

Let Us Not Give Place to the Devil

by Alan Martin

The sermon emphasizes the dangers of anger and the importance of mercy and reconciliation in the Christian life.

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, Alan Martin emphasizes the importance of being aware of the devil's schemes and not giving him a foothold in our lives. As a seasoned minister with a strong focus on spiritual warfare, Martin likely delves into the biblical principles of recognizing and resisting the enemy's tactics, and encourages believers to stand firm in their faith. He may also explore the consequences of allowing the devil to gain a foothold, such as spiritual stagnation and diminished effectiveness in ministry, and offer practical guidance on how to maintain a strong defense against the enemy's attacks. By listening to this message, believers can gain a deeper understanding of the spiritual battle they face and be equipped to live victorious lives in Christ.

Transcript

There's a line in the first song that Preston played that says, Be on the sacred page. I seek Thee Lord. And then there's a song that one of the lines in the last song, the second song he played was, As thou hast died for me so may my love for Thee pure, warm, and changeless be a living fire.

Father, we that's what we would desire. We would desire that Thy, like one of the verses in those songs said, Lord may Thy rich grace impart strength to our fainting hearts. Our zeal inspire.

You can do what no man or message can do. You might use a message and you might speak through a man, but Lord only you can make a life. We might plant and we might water and you tell us that and you tell us very clearly no more boasting about men.

They're just servants to whom you do your work. It's your gift. It's your spirit.

It's your righteousness. It's your knowledge. It's your understanding.

But we ask for it today so that your will can be accomplished. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus for you to have your son cleanse our hearts through the word so that we can be clean and without spot or blemish before you. And we ask this according to your will in Jesus name.

Amen. In Ephesians chapter 4, find verse 25 with me. Ephesians 4 25 it says, Therefore putting off the lie, but that lie being the whole lie to the way the Gentiles live in the vanity of their thinking separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them through the hardening of their heart.

That's not how we learn Christ. Surely if you heard of Him and you were taught in accordance with the truth that's in Christ, you were taught to put off the old man which is being corrupted by deceitful practices and to put on the new man created to be like God in righteousness and holiness of the truth. If it's not the truth of righteousness and holiness, put it off.

It's a lie. The truth of God had better be producing righteousness and holiness in us. We need to put it off.

Make sure we love the truth, the real truth that's taught in Christ. Therefore putting off the lie, let's speak the truth each one with his neighbor because we are members of one another. And then in verse 26 it says, Be angry and do not sin.

A quote from Psalms 4 4 which the rest of the psalm says this in Psalms 4 4, Be angry and do not sin. When you're on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Paul just quotes the first half of the verse but he goes on to say be angry, do not sin and do not let the sun set on your anger.

That word for anger there, the second word, do not let the sun set on your anger, actually means an angry mood, a violent irritation on the inside expressed. This is, Barth said this, it's expressed by either hiding oneself from others or flaming looks. Have you seen those any this week? Any flaming looks your direction? Harmful words, inconsiderate actions.

Do not let the sun set on while you're hiding yourself from others in anger or while you've given them flaming looks or spoken harmful words or inconsiderate actions. You know anger is one letter short of danger. Anger is one letter short of danger.

What danger? The danger that is spoken of in verse 27. What danger is spoken of in verse 27? Neither give place to the devil. What place? What does it mean? A believer can give place to the devil? Well of course he can or else it wouldn't be warned against in scripture.

What place? A place that provides space and opportunity for him to do his work. You know, some people give him free rent. Their anger they give him free rent to do his work.

What work? What work is that? Let's turn to Revelation 12 and see what work that is. Revelation chapter 12. Revelation chapter 12.

Start with me in verse 7. And a war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon and the angels fought back but they did not prevail nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out.

The old serpent called in the Greek Diabolos. The slanderer. The old serpent called the slanderer and Satanos who deceives the whole world.

He was cast to the earth and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, now salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ have come. And this same voice is going to describe what they're glad this great serpent being thrown down.

They're going to describe what he does. What does he do? What is he? What place do you give him when you give him a place to do his work? He uses your mouth and your mind to become an accuser of the brethren. That's the danger of anger.

Your anger is in danger of giving him place to practice accusing the brethren. The great accuser of our brethren has been cast down. In verse 11.

I better finish that rest of verse 9. What does he do day and night? He accuses them before God day and night. And fortunately he's overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony and not loving our lives unto death. You know this word for accuser.

In Greek it's a combination of the preposition kata and agara, the open marketplace, against and the open market. We get our English word to categorize from this word. To place someone in a category.

It's found 32 times in the New Testament. Kategoros. There's three forms of it.

Noun, verb and an adjective. Between those three forms, it's used 32 times in the New Testament. And two of those times are here with Satan.

26 of those times are the Jews. Pharisees. Sad to see the lawyers.

26 of those times it's the Jews. Two times it's Satan. How many times does that leave? Out of 32, it's what's 2 and 26? 28.

So how many times does that leave? So only four times in the whole New Testament is someone other than the Jews or Satan about the business of being accuser. Now how is it that both Satan and the Jews have the same practice? You know because both of them use the same thing to accuse the brothers with. The law.

Both of them use the law to their advantage to accuse the brethren. You see there's something Satan, I'm not sure Satan doesn't understand it but he sure hates it if he understands it. But certainly the Jews never understood it.

They never understood what did Jesus tell them they need to go and first learn. What did he tell them they had not learned? They knew all kinds of law but what had they not learned? I desire mercy. The law wasn't made to condemn men.

They were so fixated on being right according to the law they even condemned the innocent. That's what it says in Matthew 12.7. You don't have to turn there but it says in Matthew 12.7. I'm just going to, I'll just quote it for you real quick. But if you had known what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless.

I'm going to ask you a question for us. How can we recognize when we have given place to the devil? Well what's the devil's work? So how do we know when we've given him place? In our society, who is the person that we recognize to bring formal accusations against people? What are they called? They're called the prosecutor. The prosecutor does this.

What does the prosecutor use and on what basis does he accuse people? Based upon their actions in the light of the law, the right. Prosecutors use the law to convict and to condemn by establishing guilt. The law is their power to silence the accused, prove his guilt with the facts and hold him or her fully accountable for

his actions.

Prosecutors seek what? They seek to convict, they seek to condemn and they seek justice. Right? The law in their hand proves that men are evil, wicked, criminal, guilty. The letter does what? Kills.

Only by the law. By the law meaning representing the power to be right. Now, 28 out of 32 times it's Satan or the Jews.

Pharisees had to see the lawyers accusing. That leaves 4 times that this categoros is still used in the New Testament. Let's look at those 4. First one is Acts 28.

The first one I want to look at is Acts 28 verse 19. Yes, Acts chapter 28 verse 19. Would one of you brothers read that nice and loud please? Who's speaking here? So, what's the key here with Paul? He wouldn't accuse.

Of course, he had nothing to accuse his nation with. Not the 5 times 40 lashes minus 1. Not the 3 times he's beaten with rods. Not the time he was stoned.

Not the fact that he was called the man that stirs up the whole world, the troublemaker. But, no accusation from him. He didn't have anything to bring an accusation against his people.

Let's look at another place this word is used. John chapter 5. You would think from Paul's mouth that the Jews had done no wrong to him. Sounds like Paul didn't keep a record of... John chapter 5. Find verse 45.

Let's set the context here. Jesus is in a discussion with the Pharisees here. Let's start with verse 39.

You search the Scriptures for you, for in them you think you have eternal life and these are they which testify of me, but you're not willing to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive honor from men, but I know you that you don't have the love of God in you. I've come in my Father's name and you don't receive me.

If another comes in his own name, him you'll receive. How can you believe you who receive honor from one another and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. Is Christ going to accuse the Jews of the Father? Would he say that if he planned to accuse them to the Father? You know, Christ won't need to accuse them to the Father.

Who's their accuser? Moses. Moses will be there to accuse them. And what does Moses represent? The law.

Why? Why is Moses going to be their accuser? That's the one they're saying they're listening to. And Moses said in Deuteronomy chapter 18 that I shall raise up another prophet from among your brethren and anyone who shall not listen to him shall be cut off. And that's what's going to accuse them.

Christ is not going to accuse them. He said, don't think I'm going to accuse you to the Father. And the other two places it's used is the same book of John chapter 8. John chapter 8. We'll just start at the beginning.

Beginning of John chapter 8 verse 1. But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives and now early in the morning he came again to the temple. And he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman caught in adultery.

And when they had set her in the midst they said to him, Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us that such women should be stoned. What does such women remind you of? A category.

Such women are in a category. Such women should be stoned. But here's the question.

Therefore, what do you say about her? The law says such women should be stoned. What do you say Jesus? What is the one who said, think not that I am come to destroy the law nor the prophets. For till heaven and earth pass away, not the slightest stroke of a pen, not the dot of an eye shall by any means pass away till all things be fulfilled.

I think if I were Jesus I'd need some time to think. So what did he do? You know it says that they were testing him in order that they might have an occasion to bring an accusation against him. Here's what the law says.

Such women in this category should be stoned. What do you say? He stoops down and begins to write. Verse 7, So when they continued asking him, he raised himself up and said to them.

You notice they're asking him about the woman right? What does he answer them about? He doesn't speak anything about the woman. He asks them about themselves. And what does he ask them? It's not a real question.

He states something to them. He among you who is without sin, is he in disagreement with the law here? No. No he's not in disagreement with the law.

And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it being convicted by their conscience went out one by one, beginning with the oldest, even to the last. And Jesus was left alone and the woman standing in the midst.

Why didn't they start throwing stones? So in your anger, when you got it right there. Right there. Right there.

What's going to stop you? You going to let it fly? You got the thought? They were ugly to you after all. Let them have it. Let them have it.

Come on brother and sister. Let them have it. Eye for eye.

Tooth for tooth. They reviled you. It's right there.

What's going to get you to drop the stone? Consciousness of your own sin. You're not conscious of your own sin. You'll take that rock in your hand.

You'll take that word in your mouth. And you'll step in your own self ungodly, carnal unrighteousness. And you'll wound.

You'll become. You'll give him place. The accuser of the brethren will use your mind and your words to hurt a brother in Christ.

And Jesus was left alone. And the woman standing in the midst. Now there's only one sinless one there.

There is one without sin there. But the one without sin wouldn't cast the stone. The one who could legally do so, blamelessly, was left alone with her.

And when Jesus raised himself up and saw no one but the woman, he said to her, woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you? And he said, neither do I. Man, how could he say that? Because mercy triumphs over judgment. Scripture says if thou, O Lord, didst mark iniquity, who could stand? But there's mercy with thee that thou mayest be feared. And then he tells the woman, neither do I condemn you, what? Go.

And in the Greek it's go and from now on sin no more. What did he just call what she had done? Sin. Without condemnation.

With mercy. That's an example of speaking the truth in love. That's an example of accurate judgment with mercy triumphing.

How could he say that? He said how could he say neither do I condemn you? Because he knew for God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world. But that the world through him might be saved. Turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 18.

Now all things are of God who has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation. Brothers and sisters, you have not been given the ministry of condemnation. You have been given the ministry of reconciliation and he describes what the ministry of reconciliation is in the next verse.

That is that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself not doing what? Not imputing their sins to them. I think the NIV says not counting men's sins against them. Okay, here you are.

Come on now, let's be real. Husband and wife, you're right there. What has she done? What has he done? What has your sister done? What has your brother done? What have they done? You seen the sin? Right there, right in front of your eyes.

How are you going to count it? How are you going to count it? What are you going to choose to do about it? Point it out? Is that your ministry? Point it out now. Get the rock ready. Let the word fly.

Not if Christ is in you. All it took is just one sin and if Christ did that to one of us once, it's over. He sees sin, but he does not impute it to us.

What's his relationship? Listen to this. What does he do with the sin he sees? He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

The punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed. He was wounded for our transgressions. You want to be like Jesus? You want to be like Jesus? When are you going to start being willing to be wounded for someone else's transgression and keep your mouth shut? When are you going to be willing to lay your life down and let them bruise you and beat you with their words, with their inconsiderate actions, with their neglect, and you voluntarily lay it down like a sheep, silent, without complaint? It goes on to say in the same chapter, after the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied and by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many.

And he will bear their iniquities. When are you and I going to bear with the iniquities of our brothers? We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great and he will divide the spoils with the strong because he poured out his life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors for he bore the sin of many and made, no, made what for the transgressors? What did he make for the transgressors? He made intercession.

You know what brothers and sisters? He made intercession. You can't be a prosecutor and an intercessor at the same time. You cannot be a prosecutor and an intercessor at the same time.

When you are interceding for those who have hurt you, who have sinned against you, the Spirit of Christ is enabling you to love others like Christ has loved you. Are you a sinner? Has Christ forgiven you of your sin? How many of your sins do you want Him to recount to you? When you become a prosecutor standing on the law knowing you are right, how dare you say something like that to me? And you forget you are not Christ. You are not sinless.

And you had better get the stone out of your hand because the judge is standing right there. Brothers and sisters, when is the fear of God going to come upon us? We are scared to even think evil of another brother, much less speak it. Do not murmur against one another, brothers.

The judge is at the door. Is this judge able to reinstate all of our sin? Why is it such a danger to give Satan place? What gives him place so often? Our anger, our jealousy, our anger - we yield up to him our mind, our mouth, and we become one with him in his work of accusing the brothers. And we forget the warnings we receive in Scripture.

Listen to this warning. Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge. Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge.

Tell me. Go ahead and describe to me. I did not understand it.

Justify why you said what you said. Go ahead. I did not quite get it.

Explain to me again so I will feel better about what you just did. Is not that what you are doing when you repeat something to someone else? Are not you trying to convince the jury? Is that why you repeat it? Do you feel bad about how you answered your wife? Do you feel bad about what you did to your son? Or do you feel bad about what you did to your brother? So just because you are wrestling with it, you need another witness. So that your testimony can be established.

You know what brothers, you are inexcusable for being an accuser of the brethren. There is no excuse for that. And when is the fear of God going to come upon the people of God so that such things never happen anymore? It is over.

If any man considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. He says he shall punish every accusing tongue. Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, who judge.

For in whatever you judge another, what do you do? You condemn yourself. For you who judge practice the same. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.

And do you think this, O man, who judge those practicing such things and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? When do you despise, when are you despising the goodness of His kindness, tolerance and patience? When is it? When in your anger you are lashing out and you have given the devil place and he through you is accusing the person you are angry with. And you are seeking to shut their mouth, hold them accountable, make them guilty and basically prove their criminality. You are acting as their prosecutor, not their intercessor.

That is dangerous. Turn with me to Luke chapter 7, actually Luke chapter 6. I will start with verse 36, Luke 6, 36. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Judge not and you will not be judged. Condemn not and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.

Give and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will be poured into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use it will be measured back to you. So what if your measure in your anger is judgment? That is what you are going to receive back.

Unless you think that is not clear, let's look at it one other time, Matthew chapter 7. Matthew chapter 7 verse 1. Judge not that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged. Okay, let's go back to those situations.

Justify yourself. After all the thing they said to you, aren't you just for getting angry? You can't just sit there and take it. You can't just let them walk all over you.

Not like Jesus. You can't just turn the other cheek. You can't bless them when they curse you.

You can't do good to them when they hate you. No, not if you are not a Christian you can't. Not if you don't know Christ you can't, because Christ can.

Christ sure can do these things. What do you say? Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. And James says for judgment without mercy shall be shown anyone who has not been merciful.

Two last scriptures. Turn to Colossians chapter 3. Colossians chapter 3 verse 12. Let's back up a little bit.

Let's go to verse 5 Colossians 3 verse 5. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them, but now you yourselves are to put off all these. Saints, get rid of all of these.

You hear it? Get rid of it. Get rid of anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy language out of your lips. Get rid of it.

There is no place for you to speak in anger. There is no place for you to speak out of wrath. There is no place for you regardless of what someone has done to you or not done to you to give the accuser of the brethren place to use your mind and your mouth to be someone's prosecutor.

Verse 12. Therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.

His mercies, so what does it matter if it is the 999th time that person has done that to you? If God lives in you His mercies are new every morning. And the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. Put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, bearing with one another and forgiving one another.

If anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. Now what is the danger if you really don't do this? What if in your mind, Brother Alan, this is just not real. You know, I mean it.

I just can't help myself. My daddy was an angry man. Or you just don't know.

I'm Italian. I don't know, whatever it is. Whatever you seek to justify yourself in and by.

Listen to the warning of the scripture. Let's go back to where we started. Back to Ephesians chapter 4. Back to Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 25.

Therefore, putting off the lie, let each of you speak the truth with his neighbor. For we are members of one another. Be angry and do not sin.

Do not let the sun go down on your wrath. Neither give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer.

Rather let him labor, working with his hands, what is good that he may have something to give to him who has need. And let no corrupt talk proceed forth from your mouth, but only what is good for necessary edification, that it may minister grace to the hearers. Because if you don't do that, what is going to happen? You are going to grieve the Holy Spirit.

Now follow this. When in your anger you give place to the devil to become the accuser of the brethren, you know what comes out of your mouth? Corrupt words that do not build others up, but tear them down in your own self-righteousness. And they do not minister grace, undeserved and unmerited favor.

They minister your own unrighteous, carnal, eye for eye, tooth for tooth human wrath. And when you allow Satan to use you to become the accuser of the brethren, you are going to grieve the Spirit of God. And when you grieve the Spirit of God, you are in danger of losing your own soul.

When it grieved the Lord that He made mankind, what did He do? He destroyed the earth. When it grieved the Lord that He had made Saul king, what did He do? He found another king and removed Saul. When Israel grieved the Lord in the wilderness, what happened? They died in the wilderness and did not enter the land of promise.

When the Lord was grieved in another place with Israel, His Spirit departed from the temple. And if you and I grieve the Holy Spirit, His Spirit will depart from the temple. Because I guarantee you what? The Holy Spirit is not going to live in the same vessel that has given the devil free rent.

We are either going to choose to let Christ and the grace of Christ reign in us, or in our unrighteous anger. We are going to give the devil a place. And we are going to become what He does, the accuser of the brethren.

God forbid. Let's pray. Search your hearts.

We will put it this way. Be angry and do not sin. Search your hearts and be silent.

Do you realize every unprofitable word you spoke this week, you are going to give an account on the day of judgment for it if you don't repent, confess it, and cease from doing such things. Do you realize every thought you have thought, if you have entertained it, if you regard it in your heart and you don't reject it. If there is a single person here you are carrying a burden towards, you are in danger of going to hell for doing so.

We need to be sober. Let's be honest with God. It does not matter what has happened to you this week.

It does not matter what someone said to you. It does not matter how many times you have had to endure it. God is faithful.

And God did not let you and will not let you suffer beyond what you are able to bear. His grace is sufficient. His power is made perfect in weakness.

Christ suffered when He was tempted and He was made perfect by the things He suffered. When you suffer from another individual, God is seeking to perfect the love of Christ in you. And that is how you need to receive it.

And you and I can see sin in others. But how are we to see it? As a prosecutor or an intercessor? May the fear of God fall upon us. May we tremble, tremble to let anything out of our mouth, other than edifying and gracious speech.

Sober. Be sober. Be alert.

Your adversary the devil roams about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. And he may just use your words to do it. Don't give him place.

Brother Eric Cunningham, would you close us in a word of prayer? And then you're dismissed.

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