

**8 – Grounded in The Word**  
**GFC – September 6, 2020**

We are in a sermon series called Signs of the Times. We've been teaching from the Gospels where Jesus taught about the signs of the end times and about what events will take place.

We've been looking at the things the Bible tells believers to do to stay ready for His second coming. We've looked at 5 of those: worship, watch, work, witness and warfare. Today I'm preaching on the sixth thing we need to do in a sermon on God's word entitled Grounded in God's Word.

When Jesus listed the signs of the end times, the very first one He mentioned was deception. Matthew 24:3-6 says that when the disciples asked Jesus about the signs of His second coming:

*Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come."*

Jesus went on to list the other signs of the times, but the first was deception. I think that is very important. Deception is one of the main signs of the last days.

Six times in Matthew 24 Jesus warns us about deception. Although deception has always been with us, the coming Antichrist along with the "false prophet" will elevate deception to an art form. A few weeks ago I taught on how the antichrist spirit is already at work in the world. What is it doing? 2 John 7-8 says:

*Many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*

The antichrist spirit is a spirit of deception that keeps people from faith in Jesus Christ. It also works to lead believers astray from the truth of God's Word. So – we need to be on guard!

Everywhere you look today you see deception and people falling away from the faith. Jesus said this will only increase! So we need to be prepared for it. And in order for it not to happen to us, we must be grounded in God's Word! The spirit of this world is working overtime to eliminate the truth of God from our culture and replace it with end-times deception.

I'm very concerned about this because these days it's hard to know who or what to believe. Many people are getting their information from social media or QANON – which may or may not be true. It's hard to sort out fact from fiction. So let me say: if you're getting more input from mainstream media and social media than

from the word of God – then the resulting deception, fear and discouragement in your life is self-inflicted! That’s why we must be grounded in the truth of God’s Word!

Here’s something else - we are living in the times the prophet Isaiah warned us about in Isaiah 5:20

*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness...*

It’s amazing how this has started to happen in the last few years. Take abortion for instance. I believe it is wrong to take the life of an unborn child except in certain situations like when the mother’s life is in danger. But those times are very rare. And abortion in those cases should never happen in the latter months of pregnancy because today babies have a huge chance of surviving an induced premature birth.

The Bible tells us that God knits us together in our mother’s womb and puts a call on our life even before we are born. Yet, many people today believe that an unborn child is just tissue – a fetus – a potential human being. That deception enables them to look at killing babies as a good thing.

Not only do they call evil good – but some are now saying that those who oppose abortion are evil because they are denying a woman her rights.

My point is that the whole thing has been flipped around and some people now call those who are pro-life “evil.” They call people evil if they believe that marriage is limited to one man and one woman. They say people are evil if they believe that the Bible teaches that a homosexual lifestyle is a sin. And the list goes on and on.

But the Bible says *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil...*

The word woe means affliction and the resulting sorrow. In fact, the New Living Translation says:

*What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil.*

There will be much sorrow for those who do not obey the word of God. But Jesus said: *Those who stand firm to the end will be saved!*

And to stand firm to the end, we must be grounded in God’s Word!

We must choose to believe it and obey it!

We can’t allow the spirit of the world to cause us to doubt God’s Word.

Deception is a tool of the enemy to cause someone to believe something is true when it is actually not true. And the devil is the great deceiver. According to John 8:44

*There is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

If the devil's lips are moving, he's lying! He lies about God – He lies about himself – He lies about you. Satan is a liar and he has deceived people by casting doubt on the word of God from the very beginning. Genesis 3:1 says:

*The serpent was more subtle and crafty than any living creature of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Can it really be that God has said, You shall not eat from every tree of the garden?"*

We see here what Satan attacks – God's word.  
He'll say things like: did God really say that?  
Does the Bible really mean what it says?  
Does it actually apply to you today?

Satan wants to keep you out of God's word – but if he can't do that – he will twist God's word to make you believe something that is not true. We need to be so familiar with the truth that we easily recognize lies!

Satan knew that if he could get Adam and Eve to doubt God's word –then he could have his way with them. And he knows if he can get you to doubt God's word – he can have his way with you! That's why he spreads deception!

When Satan tempted Adam and Eve, he said in Genesis 3:5-7:

*"God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.*

Their rebellion caused their eyes to open in a way that caused spiritual blindness! Their sin resulted in deception that caused them to hide from God. So, we must stay on guard against the deceptions of the enemy.

The enemy wants to deceive us, but many times we blame the devil for things that are our own fault. Self-deception is a major cause of spiritual blindness.

Deception is caused by not knowing God's Word.

Self-deception is caused by not doing the word!

James 1:22-24 says:

*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.*

We deceive ourselves anytime we know what the Bible says – but we excuse ourselves from obeying it. We say things like:

- Yes, I know the Bible says we should not have sex outside of marriage, but God knows I have needs.
- Yes, I know the Bible says we should tithe, but God knows I have bills.
- Yes, I know the Bible says we should use our gifts and talents in church, but God knows I'm busy.
- Yes, I know I should submit to authority, but God knows my authorities don't deserve my submission.

And the list goes on and on! And I want to say, “Really? You really think God is going to give you a pass on obedience?” If you think so, you are deceiving yourself!

Overcoming that deception requires seeing the truth in the Word. That happened when Jesus met the men on the Emmaus Road. Luke 24:27 says:

*Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.*

Spiritual vision is given through the Word of God. That's why the 2 men said in Luke 24:32

*Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?*

Likewise, you will never understand the Word unless Jesus opens it to you. So, when you open the Word, ask Him to open your eyes to see what He wants you to see. Psalm 119:18 says:

*Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in Your law.*

To open our eyes we must renew our minds with the truth of God's Word. How do you renew your mind and vision? By abiding in the Word of God. In John 8:31-32 Jesus said:

*If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

Abiding in the word means to live in the word and then live out the word! It requires reading and studying and memorizing and obeying. To overcome deception, we must replace lies with the truth of the Word.

Remember that Satan uses the same methods he always has. The first thing he does is cast doubt on the word of God.

He did that in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve when he twisted God's words to deceive them. And Satan does the same thing today to cause you to doubt God's word.

Also, the deceptions used by the religious leaders of Jesus' day shows the different ways Satan deceives. In Matthew 27:40 they said-

*Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!*

Here they are casting doubt on Jesus being the Son of God. And Satan always puts doubts in people's minds about the existence of God and/or Jesus being the Son of God.

In Matthew 27:42 they said –

*He saved others, but He can't save Himself! He's the King of Israel! Let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him.*

Here they are attacking the power of God to save. And Satan today deceives people into thinking God is powerless.

In Matthew 27:43 they said –

*He trusts in God; let God deliver Him now if He cares for Him and will have Him, for He said, I am the Son of God.*

Here they are attacking whether or not God cared about Jesus. And Satan today deceives people into thinking God does not care about them.

The religious leaders also devised a plan to deceive people about the resurrection of Jesus. And Satan is still deceiving people about that today because he knows the resurrection is the heart of Christianity.

So, there you have the main ways Satan deceives people:

- He attacks God's word
- He attacks the existence of God
- He attacks the power of God and the love of God
- He attacks the resurrection.

That is his work as the great deceiver. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says:

*Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe.*

That's why we who are believers must have on the belt of truth and be grounded in the word of God.

We need to be so familiar with the truth that we easily recognize lies!  
 We need to be so familiar with the voice of God that we recognize the voice of the enemy.  
 We need to be so familiar with the Bible that we instantly recognize the devil's deception.

In one of the last things he wrote, the Apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:1-4:5

*But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, dis-obedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.*

*...everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

*In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge:*

*Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction.*

*For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*

Paul teaches that we need to be in the word individually and we need to be in the word corporately. Paul said to continue in the word you have learned on your own and he also said you need the preaching of the word!

At this church, you have preaching on Sunday, Bible teaching on Wednesday night, Grace Journey and various small groups to help ground you in the word!

Paul lists 5 benefits of God's Word: it teaches, us, rebukes us, corrects us, encourages us and trains us so that we may grow to maturity. We tend to consider 3 of these benefits to be positive: those are teaching, training and encouraging. But Paul also mentions rebuke and correction.

Most people don't like those. They say,

"Teach me, but don't correct me."

"Encourage me, but don't rebuke me."

But the word of God commands pastors to correct, rebuke and encourage. Paul said that many people will not like this and they will find teachers that will say what they want to hear. But, my job is not to tell you what you want to hear. My job is to tell you what you need to hear!

James said don't many of you become teachers, because you will receive stricter judgment. God is going to hold me accountable for what I preach and teach. So, I must preach the whole counsel of God! I don't give pep talks or motivational teachings – I'm here to preach the living Word of the living God! If all I do is preach encouraging words, I leave out two-thirds of what God said to preach: correcting and rebuking!

This is why we cannot forsake the assembling of ourselves together! Hebrews 10:25 in the Amplified Version says:

*Let us not forsake or neglect to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the Day approaching.*

The Day it's talking about is the second coming of Jesus Christ. We need the word and we need each other to stay grounded in the truth. This is why church attendance is not optional for the believer!

So, are you a believer or have you been deceived by Satan not to believe? Jesus already defeated Satan on the cross and it's up to us to believe in Jesus and enforce His victory. Believers fight from the place of victory. We have the upper hand. So don't be afraid of spiritual warfare – this is not a fearful thing.

Always remember – Jesus defeated and disarmed Satan on the cross. And Romans 16:20 says: *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.* So don't be caught off guard when Satan attacks. Overcome that deceiver by enforcing the victory Jesus won at the cross!

To do that you must know the truth of 1 John 4:4  
*Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.*  
 Your destiny is to overcome the enemy, not to be overcome by him!  
 If God is for you, who can be against you?  
 Remind Satan you have authority over him.  
 Remind Satan he's under your feet!  
 Remind him that the gates of hell cannot and will not prevail against us!  
 Overcome him by speaking the word of God – the sword of the Spirit:  
 No weapon formed against us will prosper! Every tongue that rises up against us we condemn! This is the heritage of all the saints! This is your heritage!  
 We know the devices of Satan. We have the truth of God's word!  
 We have the power of the blood of Jesus! We have the victory won on the cross!  
 We have the authority of Jesus name and the armor of God! And in the name of Jesus - we choose to be those who believe - not those who are deceived!