

ARMOR OF GOD

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS WITH PASTOR JACK

Knowing Our Adversary and the Armor of God Week 3: (Eph.6:10-13) Knowing Our Adversary (Part 3)

October 7th, 2015

Introduction

- A. Review weeks 1 and 2 in our Knowing Our Adversary series.
- B. Tonight in our last installment of Knowing Our Adversary, before turning to the Armor of God, we want to focus on some of Satan's chief strategies against God's people, the church. We have placed them in 8 categories that cover most of his activities so we might know him and be aware of his devices.

Tempting Us To Sin

- A. Sin is basically defined as missing the mark God has set and turning instead to our own ways.
- B. We must be able to distinguish between sin and temptation (Jam.1:13-15). Though Satan cannot make us sin, he can and does seek to lure us through our flesh, our lusts, and the pride of life. He is the chief instigator to sin (1Jn.3:8).
- C. Sin appeals to our unredeemed flesh (Rom.8:11-13, 23), which is why we are constantly warned to put on the new man and put off the old (Rom.6:11-13)(Eph.4; Col.3).
- D. Temptation often begins in the thought realm and these fiery darts of the enemy come at the most peculiar times. In the weeks to come, we will be studying the shield of faith that God has given us to overcome these attacks.
- E. Even Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (Lk.4:1-13) suggests these assaults were from within, not from without. As our Lord, Jesus knows what we face and can help us be more than conquerors (Heb.2:18; 4:15).

Creating Doubt

- A. Challenges and questions are often engendered by the enemy as he seeks to cast doubts and questions regarding our faith.
- B. Some questioning and searching for truth is healthy and needful for growth while others are the insidious work of the enemy, who would have us focus on how we feel and not on what we know.
- C. Remember doubting Thomas, who earned his name for his doubt that overwhelmed a common sense response (Jn.20:25), but he was by no means alone in his difficulties (Lk.24:36-41)(Mt.28:16-17).
- D. John the Baptist had his share of doubt as well (Mt.11:3), even though Jesus declared of him that there was not a greater prophet than he (Lk.7:28). So did Peter, as he attempted to walk to Jesus on the water (Mt.14), but his sinking upon seeing the circumstances he was in were characterized by Jesus as doubt and a lack of faith (Mt.14:30-31).
- E. All of the disciples participated in doubt and fear in waking Jesus up in a particularly bad storm on the sea of Galilee and were told the same thing as Peter (Mk.4:38-40).
- F. Doubt works against faith (Mk.11:23), and Jesus spoke of it in the Sermon on the Mount (Lk.12:28-31) as worrisome and worldly. Yet we all have to battle weakness in faith as evidenced in doubt (Rom.14:1, 23). Paul spoke of it (1Ti.2:8), as did James (Jam.1:6).
- G. We will be looking at the armor God provides for our minds, the helmet of salvation, in a few weeks.

Motivating Persecution Against You

- A. As you serve God, you can expect Satan to seek to stir up opposition against you. Jesus warned of this (Jn.16:1-3, 33) and spoke of it to the church at Smyrna (Rev.2:9-10). Paul told Timothy in no uncertain terms of its inevitability (2Ti.3:12).
- B. In light of Paul's words, what then would it mean when a Christian living in the world finds no persecution or difficulty in pursuing Jesus and sharing His love?
- C. Persecution is a tool of the enemy to oppose the church.

Hindering Our Service To God

- A. Along with persecution comes hindrance (1Th.2:18), especially as we make ourselves available to the Lord for service.
- B. The more effective you become, the greater the hindrances will be; however, his plan is to stop you before you begin! So the discouragement and opposition is found early on as you begin to serve, step up to teach, decide to spend more time in church, make yourself available, etc.
- C. Knowing Satan's plans will keep you from falling to them...forewarned is forearmed.

Tempting Us To Rely Upon Our Own Resources

- A. Another area of opposition from the enemy is encouraging us to rely upon ourselves, rather than upon the Lord's power. It is a temptation we all constantly face.
- B. One good example is found in the report of 1Chr.21 as David stumbles in his trust in the Lord and leans to his own strength and assumed power, only to find judgment as the enemy stands alongside encouraging him to go that route.
- C. One of the reasons God may have whittled down the potential fighting force of Gideon before sending him into battle with the Midianites was to keep him and his troops from trusting in themselves (Judg.6-7).
- D. The warnings from our Lord regarding this foolishness abound in the Scripture (Jer.17:5)(1Co.10:12), and Paul tells us where to keep our focus (Eph.6:10).

Bringing Division To The Body

- A. (Pro.6:16-19) Satan works to promote what God hates. Division is one of the devil's greatest tools. The consequences and fallout of falling for it are horrendous. Yet it is so prevalent that God speaks often of our being on guard against it.
- B. (1Co.3:1-3)(Eph.4:32-5:2) Jesus prayed about this very thing, that we would be one with each other (Jn.17:21-22).

Infiltrating The Church With False Teachers And False Believers

- A. Last week we saw that false doctrines are a work of the enemy to keep the world in the dark, so he also seeks to oppose the saints.
- B. One problem is the large number of those who call themselves the church but who do not know Jesus Christ (Mk.4:30-32). Jesus spoke of them in the parable of the wheat and tares (Mt.13:24-40).
- C. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, will help us stand fast and see clearly!

Tempting Us To Give Up

- A. Through discouraging circumstances (Lk.5:18-20)
- B. By unbelieving friends (Mk.5:35-43)
- C. By questioning divine delays (Jn.11:1-6)
- D. We must simply hang in there (Gal.6:9)(Zec.4:10)

Conclusion

- A. Next week we begin in Eph.6:14a with having girded our waist with truth!

Ephesians 6:10-13

"Knowing Our Adversary - Part 3"

All right. Let's open our Bibles tonight - Ephesians 6:10 - as we continue tonight in our series that we have entitled "Knowing Our Adversary" and then the "Armor of God." And we've spent two weeks.

Tonight will be our last, or our third, week of "Knowing Our Adversary" so that next week we can begin to look specifically at the armor God has provided for you and me in the battle that we fight. So next week, we're going to do verse 14a. We're going to do the very first part, having your waist girded with truth; and then the next week, we'll do breastplate of righteousness; next week, we'll do feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; next week, shield of faith. And so we're going to take each one of those parts one week at a time.

Introduction

A. Review weeks 1 and 2 in our "Knowing Our Adversary" series

But we wanted to kind of get the overall picture of the enemy that we face spiritually - of the devil. So we've spent two weeks. We looked at how Lucifer was created by God before man, his position, the glory that God gave him; and yet the choice that he made, the fall that he took as he refused God's authority. He wanted to be like God, sit on the sides of the north in the seat that God occupied. He wanted to be worshipped. We learned that one-third of the angels, however many millions of angels there are, fell with him. We spent a week looking at his character as described by the titles that God assigns to him, and they describe his actions pretty well - Satan and the devil and the tempter and the liar and the serpent. And we looked, at the end of that first week, at some of the limitations that are upon him. People go, "Oh, the devil." But there're plenty of limitations just by the fact that he is answerable to God. He is a created being. He's more powerful than you are, but "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

In our second week, we looked at his MO - his method of operation in the world. In other words, what's Satan's goal when it comes to keeping his own under wraps, his strategy against his own? And we looked at the Scriptures that talk about him blinding the minds of those who don't see Jesus, lest seeing they might believe in Him. We looked at how he hardens the hearts of men; that there are plenty of attacks on the character and the nature of God through the teaching of false teachers, if you will, and false prophets; they deny the Bible; they deny the deity of Christ; they deny the grace of God; they deny (oftentimes) the second coming; they provide a god for you - just not the right one; they influence governments; and they oversee the world's politic in that regard.

B. Eight categories of Satan's chief strategies against God's people

Well tonight we come to our third category, and that is - what is Satan's strategy, then, against you? What are the most effective and, for us, the most obvious and those things that God has revealed to us? What is his strategy against you and me? We've put them in eight categories. I think they cover just about everything. You might find one that stands on its own, but I think these eight general categories will sum up most of his activities. And we want to be sure that you can identify the enemy, that you're not ignorant of his devices, as the Bible says (2 Corinthians 2:11), because then you'll be equipped to overcome him. And when we get to the armor here, beginning next week, which is such a good bunch of verses and, man, so helpful, then you'll be able to stand with the full armor of God on. So tonight we just want to take a look at these ways in which our adversary attacks the church, if you will. We looked at his character, looked at his work in the world, and tonight with you and me.

So we had you turn here because we're going to bounce around a little bit. Starting next week, we're not bouncing anymore. But tonight, we wanted to again go back to these verses. Verse 10, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand." And then he begins, verse 14, "Stand therefore."

Tempting Us To Sin

A. Sin is defined as missing the mark God has set

Satan's greatest work against you, more than anything else, is he wants to, number one, tempt you to sin. Sin destroys, right? It cuts off your relationship with God. It is your separation from God that is his hope. There are a lot of words for "sin" in the Bible, and they are very descriptive, and they certainly define lots of attitudes of ours in our relationship, or the lack thereof, with God. But the most typical word for sin, the one that is used far more than any other, is just a word that means to miss the mark. Sin, by its definition, is God sets the standard, and we fail to keep it; or God sets the bar, and we don't raise ourselves up to it; or He puts the bullseye, and we shoot left, and we shoot right, or the arrow falls far short. We miss God's purposes. We miss God's will. We turn to our own ways. And that's his first and foremost plan for you - cut you off from God by causing you to sin, which will naturally bring that separation between you and the Lord. That's the one that Jesus came to restore, and that's the one that sin - it won't ruin your relationship with God in terms of the fact that you're His child, but it will inhibit and cut you off from the blessings of God or from the usefulness to the Lord as you would walk with Him. So that's his first goal - to tempt you to sin. It's his first volley.

B. Distinguishing between sin and temptation

And I think you should be well aware of the fact that not all temptation is sin. When James wrote his short epistle, towards the end of your Bible, he said in verse 13 of chapter 1, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone." And then James says, "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

The devil would have you believe that every temptation is sin, that every evil thought, that every evil imagination is entirely your own, and that's just not so. Satan has a lot to do with seeking to draw you away from God. Now Satan cannot make you sin, but he can certainly invite you to sin or lure you away from God by appealing to your flesh or to your lust or even to the pride in your life; that he'll try to just move you away. 1 John 3:8 says, "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." So Satan is the instigator to sin, and by using your flesh and the world system around you and the culture in which you live, he will certainly seek to draw you away from the Lord, thus keeping you from God's blessing, from any kind of usefulness; and then he'll bind you up. You'll be stuck in rebellion or in darkness. It doesn't mean you are no longer God's child. If you're saved, you're saved, and there's really no way to reverse that trend, you know? The Lord moves in, you get a new heart, your name's in the Book of Life, He's going to finish what He started, no one's going to snatch you out of His hand. But you can certainly be kept from the good things of God most of your life. I would say that Lot is a pretty good example in the Bible of a guy who makes it, but he barely gets in. In fact, if Peter hadn't written his epistle, I'm pretty sure I would have written Lot off - I'll never see Lot again. I'd have written him off with Saul. Saul, I'm not sure made it. In fact, I'm pretty sure Saul didn't. But Lot certainly did. And I don't know that from the Old Testament. I know that by the grace of God, from the New. So you can go a long way in your life just being kind of cut off and yet being redeemed but yet having very little to show for it. And that's certainly what Satan's goal for you is - isolate you, keep you from that which God has for you, tempt you to live in sin.

C. Sin appeals to our unredeemed flesh

Now, because you have this born-again Spirit living in this very unredeemed body - unredeemed, just look in the mirror, you'll see, it's unredeemed, it's dying, it's getting older, it's wasting away - you're not going to want to live in this puppy forever. There's a new one coming, a far better one (with hair and stuff). It's coming. In any event, because you live in an unredeemed body, your flesh naturally responds to these temptations. It wants to participate. It wants to get even, it wants to follow "I want what I want, I've got to have what I have, I'll make up reasons why I should." It drives my life, my flesh, unless I die to it and begin to live in the Spirit. And so we stand strong in God's grace, and because we're saved, we can do something that we couldn't do in the world - we can refuse to follow sin. We can say "no" to sin. "No!" Isn't that the greatest freedom that you know? You just say "no" to sin. "I'm going to walk with God." The guy in the world can make New Year's resolutions as long as he likes. He just can't keep any

of them. There's no power. But that's why Paul says to the Romans in chapter 6:11, "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin," (the word "reckon" is a word that means to make a decision, make a choice) "but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lust." You can't say that to an unbeliever, but God can say that to the saint. You can say "no" to sin. And the enemy is certainly going to come along and say, "You should say 'yes' to sin" which is why we constantly read in the Scriptures - read Ephesians 4, read Colossians 3, read Romans 6 - put off this old man, put on this new man, make those choices. Because the enemy's greatest work against you is to try to keep you from the things God wants for you, and he can do that best by causing you to sin.

D. Temptation often begins in the thought realm

Temptation most often begins, biblically, in the form of thoughts or ideas or desires. It literally is an "inside job" more often than not. Right? That's where sin begins. Now we're going to read about the fiery darts of the wicked one and the shield of faith (in a couple of weeks) because these temptations oftentimes seem to come at the most unexpected times, at times when you think how in the world will this now be taking place. But you should recognize its source. I don't know if you've ever woke up just furious or thinking some evil towards someone. And you go, "What in the world?! I just woke up! I haven't even had time to work this up yet, and here it is." Or you sit down, and you read your Bible, and you wonder how that wicked idea all of a sudden came into your mind. Or you're praying and worshipping and man, everything distracts you all of a sudden. There is a warfare that goes on. Where is that coming from? Oh, I think you should know there's a warfare for your life. There's a devil. He's for real. And temptation appeals to activities that we know are not of God. So how do you overcome them? Well we're going to, like I said, be looking at them in the next few weeks.

But we should know that Satan is very keen on taking you down the wide road that leads to destruction as often as he can. And he'll do so as often as you'll let him. It's a problem. The good news is Satan has no patience. That'd be a virtue, right? And because he has no patience, sin temptations tend to be very short-lived. I'll give you a silly example. If I'm dieting, which is almost always, and I want one of those chocolate-filled donuts (because those are biblical), if I just get in the car and drive away before I get out of the car and walk into the.....if I walk into the donut shop, I'm cooked. I'm cooked. I'm getting one, maybe two because I'm here anyway, and it's too late. I'm sorry. I'll repent later. But if I can just drive by, three minutes later I don't even think about it anymore. Temptations tend to be very short-lived. It's that way with almost all sin. If you can just say "no" and keep moving, "Lord, help me," it won't be very long before it's gone because the enemy's not patient. He's also not smart so he'll come back a lot. But he's not going to stay for very long. So if you, as James says, "Draw near to God," then you can "resist the devil and he will flee" (James 4:7-8). Draw near to the Lord, resist the devil, and he flees. You should know that the victory over sin is oftentimes won in milliseconds. Truly. Just say, "No. I'm not going to react in anger. I'm not going to get even. I'm not going to put myself first. I'm just going to walk away from this thing." And a minute later you go, "Man, I'm free from this! I'm delivered!" Draw near to God. Temptation is not sin, according to James, but the entertaining of it and the carrying out of it certainly is.

E. Jesus' temptation in the wilderness

When Jesus spent His first forty days of public ministry driven into the wilderness by the devil, tempted in every way - and written out for us to read because no one was there, so the Lord communicated that to the gospel writers to tell them what He had gone through - after forty days, when the enemy came, after a time of fasting and prayer, Jesus overcame the temptation - which was not sin - by standing upon the Scriptures. In fact, if you read the Luke 4 account, you realize that most of the attacks in the desert were internal. They were internal suggestions to the heart of the Lord. "You can make some food out of the rocks. You're God! For goodness sakes, You haven't eaten in six weeks! Help Yourself. Serve Yourself." And they weren't external. But then you'll read after these three attempts that Satan left Him for a season. You remember reading that? He went away for a season. Why? Because he's not patient. "All right. I'll come back tomorrow."

If you've ever worked in retail, at the registers they always put things that they call "impulse" purchases. It's stuff you don't need, you don't really want, but you see it. "Oh, I've gotta have me one of them." It doesn't matter what it is. Dirt-flavored candy. "I've gotta have me a couple of them. They're on sale. What are you gonna do?" Last-minute stuff that you just wouldn't buy if you took all day. But it's impulse. You get by there, you're not coming back for the dirt candy. You're not going to do that. You got by it. Right?

Same thing with temptation. Same thing. You've just got to walk away. And when we read in the Bible, in Hebrews 2:18 for example, "that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted." Jesus said, "I know what you're going through. I know what you're having to face, and I know the way out." "We have a High Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses. He was tempted in all ways like we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). He's God. We have to decide - at every point - not to sin. We're going to fall short a lot. We're going to miss a lot. But that's the life of the believer. I have to engage the enemy and stand my ground. So Satan's plan, if you will, his daily bread and butter, is to turn you from God and His ways, turn you from life and light to darkness and alienation and isolation from God, and set you up for some judgment or some correction or some woodshed experiences with God because then he can just keep you out of the flow. You're not producing anything, you're not talking to anyone. If anyone knows you're a Christian, you're just stumbling them. Then he's won, at least as far as you're concerned. So, temptation to sin is always number one.

Creating Doubt

A. Challenges and questions are often engendered by the enemy

Second of all, in your life, he will seek very much to create doubt in your heart about God. Satan's ploy in your relationship with God is seeking to create doubt about your faith, and it seems like that is often intensified and supported with the, "I just don't feel saved, I just don't feel happy, I don't feel like singing, I don't feel like reading my Bible, I don't feel good." (Pastor Jack's tone gets increasingly whiny) "Why is it I sometimes feel so close to God and other

times I feel like He moved and didn't tell me where He went? Why can I worship at church, but I can't worship at home in the shower? Why don't I feel the same way at work as I do when I'm up at retreat with a bunch of guys? I feel different....." and the doubt begins to creep in. "Why is it one day I'm so blessed to know God loves me and will never leave me and the next day I'm pretty sure He's forsaken me? I don't know what He did during the night, but He moved out." One day I look with great faith that God's hands..... "Oh, He's going to deliver me, He's going to take me." The next day, I'm just despairing because I just don't know what's going on.

So, why does that happen? The truth doesn't change. God's truth is as true the day you're believing as the day you're having trouble with it. The challenge and the questions are often engendered by the enemy as he seeks to have you question God's love and His goodness, His power and His mercy. You're not the first to do that. Satan said to Eve in the Garden, "Has God really said....?" (Genesis 3:1) He started there, didn't he? He questioned God to God's people. "God's not fair. God's not good. God's holding out on you. If He gave you everything that you could eat of this fruit, and you could be as smart as God, you see what He's doing here? He's keeping you under wraps!" And Eve went, "I don't want that!" And Adam went, "Well, let me have a little of that myself." And they began to know not just good but good and evil, and that's not good. The Bible tells us we should be foolish when it comes to evil; just wise when it comes to things that are good. So this has been going on for a long time.

B. Some questioning and searching for truth is healthy and needful for growth

Look, all of you have honest questions regarding your faith. It's a good way to grow up. Asking questions, wondering about things, struggling - those are all healthy ways to drive you to seek answers, grow up in your understanding of God's Word. I remember, as a young pastor, just fighting with every verse where I didn't understand, and I feel like now, thirty or forty years later, I don't fight with them so much. I don't have any more answers maybe, but God figures them out, and you can rest. So, it's good to have questions. You can push ahead. But these crippling doubts - I think they often arise just out of the pit of hell. They just seem to, again, attack and come from out of nowhere, and it always seeks to hamper you and to trouble you. It turns you away from the Lord. And that's true for every believer. No matter how strong or how weak you are, the enemy, with doubt, comes.

C. Remember Doubting Thomas

I always think about Thomas. To me, Thomas is such an interesting guy because I know he was a half-empty kind of cup guy, right? He was always looking on the negative of things. He wasn't a very positive guy. You would say to Thomas when you met him, "What's bothering you today?" because there was always something that was eating at him. But imagine Thomas not showing up after the death of Jesus because he's very depressed, and yet all of his other friends and family and brethren show up, and they meet Jesus, and He's alive. "Not only has He been gone all weekend, but He actually showed up Sunday night, and we ate with Him, and we stuck our fingers in His hands. That's really Him! And He gave us His Spirit, and we're understanding the Bible." And Thomas isn't there. And they all go to find Thomas because everybody loves Thomas. He was part of the OG group - the original guys, we'll call them - he was part of the

group, and yet he wouldn't listen to any of them. Not any of them. "Unless I see the prints in His hands and put my fingers in the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). "All 119 of you that found me, I won't buy it." Doubt. Overwhelming doubt. He'd walked with Jesus for 3½ years, he'd been there when the food was being multiplied, he watched dead Lazarus come out of a grave. If anyone had reason to go, "Well the Lord might be able to pull this off," it would have been Thomas. And even though he had many close friends telling him what the Lord had done, his sorrow and his despair had demanded visible proof, and his doubt overwhelmed any kind of common sense response. That's warfare. That's spiritual warfare.

Before you're too hard on Thomas, there's a Scripture there in Luke 24:36 that says, "As they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.' But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?' " Okay. The rest of the guys showed up, but they weren't necessarily any more faithful than Thomas. They were as doubting and reticent as everyone else. So, we can give him a pass, I guess, to that point. In fact, Jesus said to everyone, "Hey, you got any food here? Let Me just eat and show you that I'm not a spirit. A spirit doesn't eat bread and meat like I do. I'm going to have me a tuna sandwich. Come on. Bring one over here." And then they slowly began to kind of, "Okay, maybe that's good," but they were all shaky in their outlooks. In fact, in Matthew 28:16, when "the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them, when they saw Him," and as He was about to rise, it says, "they worshipped Him; but some doubted." There was still this, "How can this be?!" There's this battle with doubt, even when they saw it with their own eyes.

D. John the Baptist had his share of doubt as well

John the Baptist was a fellow that Jesus described as the greatest prophet that ever lived. He was the greatest. He was also the last Old Testament prophet. But when he was arrested, and he was on death row, and he was just sure that if Jesus was the One that He would get him out of prison, he sent some boys to Jesus; and the question was (Matthew 11:3), "Are You the coming One, or are we going to look for somebody else?" His doubt was, "Well, You haven't sprung me out of prison, so if I'm not getting out, maybe You're not the guy, and maybe I just need to quit following You." There was tremendous doubt, and yet Jesus, in answering these boys by doing the things only the Messiah could do - open the eyes of the blind, preaching to the poor - He finally just said, "Go tell John what you've seen, and he'll put two and two together. He'll get it." And then He turned around, and He said to the people, "Now I want you to think about John for a minute," and He complimented John to the crowds lest they come away thinking, "That guy's really shaky in his faith." But John had some honest doubts. He wondered. He'd seen the dove fall from the sky upon Jesus. He heard the voice from heaven. And yet it plagued him. It plagued him. Yet what does it say in Luke 7:28? "Among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist." That's what Jesus said of John.

Remember when Peter stepped out of the boat on the Sea of Galilee, and he was going to walk on water? (Matthew 14) "If You're really the Lord, then call me out there." "Come out with your bad self." I'm pretty sure that's what it says in the original Greek. "All right. Come on out with your bad self." So he steps out, and he begins to walk on this raging sea, and for a time, walking on the water was pretty good. But then what happened? The circumstances - he began looking around, he got his eyes off of Jesus, he saw the tenuousness of his position, and he began to sink. And Jesus grabbed him and rescued him, He called on his lack of faith, and then He said this to him, "Why are you doubting? Why are you doubting?" Now you might argue the point and say, "Well, shoot, I wouldn't doubt. I'm walking on water." Oh, really? Is that you? It wasn't Peter. Because there's an enemy to our souls.

E. The disciples' doubt and fear with Jesus during the bad storm on the sea of Galilee

Or, do you remember that storm that came up and Jesus was sleeping? He was so tired. He gave orders. "Just take us over to the other side. Just take us over to the other side." And they crossed over, and they were headed over, and then we read there in Mark 4 that one of the disciples woke Jesus up in a panic. He was just panicked. "Hey, wake up, Lord. Don't You care that we're going to die? You don't care? We're drowning here?" Now I personally think that was Thomas just because he's always a bummer, that Thomas, you know? I think he woke Him up. But again, it was all of that doubt and that fearfulness, and you find it in Mark 4 as well.

F. Doubt works against faith

Cynicism. Doubt that works against your faith. Doubt that undermines your trust in God. And it happens a lot. It happens a lot. So, we need very much to be aware of the fact that we have an enemy who is going to seek to undermine the things you've learned of God. And he'll use your feelings and sometimes your experiences or your lack of ability to explain them away to start to go, "If God is for real.....if God really loved me.....if God really was for me.....Then how did I lose my job?.....How come I'm going through this trial?.....How come I'm not better yet when I'm sick?" And I begin to question the very nature and the character of God. And doubt will do that. Paul wrote to Timothy. He said that the Lord was looking for those who would pray without doubting, "lifting up holy hands and praying without doubting" (1 Timothy 2:8). James said, "Let him ask in faith, without doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind" (James 1:6). So, there's a battle with doubt. And God loves faith, and Satan loves to undermine it.

G. The helmet of salvation

In a few weeks, we're going to look at the helmet of salvation. It's a great helmet. You're going to love this helmet. You're going to want to wear it all the time because it's the helmet that protects your thoughts, your mind, your understanding, your outlook from the attacks of the wicked one. And we will spend a week looking at the armor of God when it comes to your helmet of salvation.

So, that's the second thing, right? Doubt.

Motivating Persecution Against You

A. Satan will stir up opposition against you as you serve God

Thirdly, Satan is behind the persecutions that come against you for your faith. Satan is the one that motivates persecution against you. Jesus, in John 16, in speaking to the disciples, said to them (verses 1-3, 33), "These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

So, part of the issue of you and I walking with God is that we're going to run into an enemy who is going to want to hurt you or have you pay a price for your faith - to the point that he'll want you to shrink away from making the payment. It's easier to just look the other way, say nothing, slide through, make my life a little simpler. And so I'm tempted to do that - to compromise, to set God aside. When Jesus wrote that letter to the Smyrna church, there in Revelation 2:9-10, He said, "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." Look, you're in a battle, aren't you? And you and I, I think, maybe more than - well I got saved in '72, so what is that? 43 years ago? 43 years ago, it was in vogue to be a Christian. Jesus people. Everybody knew the Jesus people. We were on the front of Time Magazine, for crying out loud. We were the phenomenon. Now we're a problem for everyone, aren't we? Now we're the conservative group, the weirdos, the right-leaners, the people who actually care about life and liberty..... well, whatever we are. But it was much different 43 years ago. You were applauded. Now you're disdained, right?

So there's an enemy, and as you serve the Lord, you can expect Satan to stir up opposition. Paul said it to Timothy (in the last letter he ever wrote), "If you're going to live a godly life, persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). They go together like soup and sandwich. You're going to walk with Jesus, you're going to hurt. You're going to hurt somewhere in the world. It's pretty lame, here....hurt. People make fun of you, they call you names, they look at you funny. You want to really hurt? Go to Kuwait, and preach in the street. You want to know about hurting? Go to Iran, and try to share your faith there. Then you're hurting. We're not hurting. Right? But we're singled out, and that's just the way it's supposed to be.

B. What about a Christian who lives in the world and suffers no persecution?

Paul says, literally, "If there's no persecution or resistance, maybe you're kind of a dim bulb." Isn't that what he said? "If you're going to live a life in Christ Jesus, you will suffer persecution." What if there's no persecution? Maybe you need to speak up a little bit, or you're

not having much of an impact because there's no way to avoid Jesus living in you and then blending into the world. It's difficult to fit in, and it's a bad idea. You know why? Because the world's headed for judgment. Are you sure you want to hide there? You don't want to stand there.

C. Persecution is a tool of the enemy to oppose the church

So the enemy of your faith will, from time to time, produce and spring up against you in persecution.

Hindering Our Service To God

A. Hindrance comes along with persecution

Fourthly, he will hinder your service to the Lord. I think that that's an important one to understand - that he will hinder your service to the Lord. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "We wanted to come to you - even I, Paul, time and again - but Satan hindered us" (1 Thessalonians 2:18). That Paul was able to somehow understand that beside direct persecution, there's an awful lot that the devil does to hinder our serving to the Lord. If you think that somehow it's going to be clear sailing when you decide to put Jesus first and step out with a commitment to Him, you're going to really be upset because Satan loves to hinder. And I don't think that we are aware of it enough so we can just go, "Well, that's spiritual warfare, and we're just going to serve the Lord and not be bothered by it." Hindrances tend to come in every direction. What you want to be sure to do is if you can identify that it's the enemy, don't let him stop your devotion or conclude, somehow, that since it's so difficult, it must not be the Lord.

I had a guy that wrote us from the radio this week who said, "Since I got saved," and then he made a list of everything that's gone wrong. And then he said, "Is that normal?" And I wrote back yesterday and went, "Yep. I think it is." It was easy to live in sin, but, man, once you say "I'm going to walk with Jesus," here comes the enemy chasing you down.

B. More effectiveness = greater hindrances

The more effective you become, the more hindered you can expect to be. I can't begin to tell you how often Wednesday days and Saturday nights (before Sunday) tend to be our worst couple of days in our week. Things go weird and wrong all the time, and I'm just so convinced now it's the devil. I was driving out to a place to speak a couple of weeks ago on a Friday night, and it was really crowded, and it took 2½ hours to go 40 miles. And then I got off the street, and I'm figuring, "Finally, I'm here," and I look up, and there's this guy in a 1966 Rambler - with all of the original parts, I'm pretty sure, driving like 8 mph. And 2½ hours, I'm going, "Oh, I'm finally there....." little hat on, just happy as a lark. I am sure Satan put that guy there. (Laughing) I am just positive.

Look, here's the deal. Satan cannot thwart God's plans for your life. He cannot. But he can sure sideline you if you're unaware of the fact that he is doing everything he can to put you on

the side. It's amazing. I talk to people sometimes. They go, "I'm going to start going to church on Wednesday nights." I say, "Well that's good for you. You ought to be at church during the week. That's good." And then they'll make that commitment, and it won't be two weeks later - you never see them again. You go, "What happened?" "Oh, they changed my hours at work..... someone called as we were leaving the house..... the kids have a homework project that they forgot to tell me is due tomorrow." It doesn't take but three or four weeks, and they go, "Oh, forget it. It's too much work. It's too hard." And I just see the enemy as working it out and hindering anything that God would want to do with your life.

I talked to a fellow who was starting a home Bible study, and not many people were coming, and he was very upset. And he said, "Well maybe I shouldn't be teaching." And I said, "Well, are you going just for attendance sake, or do you just want to share what God's given you?" He said, "I just want to share what God's given me." I said, "Well then teach two people. How is that different from teaching 200 people if you're doing what the Lord wants? I mean, ultimately, who's on the other side of what the Lord wants isn't really your problem. That's His problem. But if you're worried about not enough people are coming, maybe you're doing it for all the wrong reasons. You're a head counter. You're a bean counter. You're not really doing it for the Lord at all." Well then he didn't like it. (unintelligible mumbling) So I just said this, "Just do what God's called you to do. Let the fruit be His problem."

C. Knowing Satan's plans = Forewarned is forearmed

But look, if we recognize the enemy, then we will be able to take steps to stand and guard ourselves against the hindrances that come, sometimes, ferociously. They come from the pit of hell.

Tempting Us To Rely Upon Our Own Resources

A. The enemy encourages us to rely upon ourselves rather than the Lord's power

The next one that we find often in the Scriptures is that Satan has a desire to tempt you and me to begin to lean on our own resources when it comes to serving the Lord. It's one of those opposition areas that we fall for pretty quickly because we like when we figure stuff out. If I can say to myself, "Hey, you worked that out really good, you were smart, that was a good idea, you really made that thing come together," it applauds everything in my flesh; doesn't do anything for the Lord, mind you. So it becomes a very nefarious kind of temptation because it is something that the Lord wants me to learn that it's His strength and His power that enables me to be fruitful in my life. And if you begin to work ministry things on your own, you'll slowly but surely wear yourself out. If all of the pressure to accomplish spiritual things is on you, you'll die. You'll quit, you'll hang it up, you'll be mad at somebody. It's a common temptation for us. Look, most Christians start off by falling on their faces and saying, "Oh, God, help me. I'm a sinner. Please have mercy." Six months later - same guy - no longer completely dependent upon the Lord. He's "matured." Now he becomes independent of God. "Lord, I'll get that." "Have you been praying?" "Oh, I don't need to pray. I know what I'm doing." And they begin to live their lives kind of in coexistence with God, no longer dependent upon God; and it isn't until life

goes like this (slap) that they go, "Oh, Lord, I really meant to be dependent on You," again. Well, that's the enemy. We have been set up to fall.

B. David stumbles in his trust in the Lord - 1 Chronicles 21

I marked in your notes a really obvious Scripture. But in 1 Chronicles 21 is the story of David at a time when he thought, with great power, "It would be great to know how big my army is. If we could just count them, we could just put on a million strong. It'd be awesome." And Joab, who was his commander of the armies, and he wasn't a very godly man (in fact, Joab was a pretty ungodly guy most through the Bible), even he said to David, "That's a horrible idea." And David was angry for his insubordination, and he said, "What do you mean it's a horrible idea?!" And he said, "Well, it doesn't matter how many people we have. Every battle we've won, it's because God's gone before us. So it's kind of dumb for us to start numbering numbers and writing them down." And David kind of threatened him, "Well, you go count them now!" Well, Joab was mad. He didn't want to do it, so he went out and counted, but he left a whole bunch of people out. "Yeah, I'm not counting them, I'm not counting them." He was kind of angry with David and half obeyed with great disdain. But if you'll read verse 1 of 1 Chronicles 21, it says, "Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel." Satan was right there going, "Number the people, David. Begin to find out what your strength is and where it lies, and see if you've got enough to win these battles." And to turn David's head away from, "God is my power and strength and Lord" to "I've got a bunch of people." Right? The temptation to lean upon your own resources. And David fell for it, and a lot of people died as a result, and there was tremendous suffering because the leader wasn't leading.

C. God whittled down Gideon's potential fighting force

It is probably the same reason Gideon, when he was told to go face down the Midianites, had 32,000 people, and the Lord said, "That's too many people for you." And Gideon said, "I can't understand that. We're still outnumbered four to one." And the Lord said, "Yeah, but you'll figure out a way to pat yourself on the back." So He reduced it to 300, and then Gideon went, "Now I'm scared to go," and the Lord said, "Perfect. Now you can go because now you can't trust in yourself or lean on your own resources." So, I think so often God will allow us to get to a place where we have absolutely nothing to depend upon but Him so that, by the time He works, we'll (a) recognize Him and (b) He'll get the credit for the work. Rather than you and I sitting around, patting each other on the back - how smart we are and how good we've thought things through and how intelligent can you be.....we're the reason for the success. He will seek to have you take your spiritual temperature by reviewing how much you have and by doing what you've done rather than just saying, "Trust the Lord." You've got to just trust the Lord.

D. Warnings from the Lord regarding this foolishness

Jeremiah 17:5, "Cursed is the man who trusts in man" (that's pretty clear) "and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD." That's the danger we face as Christians. The enemy wants you to let go of God. You began hanging onto Him for dear life. But it's kind of like little kids - they want to hang all over you, and at some point you put them down, and they

run away. "Where did he go?" Now we've got to watch him all the time because he's halfway down the block. He doesn't care. He's independent now. He's in danger. He doesn't realize how big of a danger he's in. So now you've got parents putting kids on dog leashes.....because he's in danger. I think the Lord needs to do that with us sometimes. Just get back here! Because of that danger of becoming independent.

Paul said to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 10:12), "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." That's the enemy's playground. Or Ephesians 6:10. We just read it tonight, didn't we? We read it tonight. Verse 10 of chapter 6, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." Not your own.

Bringing Division To The Body

A. Satan promotes what God hates

The sixth way that the enemy works often in the church is he seeks to bring division amongst Christians. I guess you probably all have been aware of that. Proverbs 6:16, "These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him." If you read Hebrew poetry, you know that, rather than putting highlights or underlining or quotations around things, a Hebrew poetic practice is to upspeak numbers - six, no seven; five, no six; four, no five. It's a way of saying, "There's even more that God hates, there's even more," and it's almost that adding the exclamation point at the end of a Hebrew thought. So, when you read in Proverbs 6:16, "Six things does the LORD hate, yes, seven," it isn't like the Lord says, "Oh, I forgot one! Six, I meant seven." No, He meant these are things that are completely disgusting in the Lord's eyes, and they're an abomination to Him. Verse 17, "A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren." God hates the person who sows disagreements, division, discord among His people. God hates it. Hates it. Hates it. You will always find the devil seeking to promote what God hates. And division is a very well-tried and successful work of the devil, and I suspect it is one of the church's greatest banes. It results in harsh speaking, in backbiting, in much whispering, in self-promotion, in side-taking, in setting mercy aside, in alienation; and the devil just dances while the world watches the church destroy itself. It splits churches, it breaks up families and marriages. It's a horrible witness, and you should know it comes from the pit of hell. But it is one of Satan's most effective tools. If you're hanging around people that want to backbite and talk about people all the time, you should just say to them, "I think that's from the devil" and leave. At least they'll stop talking to you. If they don't have anyone to talk to, where are they going to go?

B. Jesus prayed about this very thing

Paul, when he wrote to the lukewarm Corinthian church that had all kinds of problems, said (1 Corinthians 3:1-3), "I wanted to feed you spiritual food, but I can't because you're babies." That's what he said to them. "I fed you with milk. I can't give you solid food. Until now, you're not able to receive it. You're still carnal. You are envious and striving, and there're divisions

among you, and you're acting like mere men." Or, in other words, "You're not acting like believers at all! You're acting exactly like the world around you."

And yet to walk with Jesus is to walk in His love - 1 Corinthians 13. You're dead to yourself, you've been saved by His grace, you should extend His mercy to others. Paul wrote to the Ephesians in chapter 4:32-5:2, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us.....a sweet-smelling aroma." Do that. And then he says to them, "You're just acting like a bunch of guys who haven't got the Lord in your heart at all."

So, even John 17 - if you'll read Jesus' prayer for His disciples and then for us that would believe afterwards - Jesus prayed it on the way to Gethsemane before He was arrested, He said, "Father, I pray that they may be one as You and I are one." My prayer for the church is there would be a unity like you find between the Father and the Son. That would be God's will. I think we're far removed from that. But understand, that's the enemy. The enemy brings division. The enemy brings division.

Infiltrating The Church With False Teachers And False Believers

A. False doctrines are the enemy's work to keep the world in the dark

Number seven of eight - the enemy, in terms of a corporate attack against the church, thrives on false teachers and the development of false believers. We read last week about doctrines of demons, and I'll tell you what - there are many people that are being kept from God through the false doctrines of men.

B. Many who call themselves the church do not know Jesus Christ

Now the church, and those who call themselves believers, is far larger than the true church. I guess you know that, right? There're a lot of people who say, "I believe in God," but you're not part of the church. Not of the church that is born again and believes in Christ. The church swells in numbers, doesn't it? When Jesus told that parable in Matthew 13:24 about the wheat and the tares, He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared." Interesting thing between tares and wheat. Maybe we should bring you some pictures. We have them from Israel - where they grow together. It's kind of interesting. Wheat and tares look exactly the same until they begin to fruit, and then one's white and one's extremely black. They're as opposite as night is from day. So they're not aware of the overseeding until the harvest time, and then they realize not everybody in the field is wheat. There're some tares there. They are the product of the enemy, and they said to Jesus, "Certainly an enemy has done this. Do you want us to go out and gather them?" And the Lord said, "No, because we don't want you to pull up the wheat with the tares. Just let them grow together, and I'll separate them in the end." They're not all wheat. Not everyone who sits in church is wheat or saved. When the Lord went

(a couple of verses later in Matthew 13:39) to make the explanation, He said, "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire." So, not everyone in church is saved. But yet the world doesn't distinguish that. They just hear "Christian." Everybody can just be "Christian." "Christian" just means, I guess, non-something else; not Jewish, not Muslim. "You're a 'Christian'." There're maybe three groups, right? So, the visible and the outward church, if you will, is like the mixed multitude. There's a form of godliness. They all gather under the banner of the church.

Jesus, in Mark 4:30, told the story about the mustard seed, and He said, "The kingdom of heaven is kind of like the mustard seed. When you sow it in the ground, it's smaller than all the seeds of the earth." That's what He said of the tree - smallest seed of a tree. "When it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than the herbs and shoots out its large branches, and the birds of the air begin to find shade under its branches." Well, in the parables, the birds are always wicked. And a mustard seed doesn't grow up into a tree; it's a plant. And the Lord said, "That's what the kingdom of God is like. The church is planted, but it has some unusual growth that really isn't accounted for by the believers in the group." So the enemy tries to infiltrate the church with false doctrine and false teachers; and so you get a whole generation of people who are confused about - what does the Bible really teach? And then they find these inconsistent lives of so-called Christians whose hearts are not open to the Lord at all, and so there's no distinction made to them. To the world, you're all alike. "You're a Christian, he's a Christian. Look what he's doing!" And you say, "Well I would never do that. That's not what the Bible says." "Well, that's what he said!" And so the enemy has a way of confusing the world.

C. The sword of the Spirit - the Word of God

And we will have the sword of the Spirit in a couple of weeks, essential for combating that.

Tempting Us To Give Up

A. Through discouraging circumstances

And finally, we'll do one more, and it is kind of wrapped up in some of the others, but I think it's important to distinguish it. And that is that the enemy will seek to constantly tempt you to give up. Give up. Maybe your circumstances are very discouraging. You've had some real rough times. You haven't been able to keep your eyes on the eternal, and so it just seems like you're behind the eight ball all the time. It can seem overwhelming. I thought about that lame man who was brought by his friends to a house overflowing with people, and they had no access to Jesus at all. And I thought - I wonder how many of those four guys carrying him went, "Yeah, we'll have to come back tomorrow." And the lame guy going, "No! No! Not another day!" But they weren't discouraged, were they? They brought the man. They couldn't let him in, so they got up on the housetop, and they tore up the tiles. You can get discouraging circumstances.

B. By unbelieving friends

You can also oftentimes find tremendous discouragement with unbelieving friends. If you hang around with a lot of people that aren't saved and don't sustain yourself with good fellowship, the world can be a very discouraging place, can't it? I'm forever running into people, "Hey, did you see the news?" And I'm going, "No." "Oh, man. It's getting bad out there." "Well of course it is, knucklehead. You're in the world. Wait, though. It's going to get really good." And they always want to tell you the latest problem. And I've taken to saying this. "What are you going to do about it?" "Oh, you know, they're going to bomb Israel." "Yeah, what are you going to do about it?" "Oh, you know, they're coming to America." "Yeah, what are you going to do about it?" "Oh, look who's running for president." "Yeah, what are you going to do about it?" And it gets me off the hook in just about everything because they never know. "I don't know." "Okay, then. When you figure it out, let me know because so far, you're only raining on my parade." Unbelieving friends can be a tremendous difficulty for your walks with the Lord. It can really bring you down.

I thought about the ruler of the synagogue who came to Jesus for his daughter, and Jesus got stopped by that woman with the issue of blood. You remember that story? And he was like, "She's dying. We've got to go." And Jesus, "Who touched Me?" And, "Forget who touched You. Let's just go!" And then He stops and deals with this woman for the longest time. And then in the midst of that - Mark 5 - here comes somebody from his house. He goes, "Just don't bother the Lord. She's dead. It's too late. Thank the woman over there with the issue of blood. Held you up." And he was so discouraged, and Jesus looked at him. "Don't trouble the teacher anymore," and Jesus said, "Look, don't be afraid. Just believe Me. We're going to fix this." The Lord had a more encouraging word for him than his entire household, and Jairus was ready to quit when Jesus encouraged him.

C. By questioning divine delays

I think sometimes our greatest temptation to give up is when the disparity between God's promise and God's deliverance is large. That can kill us, right? We pray and nothing. We wait and nothing. We've been praying 2½ years for our building over there. We have a loan, we have money, we have drawings, we have ambition. We have a will. We just don't have a way yet. And every morning I say to the Lord, "Really? Is today going to be the day? Or are You just going to make me wait another day?" It's been my prayer for the last 18 months. I figure God's not mad; I'm still standing, but.....I'm telling Him how I feel. I can't believe we're waiting this long. We need. We need. We need, Lord! You get it! But He must think otherwise. And, for me, the greatest lesson has been I need to learn that He knows better than I do.

I thought about Lazarus' sisters - so sure of Jesus. He'd always been the One that you could depend on. Brother gets sick. Go get Jesus. And He just doesn't show up. He doesn't show up until your brother is dead and buried, and you're into the week for four days - talking with family. He really is late. And when He comes into town - before He even gets into town, word comes, "He's coming," Martha rips out of the house. Gets right in His face. "If You'd have been

here, my brother wouldn't have died! Thanks a lot, Lord." When are we going to get our building? (Laughing)

Satan will always try to get you to give up on Jesus. But Psalm 37:5, "Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." I believe that more than how I feel. How about you?

D. We must hang in there

But the enemy wants you to work it the other way. How often do you read - if you read through the Psalms on a regular basis - one of my favorite books because it's almost like eavesdropping on prayer. It's like you sit and somebody's in the next room, and they're praying out loud, and you go, "That was an interesting prayer." And you get to listen on David's up days and down days and discouragement days and break-their-teeth-in-their-mouth to, "Lord, forgive me." He's great at praying, right? But how much discouragement does he go through and yet he hangs in there all the way.

Well, we have to do that, too. Galatians 6:9, "Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall" what? "reap if we do not lose heart." Zerubbabel, in Zechariah 4:10, "Don't despise the day of small things because the eyes of the LORD are going to and fro throughout the whole earth seeing who He can be strong on behalf of." Don't despise when God's doing little things. Don't give up.

I always thought about that - giving up. Where are you going to go, anyway? Where are you going to go, anyway? "I've tried Jesus and the God of creation. I'm going to try something else next." You're a knucklehead! You've got to stand fast.

Conclusion

Tempting us to sin, creating doubt, motivating persecution, hindering our service to the Lord, tempting us to lean on our own resources, bringing division, infiltrating the church with false doctrine and false teachers, and just suggesting that we cash it in. Well, watch out for that guy.

Next week, we'll start to put an armor on you. You'll look good by the time you're done. Seven weeks from now, you'll be ready for bear.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
October 10, 2015