

February 6, 2011

Born Again Series - Discipleship

2 Peter 5:8 – “Is the devil real?”

INTRO...

ILLUST: Conversation with Tracy (PC2)

- ...witnessing to her...presenting the reality of good and then evil...Jesus and the devil...
 - ...*“I don't really like doing the 'devil thing'?”*

This is really the attitude of a lot of people today...they somehow think that by not thinking about it...

- ...or not believing in the devil will somehow make it go away...people don't want the devil to be real...
 - ...BUT...obviously he is real...otherwise how could anyone make sense of all of the evil that is around us today...

This morning...as we continue the Discipleship portion of our Born Again Series...

- ...we are going to answer the question...**“Is the devil real?”**

Again...I want to remind you...that we are looking at these questions from the perspective of a New Believer...a New Christian...

- ...and as I think of the order of things that a new believer needs to understand...I think that this subject is near the top of the list...

Q: Why? Because the **devil**...also known as **Lucifer**...**Satan**...the **serpent of old**...

- ...the **evil one**...and the **dragon**...will do everything possible to discourage...to stumble or distract new believers from their new found faith...

1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV) — 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

ILLUST: Watching the lions at the zoo...pacing back and forth...

- ...the devil sees a new believer...as fresh meat...and he cannot wait to sink his lying...scheming teeth into them...

Listen to what the apostle Paul had to say about the devil and demonic forces...

TURN WITH ME...Ephesians 6:10...

Ephesians 6:10–12 (NKJV) — **10** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **12** For we do not wrestle **against flesh and blood** [...man is not our problem...], but against **principalities** [...demons who have oversight over nations...or regions of the world...], against **powers** [...demons who are waiting to possess humans...keeping people in bondage...in any number of ways...], against the **rulers of the darkness** of this age [...demons...who are in charge of Satan’s worldly business...demonic influence of leaders in various societies...Hitler...Idi Amin...Sadam Hussein...Osama bin Laden...Mahmoud Ahmadinejad...], against **spiritual hosts of wickedness** in the heavenly places [...demons...in the heavenlies...who have charge of false religions and ‘mysticism’...which are rampant today and gaining tremendous momentum...].

There is this cosmic battle going on all around us...attempting...with all their power to overcome the forces of Good...

- ...and it is not something to be taken lightly...

The devil is more powerful than us...BUT...he is NOT more powerful than God...

ILLUST: I used to think I was a pretty good wrestler...that I could hold my own...

- ...that is until I came across someone who actually knew what they were doing...
 - ...and in an instant...I was twisted up like a pretzel...in a hold that rendered me completely helpless...

Consider the great and mighty arch angel Michael...

Jude 9 (NKJV) — **9** Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses [...the bible says that no one knows where the body of Moses is...it seems that God gave the body to Michael to bury it...and Satan interfered...perhaps wanting to use it to draw people so some sort of false worship or something...and it says...Michael...], dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

Q: Where did the devil come from?

- ...like everything else...he is a created being...he was created by God...he was an angel...created in the very beginning...

TURN WITH ME...Ezekiel 28:12-17...

Ezekiel 28:12–17 (NKJV) — **12** “Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre [...a reference to Satan...], and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. **13** You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created [...it is believed that Satan may have been a worship leader at one time...]. **14** “You were the **anointed cherub** [...angel...] who covers; **I established** [...created...] **you**; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. **15** You were perfect in your ways from the day **you were created**, Till iniquity was found in you. **16** “By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones. **17** “Your heart **was lifted up** because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you.

TURN TO...Isaiah 14:12-17...

Isaiah 14:12–17 (NKJV) — **12** “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! **13** For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; **14** I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be **like the Most High.**’ **15** Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit. **16** “Those who see you will gaze at you, And consider you, saying: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms, **17** Who made the world as a wilderness And destroyed its cities, Who did not open the house of his prisoners?’

The devil fell from heaven...because he wanted to be like God...

Q: Why?...Because God had something no one else had...

- ...*“He didn’t have to answer to anyone else!”*

We first read of him in his fallen nature...in the book of Genesis...

TURN WITH ME...Genesis 3:1...

Genesis 3:1–6 (NKJV) — **1** Now the **serpent** was more cunning than any beast of the field **which the LORD God had made**. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” **2** And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; **3** but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God

has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ” **4** Then the serpent said to the woman, “**You will not surely die.** **5** For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God**, knowing good and evil.” **6** So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

The devil is a liar...he knows how to speak nothing else but lies...this is what Jesus said about him...

John 8:44 (NKJV) — 44 [...speaking to the unbelieving Jews who were insisting that they knew God...through Abraham...] You are of your father the **devil**, and the desires of your father [...the devil...] you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

The devil will always...always lie to you about your faith...he will cause you to doubt that you have ever been saved...

- ...he will try to convince you that you are still in your sin...and remind you how unworthy you are to be saved...

When the devil tells you that you are not worthy to be saved...you can tell him...

- ...*“You are telling me something I already know...I know I am not worthy...which is why I have Jesus...He washed me clean by His precious blood!”*...
 - ...and it will shut him right up...as we will see in a moment...he is subject to Jesus...

The devil’s greatest scheme...is to undermine ‘the cross’...

Q: Why? Because...the cross is where Satan is defeated...

- ...his goal is to deflect people away from the cross...until death...knowing that if they were to die...without having placed their trust and faith in Jesus...
 - ...they would be eternally separated from God...and cast into hell for all eternity...

1 Corinthians 15:54–55 (NKJV) — 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality [...when a person becomes a Christian...], then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” **55** “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”

The devil has been given temporary dominion over the earth...

1 John 5:19 (NKJV) — 19 We know that we are of God, and **the whole world lies under the sway** [...the influence...] **of the wicked one.**

John 12:31 (NKJV) — 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now **the ruler of this world** will be cast out.

Q: Why?

- ...the bible doesn't specifically say...BUT...I suppose that it is to draw people to a need for good...
 - ...for a Savior who can rescue us from evil...

The devil currently has access to God...

Job 1:6–7 (NKJV) — 6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. **7** And the LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” So Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.” [...just like 1 Peter 5:8 says...]

The devil and his **minions**...his followers...his demons...are subject to God and Jesus...

- ...keep in mind...that the devil is a created being...he is not **omnipresent**...like God...which means...he is not able to be everywhere at the same time...
 - ...not is he **omniscient**...or **omnipotent**...like God...meaning ‘all knowing’...and ‘all powerful’...
 - ...this is why he utilizes demons...the bible suggests that when Satan fell...he took as many as a third of the angels with him...

TURN WITH ME...Mark 9:17...

Mark 9:17–27 (NKJV) — 17 Then one of the crowd answered and said, “Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit [...demon...]. **18** And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.” **19** He answered him and said, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.” **20** Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. **21** So He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. **22** And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” **23** Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible

to him who believes.” **24** Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” **25** When Jesus saw that the people came running together, **He rebuked the unclean spirit**, saying to it, “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!” **26** Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And **he became as one dead**, so that many said, “He is dead.” **27** But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

In some instances...people were possessed by as many as hundreds and hundreds of demons...at the same time...

TURN WITH ME...Mark 5:1-13...

Mark 5:1–13 (NKJV) — **1** Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. **2** And when He [...Jesus...] had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, **3** who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, **4** because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. **5** And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. **6** When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. **7** And he cried out with a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” **8** For He said to him, “Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” **9** Then He [...Jesus...] asked him, “What is your name?” And he answered, saying, “**My name is Legion; for we are many.**” **10** Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. **11** Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. **12** So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” **13** And at once **Jesus gave them permission**. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

The devils and his demons...know that their day is coming...when Jesus comes back...and there will be an end to their scheming...

Revelation 20:10 (NKJV) — **10** The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone [...describing hell...] where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

- ...we will learn more about that in just a few weeks...

Q: Can a person be demon possessed today? **ABSOLUTELY!**

Some of you may recall the testimony...of the young man in our church who was possessed by a demon...

- ...and I had an opportunity to pray with him to receive Christ...and after he made a profession of faith...

- ...I laid my hand on his head...and commanded the demonic realm to have no more influence upon his life...three of us witnessed this...

AND...as I was praying...*just like the demon possessed boy we just read about...*he slumped over as if he were dead...

- ...later telling us how he literally felt the demon leave him as I was praying...and he sat up a new and transformed man...a new creation in Christ...

Jesus is the only one who can permanently deal with demons...without Jesus people are in a heap of trouble...He said...

Luke 11:24–26 (NKJV) — 24 “When an unclean spirit goes out of a man [...speaking of an unbeliever...], he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ **25** And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. **26** Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”

Q: Can a Christian be demon possessed? **ABSOLUTELY NOT!**

Because...good and evil cannot cohabitate together...

- ...this is why we have a broken relationship with God...because we are born into sin...born evil...and He is holy and good...

Jesus told the apostle Paul at his conversion...

Acts 26:16–18 (NKJV) — 16 But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. **17** I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, **18** to open their eyes, in order to turn them **from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God**, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’

Jesus is the light of the world...and darkness cannot cohabitate with light...

- **...think about this truth for a moment...**the smallest amount of light...dispels the greatest amount of darkness...AND...
 - ...the greatest amount of darkness cannot dispel the smallest amount of light...

1 John 4:4 (NKJV) — 4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

However...Christians can be ‘oppressed’...hassled or harassed...bothered by demons...

- ...there is a saying among Christians...*God loves you...and has a wonderful plan for your life!*...
 - ...AND...in the same manner...we must remember...that...*Satan hates you...and has a horrible plan for your life...*

While it is true that the devil cannot possess a Christian...he will certainly try and do everything he can...

- ...to trip you up...to cause you to stumble into sin...and tempt you with all kinds of things...
 - ...in the hopes of drawing you away from God...NOT...to steal your salvation away...

John 10:28 (NKJV) — 28 [...Jesus said...] And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

BUT...rather to dishonor the name of God...in the eyes of unbelievers who are watching the testimony of your life as a Christian...

Q: So...what do we do about demonic oppression when it comes?

There is GREAT NEWS!

In the same manner that the devil...roams the earth...looking for someone to devour...

2 Chronicles 16:9 (NKJV) — 9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro **throughout the whole earth**, to show Himself **strong on behalf** of those whose **heart is loyal to Him...**

- ...the bottom line is...the Lord is watching our back...His eyes are constantly upon us...
 - ...for ONE...because He loves looking at us...BUT...for another...because he wants to protect us...
 - ...our part is to simply remain loyal to Him and all his ways..

CONCLUSION...

Q: How do we fight off the devil? TWO THINGS...

TURN WITH ME...1 Peter 5:8...

1 Peter 5:8–9 (NKJV) — **8** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. **9 Resist him** [...How?...], **steadfast in the faith**, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

- ...we must remain...steadfast in our faith...in our trust in Him...and all of the promises in His word...
 - ...and all of the things God says about us...

SECONDLY...

TURN WITH ME...Ephesians 6:13-18...

Ephesians 6:10–18 (NKJV) — **10** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **12** 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. **13** Therefore [...because of this cosmic battle that is taking place...] take up the whole armor of God, **that you may be able to withstand in the evil day**, and having done all, to stand. **14** Stand therefore, having girded your waist with **truth**, having put on the breastplate of **righteousness**, **15** and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of **peace**; **16** above all, taking the shield of **faith** with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. **17** And take the helmet of **salvation**, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word of God**; **18** praying always with all **prayer** and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

- ...we are able to fight off the devil...in the Lord's strength...by remaining steadfast in our faith...
 - ...standing on TRUTH...on RIGHTEOUSNESS...PEACE...the promise of our SALVATION...the WORD OF GOD...and PRAYER...
 - ...and we need not worry about the devil at all...

I love the story of Martin Luther...who spurred the great Protestant reformation early in the 16th century...

- ...because of that great work of God...as His instrument...Luther was quite often harassed by Satan...and on one of those instances...he is known to have said...
 - *"...when I realized that it was Satan, I rolled over and went back to sleep again."*

FINALLY...TURN WITH ME...Romans 8:31...

Romans 8:31–39 (NKJV) — **31** What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? **32** He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? **33** Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. **34** Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. **35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? **36** As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” **37** Yet in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through Him [...Jesus...] who loved us. **38** For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels **nor principalities nor powers**, nor things present nor things to come, **39** nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

PRAY...

COMMUNION...

WORSHIP...