

“I saw Satan Fall like Lightning from Heaven” // Luke 10:17–20 // *The Difficult Sayings of Jesus #5*

I know that is a very **different kind of video** for Mothers Day.

- We as a church have **identified single moms** in our city as a group that we really want to love and reach out to.
- ***I love that about our church...*** that you are ministering in radical ways like this.
- But to all the moms today—including adoption and foster mothers—we say happy Mother's Day. Time of pain? When God has designed something to be a great blessing can also be a source of pain.

Welcome at all of our campuses... We're in a series called *The Difficult Sayings of Jesus*. Things JESUS said that don't easily make sense... That challenge us...

- You see, many people come to Jesus with a **very specific role** they want him to play... they're looking for a kind of **divine Snuggie**.
- But **then Jesus says** these things and we're like, “Oh... No, Jesus, please don't say that.” And you're confronted with you're willing to let Jesus be who he is.
- Listen, if you're going to come to Jesus, you **have to have the integrity** to at least him be who he is... We don't get to edit the parts of him we don't like...
- **Thomas Jefferson** had that famous Bible... Well, **these statements** will **confront** us with the “hard parts” of Jesus...

Here's the difficult statement for today...

Luke 10:17–20

[17] The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” [18] And he said to them, “I

saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. [19] Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. [20] Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:17-20)

Now, why is this one difficult?

- Well, first, **what does it mean that we have the authority to tread on serpents and scorpions?** Is this when our church really starts to get weird?
 - Ummm... **maybe. But first, if the ushers** would please come forward with the poisonous snakes... We're going to see who has faith. J/K
 - **The only time I've really handled** a snake...)shooting snake in head.) Carried home; wriggled off... I'd be happy to never see a snake again.
- But, **even if you know Jesus didn't really mean** that, you might say, *“Is Jesus saying Satan is actually real? Really? Like, a real devil, with a tail; and horns; and a pitchfork?”*
 - Maybe you've known people who were **obsessed** with demons...
 - You got a friend who **stays up all night studying** and flunks a test and they say, “The demons messed me up!” Bro, you didn't study.
 - **Mother of a friend** in seminary... Whenever something went wrong with a car, demons were always our first suspect... car wouldn't start (dead battery; demon).
 - Back door.

So, maybe you say, are you trying to tell me Jesus really believed in demons? Like, with pitchfork and horns?

Well, you can see from this verse that Jesus most definitely believed Satan and the demons were real.

- *In fact, Jesus seems to spend his whole ministry engaging with the devil and demonic forces.*

- Satan is mentioned 250 separate times in the New Testament, which means almost once per chapter!
- And here, he's giving them very clear instructions about how to engage... If you're going to take Jesus and the New Testament seriously, you have to take this seriously.

Well, who is he, and what does he do?

This verse gives you a clue as to where he came from: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven"? Satan was one of the **highest archangels that rebelled against God** and was **cast out** of heaven as a result, **taking 1/3 of the angels** with him. Scripture never gives us a detailed account of it (you have to piece that together from various places), but **Isaiah 14:12-14** gives you a glimpse into what happened:

- (This verse is actually about a human king who rebelled against God, but Isaiah looks through him and sees the real enemy behind him) "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground... "You have said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven... I will set my throne on high... I will make myself like the most High.'"
- What do you see in those verses? "I will." That's the heart of Satanic rebellion: "I will" instead of God's will.
- Well, ever since and the fallen angels came to earth, he's been trying to coerce anything and everything to join in that rebellion.

We as a race have joined him in his rebellion and now he has a **certain authority** over us... Jesus said he's here to "steal, kill, and destroy."

I told you he is mentioned over 250 times in the NT... let me show you what he's doing (btw, if you're writing things down, don't focus on getting down all these references... all in the transcript (everything, including dumb jokes)... I just want you to listen and get a feel for what the New Testament identifies specifically that he does):

- Jesus in John 8:44 calls him the father of lies and 1 Timothy 4:1 says he corrupts truth and concocts false doctrines

- 2 Cor. 11:14-15, says that he gives false teachers the ability to imitate signs and wonders¹
- 1 Cor 7:5 tells us that he tempts the saints, specifically, with illicit sex.²
- 2 Cor. 2:11 tells us that he turns unresolved anger into bitterness in the hearts God's people
- 1 Thess. 2:18 tells us he puts obstacles in the way of people trying to tell other people about Jesus (**You ever been sharing with someone...** maybe getting here this weekend)
- Revelation 12:10 calls him the accuser of the brethren... which means he loves to remind you, when you mess up, of what you have done (**Do you ever feel really defeated about your sin?**)
- Romans 16:17-20 says he sows discord & division among God's people and moves in God's people to rebel against their leaders
- 1 John 3:10 calls him the father of hatred and murder at work in the rulers of the world.
 - In fact, when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Satan offers, Luke 4:6, "...To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. (Jesus conceded the point). Think about that... he is moving in the highest levels of power, turning them to kill, steal and destroy.
- 1 Tim 3:6. Paul says he puffs Christian leaders up with pride so they will fall, then, in 2 Tim. 2:24-26 that he brings to the minds of unbelievers the pride and other faults of Christian leaders so they won't take the gospel seriously.
- Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 4:4 that he blinds the mind of unbelievers, and in 1 Thess. 3:5 that he attacks faith wherever he finds it³
- Ephesians says he ensnares unbelievers in their sin so that they get addicted to them.⁴
- Throughout the New Testament, we see him causing sickness and sometimes insanity.

¹ 2 Thess 2:9

² 1 Tim 5:15

³ 2 Cor. 11:3

⁴ 2 Tim 2:26

- OT: We know he afflicted Job's body
- Many passages in the NT relate physical maladies with spiritual causes. Matthew 12, a demon makes a man blind and mute⁵
- 2 Cor 12, Paul called his physical affliction, "**a messenger of Satan to afflict me**" 2 Cor 12:9).

Is he real? Is he active? If Jesus knew what he was talking about, the answer has to be "yes."

BTW, are you skeptical? Can you not look at this world and see something more than flesh and blood at work?

- You look at **certain chapters of human history** and say, "How could that have happened?" How do things like the **Rwandan genocide** happen? This year: recognizing centennial of **WW1**... pointless bloodbath? How do you get to the levels of cruelty you see in **the Sudan** or the **Taliban**? How did **slavery** happen in our country? How *is* the **abortion epidemic** still *happening* in our country now?
- How does **child pornography**—the sex slave trade—how do these things gain traction? Largest hub of that is Atlanta.
- The famous historian from Yale, Marlow Unger said, "History is littered with the story of powerful men and women whose infliction of destruction and death could only be described by two words, insane or diabolical."
- Can't you see that? Can't you see there is something greater at work in the world than just human dysfunction and bad parenting?
 - 3 times in the Bible Satan directly fills someone or something (serpent; Judas; antichrist). All three times they look *sane* but they are murderous, and bent on destroying Christian faith.

To quote **Tony Campolo**, Satan is the one "*...appearing in movies telling us that romantic love and sexual pleasure are the keys to*

fulfillment; he's the one behind an economic system that teaches us that money is the key to success and happiness; he works in and through governments that coddle people into thinking that government help is the answer;

...he's the one who sits in the psychologist's chair offering ultimate hope in life apart from God; (he's the one standing as a professor touting that science and education have all the answers); he's the one teaching from our pulpits that life is about you, that God wants to make you rich, that hell is not for real, and that the standards of the Bible are for a different time and place."

So is he real? You better believe it!

- You say, "**Well, why isn't he more obvious?** Demons seem a lot more visible in the Bible than they do today."
- **Listen: Satan is not after your recognition; he's after your destruction.** He's happy if he can destroy you, even if you don't know it's him doing it.
- Think of it like a hunter... the hunter doesn't care if you ever know he's there (he'd prefer!): **wolf blade**

1 Peter 5:8, "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

- First, notice that Peter **calls Satan a lion**. That means he's part of the **cat family**... See, I knew it. Cats are demons.
- That's not the main point.
- **Main point:** He's a hunter. He seeks prey. And what happens if you go through life not even knowing you have an enemy?
- *The Ghost and the Darkness*, a movie with **Val Kilmer** about a lion that attacks people in the jungle. Me going to Africa. I'll watch it. Dumb move! But I guess that's better than being totally ignorant of the danger.

What if he was at work in your life now?

- In the **temptations**...
 - What if he is the one hovering near **your computer**...

⁵ Cf. Luke 8:2; Luke 13:10 (sickness caused by spirit)

- Providing you with **opportunities to cheat...**
- Some **temptations seem so perfect...** One time on a mission trip: (Indo girl).
- What if he were the one **trying to make divorce** so appealing and reasonable... nothing destroys family and church more than unbiblical divorce...
- Dads, what if he was after your kids? And you weren't even involved... he's probably excited you've got the family on auto-pilot, and that you have your kids consumed with everything but God.
- What if he were the one trying to get you in debt... making it seem like you just have to have that car... debt: options become so limited.
- Those of you investigating Christianity... what if he were the one planting doubts in your minds...

What if all this was happening, and you were completely unaware of it?

Alright... Are you encouraged yet? Good news.

[19] "I saw Satan fall... and I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you."

- This is an amazing promise...
- *"I have given you authority to tread on them..."*
 - Think about what it would be like to walk on serpents and scorpions... that's a metaphor... would you do that?
 - Putting hand in the river bank...
- *"Nothing shall hurt you."*
 - *That doesn't* mean Satan can't afflict us... Paul said he had a thorn in his flesh that was a messenger of Satan he asked God to remove 3 times... and God said no.
 - *"Nothing can hurt you"* means nothing he does can stop the forward progress of what God is doing in your life!
 - God turned the messenger of Satan for Paul's good!

- You've been given authority to overrule all that Satan intended for evil for your good.

You say, "Well, how do we exercise that authority?" Great question, before we get to it, let me answer a couple of practical questions.

"I've got a situation (e.g. sickness), and I don't know if there's a spiritual reason behind it. What should I do?"

- We know so much now... **the science of medicine...** and **God gave us that knowledge** and expects us to use it to the fullest. And yet, we know that there can be spiritual reasons behind sickness. I gave you some references above... Paul in **1 Corinthians** said that some were sick and even died because of their disrespect of the **Lord's Table**.
 - Well, part of the problem is we like to draw neat lines between the natural and supernatural. *The supernatural can work in and through the natural.* For example, can God send a storm? Sure. Does that mean he did not use the normal forces of nature to cause it? No. The supernatural can be in the natural.
 - **My kids: I teach them that they were specially created by God... Is that true? Psalm 139 says yes...** but that doesn't take away from the role my wife and I played biologically.
- **Practically speaking**, when you're dealing with a situation, and you suspect there may be some supernatural purpose behind it, my counsel to you would be that you address both natural and supernatural sources as you seek healing. **Exhaust every natural remedy** at our disposal and be sensitive to spiritual reasons behind it as well.
- Did you know **Paul traveled with a physician**? Paul calls Luke "the beloved physician." Paul in his letters sometimes gave physical medical advice, which presumably he got from Dr. Luke.
- **The point: One doesn't have to exclude the other.**
- So, when someone is sick, call the doctors. Always. But if you begin to suspect that something really different is at work... James says to call the elders of the church in to pray.

Here's another question I get a lot...

"Can a Christian be demon-possessed?"

- Interestingly, the Bible never uses that term. That's a bad English translation of the Greek word, "*diazomai*." Which literally means, "demonized..."
- Can a Christian be "afflicted by a demon"? Yes.
- DEMONS OUT
- Any part of you that is not surrendered to Jesus and placed under the protection of his blood can be demonized.
- Your soul can never be completely taken over, since, if you're a Christian, your soul belongs to Jesus, but parts of you that you have not brought under the Lordship of Christ can be demonized.

Which leads me to the final question...

"How should we engage against the demonic?"

Well, this passage doesn't give you a lot of detailed instruction, ... **but notice** what Jesus says in vs. 20: *[20] Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*"

- Jesus **consistently directs people away** from pre-occupation with the demonic.
- In fact, he **never tells us to go out demon hunting** or approach the world like an exorcist.
- **There's really only one passage in which the Bible outlines for us what spiritual warfare is like** (Ephesians 6)
 - *In that passage he lists out the weapons of our warfare...*
- **What's interesting** (and maybe disappointing to some of you) is that none of them are really that weird.
 - The helmet of salvation: let the gospel shield our thinking. Shield of faith: believe God's promises. Belt of truth: that's good news: you never want to go into a fight with your pants down... Feet covered with a readiness to preach; the Word of God

- Let me **summarize** all those things for you? **Faith in the gospel. Be covered by the gospel. Saturate yourself in the gospel.** When you are covered by the gospel, Satan can't touch you.
 - When I was on the mission field... many believed in **territorial spirits**... find him and bind him...
 - But Paul never instructs us do that.
 - He **doesn't say... figure out who the prince of Durham is...** and bind him. (UNC fans... "It's Coach K.")
 - In fact, Paul gave us **3 model prayers** in Ephesians (Ephesians 1:15–23; 3:14–21; 6:18–19) and in none of them is he binding or casting out demons.
 - I know a woman who was praying with another Christian she worked with about something she was worried about... this lady went and **cut out a snake in construction paper** and a small decorative hatchet and said, "there, cut the head off of the snake." God never tells us to do that kind of stuff.
 - **In 1 Corinthians 1**, when Paul is addressing the division in the Corinthian church (which he said in Romans 16 could be demonic—and this would have been the prime example, they were the Jerry Springer show of churches), he never tells them to rebuke the spirit of division, he tells them to be united in their minds and charitable to each other.
 - **In 1 Cor 5** when he talks about the problem of immorality in the church—some guy sleeping with his mom (SOME SCHOLARS SAY STEPMOM: DOESN'T MATTER—MOM/PROM (which he says in 1 Cor 7 can be spiritually induced), he doesn't rebuke the spirit of incest, he urges the Corinthians to exercise church discipline and encourage the guy to repent.
- The point, again: Get grounded in Jesus and Satan won't be able to touch you.

- **Luke 11:14–26**, Jesus tells a parable in which he talks about a demon being thrown out of a house... the guy is excited and cleans it up... 7 of his buddies... *“The last state of that man was worse than the 1st.”*
- **Jesus said: If you want to keep him out**, you need a stronger resident who when the demon comes back can’t take over!
- **See, the irony is**, if you want to fight the demonic in your life, **don’t focus on the demons at all**; just let Jesus be large in your life.
- **C. H. Spurgeon**, *“The preaching of Christ is the whip that flogs the devil.”*
- **How do you get the devil out, pastor?** I preach Jesus, and that beats the heck out of Satan
- **You see, when Jesus died, he destroyed any power Satan has over you.**
 - Heard a story... Pioneer days story; cabin, in a field with a fire on the horizon. In realizing it that all would be lost, they jump in wagon, yet the fire was catching up. When the father realized they would be lost in the fire by running from it, he stopped the wagon, and burned a circle with fire, and he and the child stood in the circle. The fire then came and burned around them, and yet did not burn them because **the place they were had already been burned.**⁶
 - Jesus did not simply die for you; he died instead of you. Death and sin were taken into Jesus. Satan has no more claim on you.
- **Christians fight from victory, not for victory.** (A lot of times I hear Christians say they are fighting for victory.) I don’t need authority—he has it!

Applications:

- So, **Satan fills your mind with discouraging thoughts?** “You’re a failure. You’ll *never be used* by God! There’s *nothing but failure* in your past, there will be nothing but failure in your future...” You counter that with the truth of the gospel: “I have ransomed you; made you my own; *given a future and a hope.*”
 - *The Lord has promised good to me; his word, my hope secures...*
- **Satan loves to whisper in your head.** I know—he does mine **all the time!**
 - **(Remember**, he’s called “the accuser” of the brethren!)
 - Drown out his voice with the louder voice of the gospel!
- You suspect **Satan is afflicting** you? You declare that these things cannot hurt you; that you’ll walk right over top of those scorpions; and God will overturn all his evil plans for good.
- **You think Satan is messing with your marriage?** Get the presence of the Stronger man in your marriage.

Whatever belongs to Jesus, Satan cannot touch. On the other hand...

Whatever has not been submitted to the Lordship of Christ, and brought under the blood of Christ, is wide open for Satanic attack. And that one thing can destroy you. I’ve seen it.

- My youth pastor: **The one nail.**
- **One habit, not a bunch, just one.**
- **Dating/finances**

Conclusion:

Christian: for you, let me close with words of CS Lewis: “Humanity falls into two equal and opposite errors concerning the devil. Either they take him altogether too seriously or they do not take him seriously enough.”

Don’t develop a bunch of rituals, but let this reality drive you deeper into Jesus.

- **My dad heard** this kind of teaching when I was a kid and realized that he had a responsibility toward my family to get off the

⁶ From Tony Evans, *The Battle is the Lord’s*.

sidelines and get us grounded into Jesus, and thank God that he did! Dad, you need to protect your family, and the way you do that is by getting serious. **Can I invite you to get involved**—go to **Starting Point**; get into a **small group**; get active in **ministry**?

If not a Christian, do you believe Jesus about this?

- Might you consider that you are under the attack of an enemy? *He **doesn't want your recognition**... he's fine with you not believing. He wants your **destruction**, not your recognition.*
- He's there, like a roaring lion, trying to destroy you. Let that make you run to Jesus! (The GOSPEL... **Jesus defeated all evil that is at work in and around you**, but you have to personally receive it.