

A World of Lies
Pastor Joe Oakley
GFC 9/12/21

We are in a sermon series called The Necessity of an Enemy. We've taught on our three main enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil. We need to know who we're fighting and have a strategy for each enemy. Dying to self overcomes the flesh! Spiritual warfare overcomes the devil. Faith, love for God and renewing your mind overcomes the world.

I'm preaching a message today called A World of Lies. Remember – the biblical word for world is cosmos. It's not talking about planet earth, but the present order and systems that rule the world.

2 Corinthians 4:4 says that Satan is *the god of this world*.

1 John 5:19 says: *We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.*

Our current world order and culture are under the destructive rule of Satan. And the world has taken on the character of Satan. Now – what is the nature of the evil one? Satan. Well obviously, he is evil. But we can see what he does by looking at his names.

He's called the tempter because he's always tempting us to sin.

He is called the accuser because he accuses us when we do sin.

He's called the adversary because he's always fighting us.

He's called the thief who steals, kills and destroys.

But there are three names that go together: liar, deceiver and father of lies.

Satan always works to deceive us – to keep us from the truth.

Since Satan lies and deceives – the world he rules is a world of lies because of the deception spread by the deceiver! Here's what Jesus said about Satan in John 8:44

He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Deception is the main tool of the enemy! When Jesus listed the signs of the end times, the very first one He mentioned was deception. Matthew 24:4-6 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. The antichrist spirit is already at work in the world. What is it doing? 2 John 7 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. The spirit of this world is working overtime to eliminate the truth of God from our culture and replace it with end-times deception. And in order for it not to happen to us, we must be grounded in God’s Word and God’s character!

One of Satan’s biggest goals is to deceive us into not believing in the Word of God or the character of God. This goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden. Satan is a liar and he has cast doubt on the word of God and the character of God from the very beginning. Genesis 3:1-7 says:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any living creature the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For 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.

We see here Satan’s three big lies – he lies about the word of God, the character of God and he lies about who people are. As a result – these are also the three big lies of the world. The world wants to deceive you into believing God’s word is not true. The world wants to deceive you into believing that God is not good and that He is withholding good things from you. And the world wants to deceive you into believing that you can be god of your own life.

1- The world’s first lie is that God’s word is not true.

The god of this world casts doubt on the word by saying 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!

We live in a world now where no one knows who to believe anymore! That's why we need to be grounded in the truth of God's word. Jesus prayed this for all His followers in John 17:16-17

They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

You overcome the world of lies with the truth of God's word! Once you make up your mind to believe that God's word is absolute truth – everything changes. Decisions become easier. Deception becomes obvious. But you must first believe that God's word is absolute truth.

Unfortunately, as we learned last week, the god of this world is working overtime to eliminate the truth of God from our culture and replace it with deception. And many believers have been taken captive by the world. I showed you the results of recent Barna Research which shows that while 51% of American adults said they have a "biblical worldview, only 6% of American adults do. That means many people who call themselves Christians do not have a biblical worldview.

The research also showed that less than 1 out of 3 born again Christians believe in absolute moral truth. The surveys found that only 13% of people make decisions based on the principles taught in the Bible. And people wonder why their lives are so messed up!

We can only overcome this world of lies by transforming our minds with the word of God. That only happens when you believe that the Bible is absolute truth, authoritative, and applicable to every area of life. To have a biblical world view that overcomes the lies of the world, you must believe that the word of God is absolute truth!

I'll never forget a conversation I had with a young man in a restaurant years ago. He went on about there being no absolutes until I could take it no longer. So I asked him, "Are you absolutely sure? Because if there are no absolutes then the statement that there are no absolutes is untrue because it's an absolute statement."

"What?" He asked – kind of puzzled.

I explained that an absolute is something that is not dependent upon anything else, it is not relative; it is a universal truth. This guy said name one, so I said gravity. I started to say, “Get up on this building and jump off. I’m absolutely sure you’ll fall. But if you don’t believe in absolutes, why not give it a try?”

But I had mercy and instead repeatedly and annoyingly picked up and dropped a fork and said, “I’m absolutely sure that gravity is absolutely true and every time I drop this fork it will absolutely fall.”

He mumbled something about overcoming gravity by going into space and I said, “That’s another absolute – you get outside the earth’s gravitational field and I’m absolutely sure this fork will float in midair.”

I went on to mention other absolutes like $1 + 1$ will always = 2 and a square always has 4 sides and people absolutely need oxygen to live.

Needless to say, I ruined the evening because he just sat around and pouted. But this guy is typical of many people who have bought into the current worldview that there is no absolute truth and you can make up your own.

To overcome the world of lies, we need to be able to do is to show the fallacies of the world’s beliefs – which are illogical. So, when people tell me there are no absolutes, my answer is then that statement cannot be true. Why? Because it is an absolute statement and if there are no absolutes – that statement cannot be true - which means there really are absolutes. You just turn the world’s reasoning back on them. Turn the tables.

If they say, there is no right or wrong – I answer, “Is that right? Or is that wrong?” Because if that statement is either right or wrong, then that means there is right and wrong.

Or if they say there is no ultimate truth, I answer, “Is that true?” Because if that statement is true, then there is truth.”

If they say, “No one can know anything for sure,” then I say, “Are you sure?” Because if you are sure, then we can know something for sure, which makes the statement “we can’t know anything for sure” false. It’s amazing how illogical this world has become!

So – the first big lie is to believe that God’s word is not absolutely true.

2- The world’s second lie is that God is not good.

People have some crazy beliefs about God these days. One of those beliefs is that God is not good or loving and that He does nothing to stop evil in the world. By the way - “I believe in God” has become one of the most meaningless statements

of our time. Why? Because so many people have made God into what they want Him to be. They believe in a god that fits into their idea of who god should be rather than who God really is. They believe in a god of their own making.

In Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses “I am who I am.” Not “I am who you want me to be.”

So, when we make God into what we want Him to be we are putting an image of god before the actual God. Yet, the first commandment is to have no gods before God. This is Idolatry. It’s creating an image of a god that is manageable and willing to do what we want. An image is a copy or a duplicate. It appears to be like the real thing but it’s really just an imitation or an image of the real thing.

Images aren’t the real thing - and idols are images. Idols usually resemble God but they are far from who God really is. Idolatry can be simply having wrong ideas or believing lies about who God is. For example:

- God saved me because I am a good person.
- God is inclusive and there are many ways that lead to heaven.
- God should give me what I want because I have faith.
- God understands my sin. He understands that I live with my boyfriend because I can’t afford the rent by myself.
- God will overlook my sin because He knows I meant well.
He knows I didn’t mean to gossip, or lie, or cheat or steal.

These are all idols because they are a false image of who God is. And when we make God into our image we will always be disappointed. Our idols will always fail us. Listen to what Psalm 115:3-8 says about our idols.

Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him. But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.

This passage is showing us that idols are powerless to save. That’s why Satan always tries to twist our view of God into something that is not true!

This brings me to one of the biggest lies perpetrated on the world and by the world - that you can create your own truth.

3- The world's third big lie is that you can be like God.

Always remember this: there is a God and you’re not Him!
Your are not the creator or the savior or the Lord!
You do not have the power of determine ultimate truth.

Yet one of the common things you hear today is: "This is my truth. It might not be true for you, but it is for me."

So – someone might say – Jesus is the truth for you, but for me it is Buddhism or Islam or some other faith or no faith at all. But all those faiths are vastly different and therefore cannot be simultaneously true!

For example – if my truth believes in God and your truth believes there is no God – they both cannot be true. Either there is a God or there is not.

In John 14:6, Jesus said: *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

That means there is no other way to be saved. But the god of this world wants you to think there are many ways.

You cannot say, "You believe $1 + 1 = 2$, so that is your truth. But for me, $1 + 1 = 3$. And for my friend $1 + 1 = 1,000$."

It is absurd to believe that those can all be simultaneously true. Why? Because only 1 is actually true! $1 + 1 = 2$ is true for everyone everywhere at all times!

It's the same way with God's way of salvation – which is only through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross!

And if you come up with a different truth, your truth is not true at all! In fact, you are deceived and you believe a lie.

When we don't believe in God or submit to His will – but instead we believe that we are god and do our own will – the results are devastating. It's like Judges 17:6 which says:

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

If there was ever a verse that describes America today – this is it! The people who don't follow King Jesus always want to do what's right in their own eyes.

You even hear them say, "Don't judge me. This is my truth."

They have exalted their individual truth above God's absolute truth.

They think they see clearly – but the god of this world has blinded them!

They think they are wise – but the wisdom of man is foolishness to God!

They do whatever feels right to them – to the point that now wrongs are considered rights!

So, we must stay on guard against the world of lies!

As Romans 12:2 says: *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

So, what do you do when you catch yourself believing the world's lies about God?
 You counter those lies with God's truth.
 You do warfare against the lies of the enemy.
 You resist the devil and he will flee from you.
 You stop believing Satan's lies and start believing God's word.
 You study your Bible - you don't just skim through it.
 You immerse yourself in the truth of God's word and then you will know the truth
 and the truth will set you free.

When you compare man's truth with God's truth, there's a world of difference
 between them!

A world of your own making is nothing compared to the world that God made.
 And if you continue to live in a world of your own making – it will bring you a
 world of hurt and pain and suffering.
 But the world of God's making will bring you a world of good – a world of joy and
 a world of peace! Jesus said in John 14:27

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.
 Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

Jesus has peace that is greater than the world's peace!
 Jesus also said in John 16:33 – This is the Amplified Version

*In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of
 good cheer for I have overcome the world. (I have deprived it of power to harm you
 and have conquered it for you.)*

Whatever the world throws at you– it threw at Jesus and He overcame it-
 For you! Because of that:

You can overcome the world's hate with God's love!
 You have something greater than the world's wisdom – God's wisdom!
 Jesus has joy that is greater than the world's joy!
 Jesus has power that is greater than the world's power!
 So overcome the world of lies with the word of truth in Jesus name!