More Identities of Evil

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[0:00] I believe we spend too much time focused on the wrong thing, getting mad at the wrong sources, fighting in the wrong way.

The reality is we're in a real war. Victory's been done in that war, but there's still battles being waged, and those battles are in our lives, and they're very real.
They're not seen in battles. They're more real than that. They're unseen, and the evidence of them roll over into our lives in so many different ways, and I believe we need to understand that, to learn truths of that, and then live in response to what we learn.
Ephesians chapter 6, Apostle Paul talks about this war that we are in. In verse 11 he says, Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.
For we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
[1:14] Now we've been trying for several weeks now to get a better understanding of how the devil works, what is his approach, and what approach should we take in response. I spent some time last week talking about various names of the evil one in Scripture.

It is not just different names, but each one of them are descriptive in some fashion. It shows a different part of his character or lack thereof, and they teach us who we're dealing with and how he works.
He is called Satan, which means the adversary or the accuser. He runs to and fro on the earth, lurking to see how he can get involved with and mess up whatever he can in our lives.
He does that by leading us down the wrong path. He does that by influencing our life decisions.
Understand, we're not the first enemy to Satan.
Satan opposes the agenda of God. He wants to slow the agenda of God. His work is not against us.
[2:30] It's against the plan of God, and he does that by affecting us. He does it in your life. He does it in mine. He does it in church. He does it in the kingdom of God. He works to hinder the work of God.

He's Satan. He's the adversary. He's the accuser. Satan is a transliterated Hebrew term, and the Greek term, very similar, is devil.
Very similar, except devil speaks more of the slander characteristic in Satan. 1 Peter chapter 5 tells us that he seeks to devour us by ruining us, ruining our reputation, ruining our testimony, ruining our legacy.
He prowls around strategizing on how to have the worst effects on the life of believers, the worst effects on the works of the church. He's the devil.
The liar and the slanderer. He's also Lucifer, which literally means the shining one. He was created beautiful and of high standing in heaven.
[3:42] Sadly, his pride got in the way, and he tried to rise above God, and he couldn't. So now cast to the earth, he tries his best to look better, his options more attractive to us than those of God.

Common, the most common names, the ones I normally refer to, Satan, devil, Lucifer. We talked about that last week, and so if you wasn't here last week, you just got to recap a whole lot quicker than they did last week.
But today, I want to talk about some of the more obscure names that are still very descriptive and give us a lot more meaning to exactly what he's up to.
The first one I want us to see is Beelzebub. Beelzebub is first mentioned in 2 Kings as a god of Akron that King Ahaziah wanted to get answers from.

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And he wanted to know if he was going to live. And Elijah the prophet was a contemporary of Ahaziah. And he came to him and said, Elijah did, is there not a king in Israel?
[5:08] And the Lord said, told him, the Lord said, you will not rise up, you'll die. He told the king that, and so the king sent men after Elijah.

And when they came after Elijah, Elijah cast down fire from heaven, and it consumed them. And so he sent more men. And Elijah did it again.
He sent more men. And reluctantly, those men went, and he did it again. And it happened again and again. And after repeated pleas, Scripture says about the king, so he died.
Now, the moral of that story is, don't call on Beelzebub, okay? It don't go well. But I knew about Beelzebub before I knew about that story. I learned about Beelzebub from my eighth grade English teacher.
My eighth grade English teacher was mean. She was. She was set in her ways. And I learned three things out of her class.
[6:16] She was the meanest teacher I had in eighth grade. But I can't say that I learned three things out of any other class in the eighth grade. But I did from her. One of them was that she didn't want us to crumble up our paper and throw it in the trash can.

That instead we needed to fold it and place it in the trash can. Which took a lot of vigor and zeal out of an eighth grade boy.
I mean, the whole point of making a mistake is to crumple it up and throw it across the room and see if you can make it, you know? She would not have any of that. The second thing she did was she wrote a lot is two words on the board.
If you didn't know it, I know where you didn't go to school. But a lot is two words. All the time. Okay? And so she wrote on the board in real big letters. A with a space in between. Lot. And then underneath it real small is two words. And she'd erase it and have somebody come up to the board and write it.
[7:26] And she'd say bigger than that. And she'd write it bigger than that. And then inevitably every time they got the space too close together. So she'd call them out on that too. But I happen to know that a lot is two words.

And since the eighth grade I've never wrote it as one word. Never have. The other thing she made us do is read a lot. We had to read a lot. A lot. And that's two words.
And depending on what size of book you read, how many points you got. And we had to gather so many points. And I read a lot of little books.
Because if you read little books, you got to read a bunch of them. So I read a lot of books. And one of those books, well, I'll tell you, that gave me a love. It was delayed by about 30 years.
But it gave me a love for American literature. And I remember some of the stories that I read in eighth grade. And it kicked in a few years ago. And I read most classic American literature in a year.
[8:25] I mean, I just loved it. And so she gave me a zeal for that. And I contacted her back and told her that. She didn't respond because she's mean. But anyway. But one of those books we read was called Lord of the Flies.

It's a horrible book. But it's a book about, and if you've got to read it for school, it's wonderful. But it's a book about boys on an island trying to govern themselves. And it's chaotic, to say the least.
And in one point in that book, there's a pig's head cut off and put on a stick as an offering to the god of the forest that these boys were concerned about.
And a pig's head on a stick. You don't have to try this at home if you don't want to. Take my word for it. Will draw flies. And so the flies came. So they called that Lord of the Flies, which is what Beelzebub means.
And I remember those discussions around that in the eighth grade. However, more importantly than that, it's also in the New Testament as well. In Matthew 12, verse 24, the Pharisees said, Jesus cast out demons by the authority of Beelzebub, or the devil.
[9:36] And Jesus responded to them, why would Satan cast out Satan? Duh. I added that. But I think that's what he meant. Because the word means the god of the manure pile is what it means, literally.

Which draws flies. Therefore, it's the lord of the flies. And the point of that, that I want you to get because these names that he have are descriptive.
And it tells us about him. Satan is the god of filth. The nastiness of the world is from the evil one.

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The devil does his strongest work through filth. He'll infuse your life with filth. And he'll do it at a trickle rate so that you won't recognize it.
I mean, just let me ask you a rhetorical question. But one to think about. Do you allow more filth in your home through your television or through your phone than you did at one time?
[10:35] Profanity is much greater than it used to be in such settings. Pornography is much greater than it used to be in such settings.

Violence is much greater than it used to be. So like a frog in a kettle, and I don't encourage you to do this, but if you put a frog in a kettle, theoretically, of cold water, and turn the heat up, because the temperature rises slowly, the frog will never jump out, and it'll boil to death there.
So it goes. Like a frog in the kettle, the god of filth has slowly but steadily conditioned us to filth. Like a snowball rolling downhill, the filth comes faster and more perverse constantly, and we set ourselves up to be exposed to more of it.
All the while, he's eating at your life. He's eating at your marriage. He's eating at your friendships. He's eating at your self-image. He's eating at your confidence.
It's because he's Beelzebub, the god of filth. And he'll try his best to use it to derail you in your walk with God.
[11:53] He's also Beelzebub. Beelzebub. Literally means without value or worthless.

It's used in 2 Corinthians 6 verse 15 when it says this. Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness?
Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?
For we are a temple of the living God. Now the point that Paul is sharing there is Christians are not to be in love relationships with unbelievers.
If you are, you're unequally yoked. And it comes from the idea of yoking two oxen together to pull a plow. So if you can imagine putting an ox in one yoke and putting a dog in another, it's not going to be a very good pull.
[13:05] It's an unequally yoked situation. And the moral of that story is, ladies, don't date dogs. And a lot of guys are.

They're dogs. A believer marrying or dating an unbeliever will most likely guide the believer off course.
It's like trying to put light and darkness in the same place. It don't work. And you are walking into a den of temptation because one without Christ, I want you to hear me, lacks the conviction of a believer.
One without Christ is without Christ. And one without Christ acts like they're without Christ. The lost are going to act lost.
And the moral compass is different. They don't have the guiding voice of the Holy Spirit of God. In addition to that, the Christian has the empowerment of the Holy Spirit against the wiles of the devil.
[14:10] And those who are without Christ, that does not exist in their life. Now, I must admit, there's always victory stories. Somebody will stop me after worship and say, you know what?

There's always victory stories where somebody got saved dating a believer and they get in church. And it changes their life forever. However, nine times out of ten, and I just made that statistic up. But nine times out of ten from my own experience, it does not happen that way. It does not. Much more often, the believer comes to church by himself or herself after marriage or they just stop coming altogether.
Young ladies, don't date guys that love Jesus less than you. And I mean that in two different ways. Date someone stronger in the Lord than you are.
Make it a challenge to find somebody that loves Jesus more than you to have a relationship with. And number two, date somebody who loves God more than they love you.
[15:15] Because if they love the Lord Jesus enough, he works out a lot of the kings. Now, there are a lot of witnesses in this room. Or let me say this. There's a lot of witnesses.

There's probably some in this room that would amen me heartily if they didn't think it was inappropriate with that. Because I've had those conversations again and again.
Plus, Scripture warns about it. Yoking with an unbeliever can be a major diversion in your walk with God. I'll just be honest with you. It can be a major diversion in your walk in all of life.

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It's a fork in the road. It's a crucial kind of decision. And I want you to be clear. Satan will tempt you to do it. That is what Belial does.
He corrupts what is right. The word is often used in the Old Testament. And it describes a worthless, baseless person.
[16:20] The devil is worthless and baseless and corrupts all that he can come in contact with. A relationship that's not based on Christ is baseless.

It's worthless. It's a hindrance. And that's what Paul speaks of when he speaks of Belial. But Satan will make other things worthless as well. Do you know that they now say that there are 72 additional gender identities besides male and female?
72. Based on what? It's baseless. It's baseless. And it makes the gender confused feel that much more worthless.
Why is this country so hungry for the opportunity to rip a human being horribly from its home before it's born? Why is that such a fascination?
Because Satan convinces people that the unborn is worthless. That they're in the way. You want to know what kind of war we're in?
[17:30] It's baseless and it's worthless. It's Belial. But not only that, he's also called the tempter. And I want you to listen to Paul's concern.

I want you to listen to his passion for the church while he was away from them. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 3 verse 5, it says, For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.
Paul was burdened because he could not come back and encourage them. And people in the body of Christ need the encouragement from the word of God and from the body of believers. Why? Because we're tempted.
Due to the atmosphere of temptation that we live in, all of us need to be nurtured in the word of God. And the tempter will not only try to lead us into temptation, but he'll try to lead us out of the fellowship of believers.
He'll try it every time. And so Paul says, I want to be with you. I want to encourage you. And I want to thank you this morning.
[18:46] Because it's Labor Day weekend. There's a lot of places you could be besides in the house of God. And by simply being here, it makes a statement.

Because I'll be honest with you, even if you don't have plans anywhere else, people, well, they ain't going to know we don't have plans. Let's just stay at home. That's easy to do. That's easy to do. But after a football weekend like we had, my goodness, we better call on the Lord.
And it really don't matter what team you're rooting for. I think they all suffered. But what in the world am I talking about? The reality is we need each other.
We need each other. We need the encouragement of the word. And Paul says previously in verse 5 that he wanted to live before them holy and blameless as an example and to be a constant encouragement to them along the way.
I want you to listen to how he describes the previous days that he was with them. In 1 Thessalonians 2 verse 12, he says, We exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.
[19:58] Paul is saying, I want to encourage you and give you a charge to go fight hell on this earth and in your life with all that you have for the glory of God.

And then he tells the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 10 verse 5, Take every thought captive to obey Christ.
I want to pause there for just a moment. I want you to marinate in that a minute. Take every thought captive to obey Christ.
He said, We need to be encouraged and charged to walk worthy of the high calling of salvation that God has put in our lives. Don't let one evil thought, don't let one depressing thought, don't let one nasty thought, don't let one negative thought pass through your mind without capturing it in obedience to Christ.
As the great theologian Barney Fife says, nip it in the bud. When it comes, by the power of the blood of Jesus, God, remove that thought from my head and get me off of it.
[21:38] Every thought captive. Don't let them sneak around, don't let them hang around. Take every thought captive to obey Christ. The tempter strives to tear souls apart, to tear lives apart, to

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tear families apart, to tear churches apart, one temptation at a time.

And we so need the encouragement of the believers. We're so tempted to let the word of God slip, to let prayer be neglected, to let the faithfulness of gathering with the body of believers go to the wayside.
And Paul said, I need to get the word to you so that you don't fall into temptation. He's the tempter. He loves to mess with us. He's the tempter. One more name I want to give you this morning of the evil one. And that's the accuser.
Revelation 12, verse 10, he promises us that the accuser of the brothers will be torn down, thrown down, excuse me. And I'm going to tell you, Satan knows his future.
[22:48] He knows it. He's hard at work now. He loves to point out your sins. He'd love for you to think that you're a loser. He wants to make you feel guilty about things that have been forgiven and gone to just dog you out and make you hopeless.

Now, I want to be clear about something. Every time you feel guilt or an accusation, it does not mean it's from the evil one. For the Holy Spirit's job, one of them is to convict us of sin, to convict us of unrighteousness is the way Scripture puts it.
And so if you've got sin in your life that you haven't confessed and you haven't turned from and you continue to and you're a child of God and you feel that conviction because of what you've done wrong, it's not the devil messing with you.
It's you messing with the devil. And the Holy Spirit is trying to wake you up to walk you out of those circumstances by asking God to forgive you, to empower you, to walk away from that.
And then you go back to what we just looked at. Take every thought captive for the Lord. You look at James 4, 7. Resist the evil one and he'll flee from you. Resist the devil and he'll flee from you.
[24:09] You rely upon those things. So every accusation that you feel or every bit of guilt that you feel, it don't always come from Satan. The Holy Spirit will convict you of your sin.

But when you feel that conviction, you confess that sin. You turn from that sin. You walk away from that sin. And don't you look back again because the Lord's promise is that he will remove that sin as far as the east is from the west.
It'll be gone and he will give you the strength and ability not to do it again. And if you do it again, you get back on your knees before God and confess it back to God.
Now, by the way, you and I, we make enough mistakes each day. We commit enough sins each day that we just need to do that daily. We just need to do that daily.
And I'm thankful for 1 John 1, 9 that says that if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Man, that verse is so packed but I don't have time to deal with it this morning.
[25:12] But what it says is if you confess the sins that you're aware of and that you know about and I believe, folks, you need to name them. God knows what they are.

You need to know what they are. And so take a moment to name them before the Lord. What's the sin in your life that you need God to forgive you for to empower you to rise above?
What is that? Name that before the Lord. Face it. Deal with it. He went to the cross for that sin. The least you can do is say it to him.
Apologize to him and ask for his forgiveness. And you know what? When you do that with the most sincere effort, you're still going to miss some because we've got so good at it we don't even recognize him anymore.
And that's why I like the second part of that passage. that if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and listen to this and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That means if we're sincere on the front end, he'll clean up the rest of it.
[26:19] He'll clean the slate. And once he does, my friend, that's all under the blood of Christ. It's all gone. It's gone. Now listen, the accuser will bring it back up.

It's kind of like reflux, you know. Whatever has been consumed and is now gone, he'll bring back up and it'll burn when he does. It's what he does.
The accuser will whisper in your ear that God did not forgive you. He'll whisper in your ear that you're just going to go on and do it again. He'll whisper in your ear that you'll never be right again.
And if you listen to that and if you don't take those thoughts captive for the Lord Jesus Christ, he'll be right. He'll be right. However, by the blood that Christ shed on Calvary, you don't have to listen to that mess.

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He is just the accuser. He always points blame. He whispers sweet nothings in your ear. He'll flatten your spiritual tires. He hates your joy in the Lord and he'll fight it for all it's worth.
[27:19] He'll accuse you and try to destroy you and then try to take down others with you. Don't fall for that junk. He's not worth it. He's the God of filth and he'll bring it around us to try to attract us to it.

He is belial. He's worthless. He's the tempter. He's the accuser. And he at least wants to throw you off course.
He wants to lead us to waste our life away. He wants to lead us to even ruin our lives. And if you think nobody understands what I go through, I'm the first one to experience what I've dealt with. I'm sorry to do this to you. But 1 Corinthians 10, 13 says this. No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to man.
God is faithful and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability but with the temptation he will also provide a way out of escape that you may be able to endure it.
[28:36] Let me go back to what I referenced earlier. James 4 verse 7 Resist the devil and he'll flee from you. I want to remind you what I said about that when I first said that. He might only flee for a minute.

He may come back the next minute. Resist him. He might come back another three minutes. Resist him. He may come back another five minutes. Resist him. He may come back in two hours. Resist him. Resist him. He'll change his ploy. He'll try something different if it don't work on you. But you resist him. Specialist Jeff Lewis was a supply clerk in the year 2000 for the elite 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.
And he was shocked when he got the command to participate in a parachute jump. He had never trained to do it. It was a clerical error.
[29:47] But he fell into the ranks, got his equipment, boarded the plane, jumped out of the plane, landed on the ground, shaken but unhurt.

And afterwards, they realized their error. And they asked him, why'd you do that? He said he was doing what a soldier was supposed to do.
He was obeying orders. This is what he said. He said, the army said I was airborne qualified. I wasn't going to question it. I had a job to do.
And I had to believe in what I was doing. May his tribe increase. May we, in the same way, stand up for Christ and all the temptation that we face.
Preacher, I don't know how to do that. You don't have to. You have to know the one that knows how to do it and rely upon him constantly.
[31:05] I'm going to say it. Be dependent upon him constantly. And he will walk you through the mess that the evil one tries to throw at you.

Now you won't have the help of the Holy Spirit of God unless you know the Lord Jesus personally as your personal Lord and Savior. That does not come by church attendance.
It does not come by church affiliation. It comes by a personal surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, I know I'm a sinner. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and from this day forward I commit my life to follow you completely.
Or as Jesus told those early disciples, come follow me. And they just dropped what they had and went and followed him. If you don't know the Lord today personally, you need to drop what you're doing and come follow him.
Give him your life. He'll not only provide you an eternity with him, but there'll be an uptick in your life, a difference in eternal life.
[32:17] Because eternal life don't start when we die. It starts when we give our life to Christ. Maybe you're here this morning and you have done that, but you've never acknowledged that publicly.

Jesus, by his example and by his commission, tells us that the first step of obedience is to follow that with baptism, to physically do that in front of others, to let them know spiritually what happened to you privately.
And if you've never done that, I promise you it'll be a hindrance in your life because you missed a simple step to start out with. I encourage you, you've never done that, to come.
Maybe you're here and God's leading you to be a part of First Baptist Church. God's moving and working in our midst and I'm thankful for that. And if you feel like God's leading you to be a part of

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this congregation, you come.
I'd love to guide you in that process of what that means. Or maybe you're here this morning and you're just war-torn. You've got stuff in your life that you're ashamed of.
[33:18] You've got stuff in your life that you beat down about. You've got stuff in your life that you need God to intervene in. And I'm thankful that when you call upon His name, He'll meet you where you are.

You can do that where you stand in just a moment or you can do it at this altar. If you want a pastor to pray with you, I'll be happy to pray with you. I have no idea what God's telling you to do, but I know you'll never be satisfied unless you follow Him completely.
Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, I ask today that You'll work and You'll move in our lives, that Lord, You'll speak to us not audibly, louder than that, in our own heart.
Compel us, Lord, to know exactly what You would have us to do and help us to not be satisfied with anything less than that, God. Help us to obey You right now, oh God, I pray in Jesus' precious name.
Amen.

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