

8 - Access Denied
Pastor Joe Oakley - GFC - 6-2-2024

The bloodiest day in American history happened during the Civil War at the Battle of Antietam near Sharpsburg, Maryland. It lasted for 12 hours and there were over 10,000 Confederate casualties and more than 12,000 Union casualties – a total of 23,000 were killed or wounded.

Though the battle was a draw, with no clear winner, the mediocre Union General George McClellan was able to end the brilliant Robert E. Lee's attack into Maryland, forcing him to retreat across the Potomac. How was this possible? Two Union soldiers found a copy of Lee's battle plans wrapped around 3 cigars that somebody dropped or inadvertently left behind. Lee's plans were delivered to McClellan before the battle. By knowing his enemy's plans in advance, a mediocre General was victorious over a great General.

Here's the great thing - the Word of God gives us advance knowledge of our enemy's plans. In ourselves, we are no match for our adversary, Satan. But as with General McClellan, our enemy's plans have been given into our hands. We know his devices and strategies.

We are in a sermon series called Greater Freedom. Last week I taught on Freedom in Christ. We saw that we have an enemy who wants to keep us in captivity – not freedom. But Jesus died to set captives free!

If you are not a Christian, the devil wants to keep you from hearing the good news. If you are a Christian, the enemy wants to keep you bound by deceiving you about the freedom we have in Christ.

God wants to bless us by giving us abundant life. But the enemy wants to block those blessings. Here's the problem – many times we give Satan an open door into our lives and we don't even know it. We give him open access to our lives, families, money. And we wonder why we can't seem to get free or get ahead.

We must learn how Satan gains access into our lives and what we can do about it. That's I'm preaching a message today entitled: Access Denied – Shutting the Door to the Devil. I preached a ten-part series on this about 15 years ago. We'll probably spend several weeks on this topic.

We're going to examine the ways Satan used to gain access into our lives and we're going to learn how to prevent that from happening. In 2 Corinthians 2:10-11 – the apostle Paul said:

For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Some people are ignorant of Satan's devices. That's why we're preaching this series. Unforgiveness is one of those devices, and Pastor Deb will be preaching a sermon on that soon.

If you are ignorant of the devil's devices, He can take advantage of you. But we have the advantage because God's word reveals Satan's devices to us! Hallelujah! Let me define device:

- The NIV translates the word "device" as schemes.
- The AMP translates it - wiles and intentions. A wile is a trick.
- Strong's Bible Conc. defines it as purpose.

So – we conclude that the devices of Satan are the plans, tricks and schemes he uses to accomplish his evil purpose.

As Christians we should never be caught off guard by Satan's devices. Satan's advantage is based upon us being "ignorant of his devices." But if we are aware of the devil's devices, we can resist him successfully! To be forewarned is to be fore-armed. Jesus was totally ready for Satan's attacks and He overcome Him with the Word of God. His only defense was "It is written!" He knew the devices of the devil and He shut the door to them! You can do the same. That's why I'm going to teach you about these devices of Satan over the next few weeks so you can learn how to shut the door to the devil.

1- We can never stop the devil from attacking, but we can shut the door and refuse to let him in!

I've heard some people teaching an error that says – you can get to the place in your Christian life where you are so holy or so mature or so full of faith that the devil will stop attacking you. Oh really? Show me that in the Bible.

There are only 2 examples of people without sin in the Bible. The first example is Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before they sinned. The second example is the last Adam - Jesus Christ - who never sinned. In both of these examples – they were attacked by Satan!

Adam and Eve were overcome by Satan but Jesus overcame Satan. Even after Jesus overcame the 3 temptations of Satan, Luke 4:13 says:

When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left Jesus until an opportune time.

The Amplified Version says: ***He (temporarily) left Him (that is, stood off from Him) until another more opportune and favorable time.***

All of us need to stay on the alert because Satan is always looking for an opportune time to attack. We must live our lives on alert to the attacks of the enemy.

Many Christians today have a wrong view of devil. They see him as a sleeping dog—and if we'll just tiptoe around and not bother him—then the devil won't bother us. But that isn't true. The Bible doesn't say he's a sleeping dog — 1 Peter 5:8 says

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith...

The Amplified Version says:

Be vigilant and cautious at all times; for that enemy of yours, the devil, roams around like a lion roaring.

So, be on guard all the time. There is never a time to think you're beyond demonic attack.

I want you to understand that the point of this sermon is not to teach spiritual warfare, but to teach how to shut the door to the devil. We'll talk about spiritual warfare later.

This is about preventing strongholds – not tearing them down. This is not about casting the devil out – that's spiritual warfare – this is about keeping the devil out so you don't have to cast him out! If we don't shut the door to the devil then he just keeps coming back. Last week I read what Jesus said in Luke 11:24-26:

When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.

In the original Greek, the word possessed is actually demonized. Dan Boerger translates it that way in The Interpreted New Testament. It means to be under the power or influence of a demon.

There are levels of influence demons can have in people's lives depending upon how they live, what they believe and whether or not they resist the enemy or just give him an open door in their lives.

All the cases of demonic possession in the Bible were those who were unbelievers – none are of those who are believers in Jesus Christ. But Christians can be oppressed by the devil and they can have demonic strongholds in their lives.

Notice that if the enemy has an open door to our lives – things only get worse! The devil will never stop trying to gain entrance into your life. The devil will always try to gain a toe hold that turns into a foot hold that ultimately becomes a stronghold! How do we shut the door to the devil? By using the keys of the kingdom!

Jesus said in Matthew 16:19

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

What do keys do? Lock or unlock. Open or close.

People are always asking, “Why did God allow this or that. Why is the devil always after me? Why doesn’t God do something?” And I believe God is thinking, “Wait a minute. I already gave you the keys. I gave you authority over all the works of the devil in Jesus name! Use the keys that I gave you and shut the door to the devil!”

Can you imagine a store owner who gave an employee the key, but they call and ask, “Can you open the door?” The owner would say NO, that’s why I gave you the key. That’s why Ephesians 4:27 tells us

Leave no room or foothold for the devil (give no opportunity to him).

It’s our responsibility to use the keys of the kingdom and shut the door to the devil.

2- The main way the devil gains access to our lives is through deception.

Satan’s main weapons are words, so his 3 mains ways of attack are through temptation, accusation and deception.

Satan knows just how to tempt us – doesn’t he? For some it is sexual sin, for others it is gluttony or pride or anger or greed or the list goes on. Satan tries to bring us down by tempting us to sin. But remember - temptation is not sin. Only giving in to it is sin.

It’s always interesting to me how when Satan tempts you he makes it look like sin is good – “It’s okay, it’s not that bad, it won’t hurt you or anyone else, nobody will find out anyway.” But as soon as you give in to temptation, he immediately turns from being the tempter to being the accuser.

Revelation 12:10 calls Satan ***...the accuser of our brothers.***

After you’ve given in to his temptation, the accusations start flying. “You loser. You call yourself a Christian? After what you’ve done?” So Satan tempts and Satan accuses, but his main tool is deception. 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.

And deception is not always believing a lie – it can be ignorance of the truth. Since truth saves us – Satan wants to keep us lost from the truth. Since truth opens our eyes– Satan wants to keep us from seeing the truth. Since truth sets us free – Satan wants to keep us away from truth. So how do we shut the door to deception?

3- We shut the door to the devil's deception with the power of God's truth.

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.

Back in the old days before they had pens that could detect counterfeit money – they had to train bank tellers to detect it. You would think they would sit them down in a classroom and give a lecture on how to detect counterfeit money. And there was some of that.

But the problem was that counterfeiters were constantly coming up with new ways to deceive people. So the main way they trained bank tellers was to have them count piles and piles of real money. They would spend days handling real money so that whenever they came across a fake, they would immediately recognize it. They were so used to the real that the false was obvious to them.

The Bible tells us to do the same thing! We should be so familiar with truth that a lie seems obvious. Romans 16:19 says:

I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

When you are familiar with good, evil is obvious.
When you are familiar with right, wrong is obvious.
When you are familiar with the God of the word, the god of this world is obvious.
When you are familiar with truth, error is obvious.

That's why Jesus said in John 8:32 ***the truth shall make you free.***

Truth is the way of deliverance from the deception of Satan. Truth shuts the door to the lies of the devil. That's why the belt that holds our spiritual armor is the belt of truth. Truth is the foundation of the Christian life. That's why Satan wants to steal truth from us. In John 10:10 – Jesus said

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

The thief He's speaking of is Satan. Satan is a thief who wants to steal everything we receive from God.

He wants to steal salvation and keep us lost.
 He wants to steal healing and keep us sick.
 He wants to steal freedom and keep us bound up and addicted.
 He wants to steal joy and keep us depressed.
 He wants to steal faith and keep us in fear.

He wants to destroy everything good and godly in our lives. How does he do that? The Bible tells us how in Hosea 4:6.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Not knowing the truth will destroy you.
 Not knowing what truth? Bible truth.
 Truth about who God is and who you are in Christ.
 Truth about who Satan is and how Jesus defeated him on the cross.
 Truth about the authority we have in Jesus' name.

But also truth about the practical areas of life:
 Lack of knowledge about how to handle money can destroy your finances.
 Lack of knowledge about covenant can destroy your marriage.
 Lack of knowledge about nutrition can destroy your health.
 Lack of knowledge about how Satan operates can keep you defeated.
 Lack of knowledge about how to relate to authority can destroy your career.

This may surprise you, but one of the things that gives Satan an open door to Satan to rob our blessing is dishonoring our parents. Ephesians 6:1-3 says:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" - which is the first commandment with a promise - "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Many young people set off to pursue dreams only to run into destruction and the simple reason is they don't honor their parents. Honor releases the blessing of God. But the opposite is also true: lack of honor blocks the blessing of God.

Honor means to value someone and to treat them with respect. The opposite of honor is dishonor. It means "to treat with disrespect.

The more we honor someone, the more we will treat them as someone we value and respect. That will be seen in our actions and words.

The less we honor someone, the more we will treat them with disrespect. That will be seen in our actions and words.

The Bible teaches if you want to live a long and prosperous life, you must honor your parents. You must – it is not optional. And this is not just for little children. You never outgrow this command. All of us – no matter how old – need to honor our parents.

I want to expand that to say that dishonoring any authority will block the blessing of God in our lives.

You can't dishonor your boss and be blessed.

You can't dishonor your parents and be blessed.

You can't dishonor your pastors and be blessed.

You can't dishonor those in authority and be blessed.

In closing – I want to encourage you to begin to shut the door to the devil now. Quit waiting on God to do something. Jesus already defeated Satan on the cross and it's up to us to enforce that victory. We fight from the place of victory. We have the upper hand. So don't be afraid – this is not a fearful thing. We know the truth of 1 John 4:4

Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

Satan is not God's equal. God always has been greater, is now, and always will be greater. And the greater One is in you! Your destiny is to overcome the enemy, not to be overcome by him!

Yes, Satan will always look for opportune times to attack. But 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, enforce the victory Jesus won at the cross! Remind Satan you have the advantage.

Remind Satan that you are not ignorant of his devices.

Remind Satan you have authority over him.

Remind Satan he's under your feet!

We can shut the door to the devil.

The gates of hell cannot and will not prevail against us!

No weapon formed against us will prosper!

Every tongue that rises 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 in the name of Jesus WE SHUT THE DOOR TO THE DEVIL!!!