. If you refuse to forgive people their offenses, peace won't come to you forever.

Thirdly, it is necessary to apologize now for all the injustice, stealing or imputation you have done to your neighbors. You will never be forgiven until you address your past mistakes. By doing so, we deprive the devil of an opportunity to accuse us to the Lord by exposing our past deeds.

What is the fourth condition? Palm reading, cartomancy and fortune telling—these things are very dangerous. Through these, the devil exercises his strength within human hearts. The devil uses them to expose the hidden areas of our hearts and accuse us. We need to prevent the devil from claiming this right.

When we confess our sins, all these conditions are fulfilled. How are we doing? Do we hold on to our sins and refuse to let them go? Do we hold grudges toward others?

If we do, we are allowing the devil to exercise his right. Certainly, Jesus lives for us and mediates for us. However, as long as we have some unforgiven sins in our hearts, even Jesus can't help but allow the devil to rule us. The devil appears in the Book of Job.

Job

1:6 One day, divine beings presented themselves to the Lord, and Satan accompanied them.

2:1 Some time later, divine beings again presented themselves to the Lord, and Satan accompanied them to present himself to the Lord.

Satan, the devil is also described in the book of Zechariah.

Zechariah

3:1 Then I saw Joshua the High Priest standing in the presence of the angel of the Lord, with Satan standing at his right to oppose him.

Revelation

12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say, "Now the salvation, the power, the kingdom of our

God, and the authority of his Messiah have come. For the one who accuses our brothers, who accuses them day and night in the presence of our God, has been thrown out."

Of course, this has not yet come true, but it will absolutely happen sometime in the future. How can we eliminate the work of the devil? The answer to this question can be found in the next verse.

Revelation

12:11 Our brothers conquered him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to their lives even in the face of death.

This is how we renounce the devil. That is to say, they conquered the devil by the blood of the lamb. To prevent the devil from accusing us, it is extremely important that we acknowledge the blood that Jesus shed.

The devil will step in front of God and claim his right over us exclaiming, "This brother, that sister from Kichijouji has committed a sin. So, I will prevent them from reading the Bible every day. I am entitled to hold them back from praying and attending the gatherings."

When this becomes reality, the Lord cannot hold back the devil. The Lord God, being so sacred, cannot pass over sins within human beings. We have to satisfy all conditions required for the forgiveness of our sins.

That is to say, we need to confess our sins and forgive our neighbors. Our sins have to be corrected and all kinds of incantation, fortune telling and idol worship need to be eliminated from our lives. When these conditions are satisfied, we will totally understand the meaning of the blood of Jesus, obtain the forgiveness of sins and the purification.

These conditions have to be fulfilled before we begin to seek the forgiveness of our sins. Then, we will experience the power of the cross. When Jesus was crucified for all our sins, the strength of the devil vanished into nothing. Forgiveness and purification can be accomplished through nothing but the blood Jesus shed.

So, you no longer need to struggle. Please come to Jesus to appreciate the blood he shed for us. Then, the Lord will happily forgive everything you have done. If we hesitate to come to Jesus, the devil will expose our sins and accuse us in front of the Lord God.

How did they win the battle against the devil? There is another answer to this question; they conquered the devil through the words of testimonies. If we do

not pay enough respect to the testimony of the Lord, it will allow the devil to restore his right to accuse us to the Lord. It is only witnesses and conquerors who can reign with Jesus in the future. How can we win the battle against the devil and conquer him? As I just mentioned, it is possible by nothing but the blood of the lamb and through our words of testimony. In other words, we should not hide our faith.

Once, I was very much impressed by a poem. I believe that I read it in here before. This poem is inspired by the verse 20 of chapter 8, the Book of Jeremiah.

There is a line in the verse; "The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we haven't been delivered." After these words, a man called Alexander from Switzerland wrote this song.

The time of grace is nearing its end.
In this huge wide world,
now, quietly, the last day draws near.
From the far reaches of the distant desert,
we hear the screams of anxiety
Our night is pitch black,
with no ray of light
Without the grace of God, which illuminates us,
In pain and gloom,
we have to walk the dark road.
Forever and forever.

You sing songs filled with joy,
and call yourself children of God.
We are the sacrifices of death,
we are filled with suffering from awful pain.
Why do you stand still
and keep your hands away
while the night descends?
Why don't you tell us
that the Lord God sent His only begotten son
and He still loves us?

Because of you,
we have no chance to know His love,
and we are going to perish without any hope.
Were we just born to die?
Is death our destiny that span from eternity to
eternity ?

The stars don't shine on us.
We do not see the light of promise.
We hear the distant thunder of the judgment.
Why are you waiting so patiently,
When God is urging you, "Go and proclaim
throughout the world His victory on the cross?"

I know that you have good news
for our miserable souls.
When you hold the medicine
to heal all wounds forever,
why do you remain silent for such a long time?

Please let us hear your words and show us
the way which leads to the rock of faith.
Please wipe away our tears.
It is because of you that we have to move toward
our death.

Our sins make us suffer, and the dark night is
coming.
We have to surrender our souls
to the power of Satan.
Forever and forever.
Millions of people are calling from distant
countries,
"The Lord of harvest, please listen."

To us believers,
please give new blessings.
Please forgive our sins.
To the souls that are desperately waiting,
make us deliver the words of the cross.
To save them from eternal destruction.

Testifying, proclaiming our own faith and letting
people know about Jesus; these are the missions
given to us believers. It is required of us to let as
many people know about the Lord as possible, even
at the cost of our own lives and no matter how much
we are despised. Any place, if it is in the hands of the
devil, is a graveyard. All humans are destined to die
as long as they remain sinners.

Romans
5:12 Just as sin entered the world through one
man, and death resulted from sin, therefore
everyone dies, because everyone has sinned.

6:23 For the wages of sin is death.

The world today is ruled by the devil. It is obvious as
we look over the history of the world that the devil
has the control of this world. There is a very
interesting part in the Book of Daniel of the Old
Testament;

Daniel
10:13 However, the prince of the kingdom of
Persia opposed me for 21 days. Then—look!
—Michael, one of the chief angels, came to assist
me. I had been detained there near the kings of
Persia.

10:20 Then he said, "Do you understand why I
came to you? Soon I'll return to fight the prince of
Persia. I'm going forth to war—and take
note—the prince of Greece is coming."

The claw marks of the devil can be found
everywhere—within politics, religion, culture,
civilization, technology and scientific discoveries. By
nature, human beings are not totally independent. All

human beings have always been under the influence of the strength of the devil. If you do not take this into consideration, you will lose the essence of world history up to this day. The devil is the prince of this world. He is the one who rules the world spreading before you. Paul wrote to brothers and sisters in Corinth;

2 Corinthians

4:4 In their case, the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe to keep them from seeing the light of the glorious gospel of the Messiah, who is the image of God.

Here, the devil is called “the god of this world.” Eventually, all anti-Christians and false prophets will be destroyed by Jesus.

Revelation

19:20 The beast was captured, along with the false prophet who had performed signs on its behalf. By these signs the false prophet had deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

20:1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key to the bottomless pit, with a large chain in his hand.

20:2 He captured the dragon, that ancient serpent, also known as the devil and Satan, and tied him up for a thousand years.

20:3 He threw him into the bottomless pit, locked it, and sealed it over him to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were over. After that, he must be set free for a little while.

End