

Satan's Lies

Romans 8:31c

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

There is a scene that is repeated probably every minute in our world and has been repeated every minute since the world was created. It's the same scene that can take place in a prairie here in the Midwest, or in a New York apartment, or on a desolate moor in England, or in a luxurious villa on the French Riviera. Every minute some man or woman is looking up at the sky and wondering, is the universe and the power behind the universe friendly or unfriendly to me? Is the power behind the universe trying to defend me or trying to destroy me? Does the power behind the universe love me or hate me? Is the power behind the universe a dictatorial tyrant or a loving father?

There are plenty of clues to the answer. I'll show you one. This is the first time I've given him such an opportunity to perform. This is him. [shows a little Yorkshire Terrier] His name is Chou [pronounced shoe]. And you know, you look at him and you think, "Our dear God must be the greatest at doing little loving things to make a little thing like this. He really must be the kindest person in the world to give a little gift like this that really doesn't have great use at all. Now, he feels he does, but survival of the fittest just doesn't explain him, you know. He would not be here if it were survival of the fittest. And the whole business of the necessity of the balance of nature and maintaining the balance of nature, it just doesn't explain little fellas like this.

This has to be made by somebody who really likes to do loving things. Little things like this and little birds, and flowers, and the colors under the sea that many of us will never see, those are clues, loved ones, about the kind of power that is behind the universe. And it's very difficult, I think, to argue that the power is anything but somebody who is loving, and who is kind and who likes doing little things for the people he loves. Now I know, that holds no water if we want to get into a philosophical discussion. But, what does hold water in a philosophical discussion is: The plainest indication of the kind of power that is behind the universe is the dear Person who came to this world, who was the only one who left it and came back to earth. And he assured us, "Look, the reason why I was able to die and come back and tell you what it's like on the other side is because I'm the son of the Person who made you and he is my loving Father and he's the kind of person – listen, I'll tell you this: he's the kind of person if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will my heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask."

And every piece of information, loved ones, we get from the best documented life of that time, that of Jesus of Nazareth, every indication is that the power behind the universe is for us, completely for us. And that's what we've been studying these past few weeks. And, you might like to look at the verse. We've looked at it before but some of you might not have been here. Romans 8:31, "What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us?" And every piece of information that we have is that God is for us.

Who then is against us? What we saw last week is, the same person who was against Jesus. Jesus is the best source of information we have on the invisible world. And the person who was against him is the person mentioned in Matthew 4. Mathew 4:8, "Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Begone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."'"

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him.”

What we saw last week, loved ones, is, there is not Mephistopheles with a pointed tail, and pointed ears, and a three pronged fork. But according to Jesus, there is a devil. There is a spirit being who used to be an angel of God. The Creator has other beings besides us. He has animals, and fish, and birds, and he made spirit beings called angels. Not beings with wings and all that kind of thing, but spirits that have no human bodies. And Satan was one of those angels. And what we saw from references that we checked out, you remember, last Sunday in Jude, and Peter, and Isaiah, and Ezekiel was that this was an angel that rebelled in pride against God. And from that moment on he has spent all his time trying to induce as many other beings as possible to join him in rebellion against the Creator of the universe.

And his method of course, is just one of continual lying. He knows that it is unto us according to our faith. He knows that if we really look at a little fellow like that dog, or we look at Jesus’ words and we begin to treat the Maker of the universe as the dear Father who made those things and made those people, he knows that it will be unto us according to our faith. That God will begin to be able to get his life through to us. But similarly, he knows if we believe this is a tyrant God, a miserable judge who is out to destroy us, so it will be unto us according to our faith. So we will receive all that Satan can do in our lives. And so his job is to get us to believe lies. So Satan’s only power is to lie. And that he does continually to us. And he tries to get us to believe lies about the Creator.

Probably the greatest lie of course is that he doesn’t exist. He tries to get us to accept that. And you must admit he has been very successful in our particular generation. I had tremendous difficulty believing that there could be a Satan. I had been so bombarded with all these weird middle ages descriptions and paintings of him. And Satan’s job of course is to persuade us that he doesn’t exist. That way, you see, he gets us to think that the lies that we find coming to us, or the suggestions about God that we find coming to us are the production of our own minds and in fact, that his activity is the natural doubting of a normal, healthy mind.

And of course, once he gets us to do that then he gets us to regard that as tolerable. And we think to ourselves, “Well, it’s reasonable everybody doubts. You know, everybody has these strange ideas of what God is like. Everybody doubts if God loves them.” But no, they don’t. People don’t naturally doubt if God loves them. They only doubt if they begin to accept the lie from this spirit being that God does not love them. And of course, once they begin to regard that as the natural normal activity of their own minds, they begin to tolerate it. And that’s what Satan wants.

Loved ones, what I’d like to do is just share three other facts about this spirit being before we go on to talk about some of the lies that I think some of us are involved in here. First of all, it’s maybe good to see that he has one specific strategy for inducing us to join him in rebellion and to join him eventually, in eternal destruction and separation from God. And that strategy is in Revelation 12:10. “And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, ‘Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.’” That’s his method. He accuses you.

So often you find yourself at home, or in your room suddenly wondering, "Does God really love me? Am I really God’s child? Would God ever be prepared to deal with a creature as bad as I am?" And loved ones, that does not come from yourself. It does not. It comes from Satan whose job is to

accuse you and say, "Look, you're so rotten, you're so miserable, you're so hopeless, you've failed so many times that the Creator would not have anything more to do with you." Now, you need to watch loved ones because some of you will say to me, "Oh no, brother, but isn't that the conviction of the Holy Spirit?" No, the Holy Spirit always convicts directly, he says, "Stop gossiping." He says, "Stop telling lies." He always gives you something specific that you can respond to; Satan doesn't. He comes at you with a vague generalized sense of accusation and doubt about your acceptance with God. And that's his job.

One of his great aids of course, before Jesus died, was God's own word. It stood against us. You remember, Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death." And of course Satan used to urge that upon us. He used to say, "Look, God has committed himself to destroying all who live apart from him and are independent of him and want their own way and their own life. That's you. Now, the wages of sin is death. You're going to die." And that kind of stood against us.

Now of course, once we see that God destroyed us in Jesus, that legal bond no longer stands against us. And of course, that's always the way to answer Satan. The way to answer him is never, "No, I'm not, I'm really good," because you're not really good. Or, "Well, I was better this week than I was last week." Well, in some ways you were and in some ways you weren't. The way is never to argue with him about your own goodness but to say, "Yeah, you're right. I know that stands against me. But, God has put me into his son Jesus and destroyed me there. And God will not destroy me twice for the same sin. So, I offer you the blood of Jesus. That's why God is accepting me."

And that's why, loved ones, you have that statement in Colossians 2:13-15. And it might help some of you who have maybe labored under some of this in the past. And this is the only way to answer Satan, loved ones. I don't think you should enter into ethical discussions about your own life with him. You should just answer him this way. "And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses," and then verse 14, "Having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands." The bond was the wages of sin and death. That was the legal bond that stood against us. That's what Satan always urged. But God has cancelled that bond because he's put us into Jesus and destroyed it there and worked out the bond. "This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." And in that way you see, "He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him."

And so Satan's power to accuse us is actually no longer a power at all if you answer him in the right way. In fact loved ones, the truth is that Satan's activity now is permitted and limited by God for his own purposes. Now, that's strange, but God gave the angels free will and that's how Satan ever rebelled in the first place. And God has continued to allow Satan to have free will up to a point. He limits him, he holds him back from destroying us completely. But he gives him permission to offer his lies to us, because God knows that every time we reject him we'll be strengthening our faith in his word and his promises. And so in a way, Satan is now God's unwilling servant.

And that's clearly set forth, if you doubt it, in Job 1. Those of you who know the book of Job know the verses I'm talking about. Job 1:6, and it shows clearly that Satan is under God's control, and yet up to a point is given freedom to work his own lying ways, because God knows he can use every rejection of those ways to strengthen our own faith. Every time we reject a lie we grow stronger in the truth. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, 'Whence have you come?' Satan answered the

LORD, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.' And the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?' Then Satan answered the LORD, 'Does Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not put a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse thee to thy face.'"

And it's interesting that God will never put forth his hand and touch us and destroy us. Destruction is never God's work even though Satan said to God, "Now you do that just to test."

"And the LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your power; only upon himself do not put forth your hand.' So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD." And so loved ones, God allows Satan to tackle you and me but only up to a point. And there's no temptation come upon us above what we're able to bear. And God is using that power of evil to actually strengthen our faith in God's assurances that he loves us and can bring us through everything.

Nevertheless, loved ones, I think a lot of us, despite those facts -- that Satan's only power is that of accusing us wrongly and that that power has now been destroyed by Jesus death, and that his power to lie to us is even limited and under God's control -- nevertheless, I think many of us still, even here, -- it's almost unbearable to say it, loved ones -- but some of us, I know it's terrible, but some of us here will believe Satan's lies throughout our lives. And some of us here will end up with Satan. We will, really. I know that's unthinkable, but some of us here, despite all these truths that we've heard, will continue to believe those lies and reject God.

And loved ones, to emphasize that I'd just ask you to look at one verse with me and then just leave it at that. Revelation 20:7. However gentle we are with each other I think it's important for love to be honest and real. And it's important to point out to you these verses. It discusses the millennium, you know, the thousand years, "And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be loosed from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, that is, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city; but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever." And of course, they'll torment themselves really.

"Then I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it; from his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead in them, and all were judged by what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; and if any one's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

It is true loved ones, despite all that we share today, that some of us here in this group will continue to believe Satan's lies. I want to do everything possible to try to help you see the lies. I've asked God to give me some discernment about some of them you believe.

I think that some of us believe Satan's lie about God's love. That is, some of us keep on

believing, "Well, if God made a dear little creature like that dog, and if he makes little babies, and he makes strange little things that are lovely and interesting and quaint, then God must be such a lovey dovey God that he is for me whatever I do." Now, loved ones, that's a lie. That's a lie.

I can be for that little pet dog but if I'm really for him I'll have definite thoughts and wishes for him. There's certain things I won't let him do. I won't let him charge across Highway 494. I won't let him fall out of a car when it's moving. I won't let him eat himself until he's sick. I won't let him do certain things just because I'm for him. Now, loved ones, it's the same with our Father in heaven. It's just dumb for you to believe Satan's lie, "God is for me -- whatever I do in this life." No he isn't, loved ones. God has a definite desire for you and me that is in line with his love for us. He wants us to be like himself and his Son and he's out to destroy everything that prevents us being like them.

And so everything in our lives that is not like Jesus, God is out to destroy. And it's because he really loves us. So don't believe Satan's lie, "Oh God is so lovey dovey, he's for me whatever I do." No, God has definite wishes for your life and mine. And he's out to destroy everything that will prevent those. In fact, loved ones, he's out for radical surgery, and some of us are very disturbed when we see that. We just are horrified at the thought that, "Boy, to become like God and to become like Jesus means radical surgery in my life." But loved ones, it does.

Christiaan Barnard [a South African cardiac surgeon who performed the world's first successful human-to-human heart transplant] was not the first one at all. You see it there in Ezekiel 36:26. "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." And loved ones, your Father loves you so much that he's determined to take out that heart of flesh. All of us have a heart of flesh that wants its own way, that wants to have its own way in everything, and wants to defend its own rights, and wants to destroy anybody that stands in our way. That's the heart of flesh that most of us have. And we just stand up for self gratification and self glorification all the time. And the Father is determined to take that heart out of us and to give us a new heart. And the dearest donor in the whole world has died so that we could receive his heart.

And loved ones, what happens with many of us is, that dear donor, Jesus, has made his heart available to us and by the power of the Holy Spirit God can implant that heart in us, but first he has to take out the old heart. And that's what happens. We begin to feel the knife of the Holy Spirit for the first time on that old heart, and we begin to draw back and say, "God doesn't love me. Otherwise, he wouldn't be reproofing me and correcting me like this. He doesn't love me if he's hurting me like this. He's convicting me. He's telling me I'm wrong. He doesn't really love me if he's putting me through these things." And loved ones it gets more and more vehement as our whole body begins to reject the heart that he puts in us when we're born of God at the beginning.

When he puts that dear heart of Jesus in us, the whole body, as is to be expected, even in physical life it occurs, there's a whole rejection process that takes place and our whole personality rebels against that heart of Jesus within us. And that heart of Jesus wants to love, and be patient. And this whole body rejects it, and reacts against it, and says, "No, I want to lose my temper. I want to be what I am." And as the whole body puts into activity this rejection process, we cry out again, "God doesn't really love me." And Satan's lie is right in the middle of that, loved ones. Satan is trying to get you to believe, "Yeah, he doesn't really love you. He wouldn't hurt you like this if he loved you."

And loved ones, God states the opposite in Hebrews 12:4. And of course that's why Jesus always answered Satan with God's word, because the truth is stated plainly here for us. And that's why God regards us as being without excuse. It's Hebrews 12:4. "In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons? –'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him. For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves.'"

It's not because he doesn't love you that he disciplines you. He disciplines you because he loves you. "...And chastises every son whom he receives. It is for discipline you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time at their pleasure, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

Really loved ones, there are faithful wounds of a friend. And those are the dear wounds that the Holy Spirit begins to work on. Even after a service like this, on your way home you may begin to sense something inside you saying, "Boy, you need to change, you need to change. Why not let that heart of Jesus transform your own life?" And you begin to feel, "Yeah, there's something wrong." And then Satan gets in and says, "You mean, you're not good enough? Of course you're good enough." Of course, the answer is, "No, I'm not good enough, not at all. That's why God had to do the radical surgery on me. That's why he loves me."

Loved ones, I think those are some of the lies. I think there is another lie that some of us here tend to believe. And that is that Satan suggests to us, "You ought to produce a satisfactory experience that is an authentic Christian conversion." I think some of us accept that lie. Satan comes to you and says, "Now all that you hear here on Sunday mornings, you want to take all of that and you want to produce in your own life a satisfactory authentic essential Christian conversion experience. Now that's your job. Okay, now go and do it." But, I think a lot of us make our relationship with God an intolerable burden because we believe that lie.

Loved ones, I think some of us almost take the great facts about what God has done to us in Jesus as ideas that we are supposed to use to manipulate into a satisfactory experience. And I think many of us are always reading the descriptions of a real son of God or daughter of God in the Bible and we're listening to sermons about these things, and we're saying, "Yeah, that's what an authentic son of God would be. That's what an authentic daughter of God would be. Boy, I have to produce that kind of experience in myself." And I think many of us here are spending our lives pursuing the right experience. That, loved ones, is a lie of Satan. It's not your job to produce the experience at all. It's God's job to produce the experience. And it's his job to do the work in you. And that's why Jesus said, "If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children then how much more will my heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask."

Your job is to ask with your whole heart and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and to walk out in faith that God has kept his word. And let him produce whatever experience you need to have, or whatever experience you don't need to have. But loved ones, don't believe Satan's lie that you have to somehow produce an authentic experience of conversion, or a baptism with the spirit which will satisfy all the criteria and opinions of all the pastors, all the teachers, all the friends, all the

books, all the Bibles you've ever read. It just is not your responsibility. Your responsibility is to come to God and do what he tells you. Let him give you whatever experience he wants you to have.

I think it would lift some of you loved ones, if you'd reject that lie of Satan. I'd just like to deal with one other lie that I think some of us labor under. A lot of us know that we have to ask God with our whole heart for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. We have to ask God with our whole heart for his Holy Spirit. Loved ones, those of you who haven't been before, the Holy Spirit is a supernatural power that has the qualities of our Creator within it. And, the Holy Spirit actually is a person and he is able to come into your life and change you inside.

Now many of us, I think, know that we've to ask God with our whole heart for the Holy Spirit. And we have to be willing whatever that Holy Spirit makes us. I think Satan has lied to some of us, "Keep on analyzing, keep on analyzing and eventually as you analyze yourself and as you find out in what ways you're not ready to get on the cross, and as you keep on self examining and going through an introspection of your own miserable life, there will come a day sometime when you can raise self analysis to the Nth degree and it will become the fullness of the Holy Spirit." Now, that's dumb.

Loved ones, the fullness of the Holy Spirit is supernatural life. Analysis and self examination is psychic or psychological life. You can never raise one to such a degree that it becomes the other. It's like a stone trying to become a little bird or a little animal. It will never, because one is inanimate life and the other is animate life. Now, it's the same with this self examination. Loved ones, there comes a time when sooner or later you have to go out on a limb with God and you have to say, "Lord, I'm as surrendered as I can be. I can't go on the rest of my life examining myself to see if I can be more surrendered. Father, I ask you for the gift of the Holy Spirit. I ask you with my whole heart. And Lord, I receive this dear gift by faith and I'm going out to live on the understanding that I now have the Holy Spirit in my life. And I'm going to do what he tells me and expect him to tell me."

But loved ones, I think Satan has lied to some of us that, "No, no, you're not ready yet." And you say, "Well, I'm almost ready aren't I?" And Satan says, "No, no, you're not quite ready. A little more prayer, a little more self examination, a little more looking into your motives and analyzing them and then you'll be ready." And we get to tomorrow and we say, "Okay, now I'm ready." And he says, "No, no, just a little more --just another sermon, another Sunday service, another book to read."

Loved ones, the Father is waiting with his arms open. And he loves you and he's saying, "Look, will you come? There are some things inside you that I still need to show you but come, and I'll give you the Holy Spirit if you ask and you receive him by faith and you start living banking on him being there. And I'll show you the other things."

Loved ones, really, if I were you I'd just ask the Holy Spirit, "Holy Spirit, show me if I'm living under lies. Just show me." And loved ones, every one of us here whose life is shadowed or grey, or dark, or gloomy, are living under some lie -- really, we're living under some lie of Satan. And I'd urge you -- you're a miserable lot and I'm a miserable person, too. We're nothing, you know. We're miserable creatures. We have nothing good in us but what the Father puts in. But loved ones, you're not that bad. You don't originate the lies. It is this being called Satan that Jesus told us about. And I'd encourage you to disassociate yourself from him. And don't think you're just projecting your own evil into some physical being that you can then disassociate from yourself. No, do it. Disassociate yourself from him. Reject the lie. And begin to see that the Father is a

loving father and that he made little green apples, and little dogs, and rain, and sunshine, and made this dear Jesus who is the light of life to all of us. And he loves you. And he'll give you what you need. Let us pray.

Dear Father, thank you. Thank you that you're real and true and that you really are alive and Father that you're the loving person that Jesus has told us you are. And Father, thank you that it's your dearest wish that every one of your dear ones here in this auditorium would have the confidence to come to you now and treat you for real and ask you now to give them your Spirit, the same spirit that makes you you and makes Jesus so like you, to give us your Spirit. And oh dear Holy Spirit, we hardly know how to treat you but we know that you're real and a Person inside us. And we commit ourselves to listening to you and obeying you even though we don't quite understand.

And we ask you Holy Spirit to begin to make us the kind of children that our Father would be pleased with so that this dear world of ours might see who its Creator really is and so that thousands in India, Africa, Australia, and South America, and Russia, and China will get a glimpse of the dear Person that made them through us here. We ask this, our Father, in Jesus' name.

And now the grace of our Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us now and throughout this coming week and until we see Jesus face-to-face. Amen.