

Ephesians 6:10-20, Week 2

Introduction

I. Overview of Satan's Schemes in Scripture

- A. Temptation
- B. Deception
- C. Accusation
- D. Calamity

II. The Heart of the Matter

- A. To "split" us from God ("devil" can mean "accuser" or "splitter")
 - 1. By getting us to distrust God and his promises
 - 2. By getting us to disobey God and his commands
- B. At the heart of biblical faith is to trust and obey

The Passages

I. Genesis 3

A. Before: A great relationship between God and Adam and Eve (Genesis 2)

B. Enter the Splitter

- 1. His question (v. 1)
He gets them to distrust God by getting their eyes off all God's great gifts and focusing them on his one prohibition. He makes God look like a withholder.
- 2. Eve's Response (v. 2-3)
She is quick to exaggerate God's command/prohibition
- 3. Satan's comment (v. 4-5)
Again he gets them to distrust God by making him look like someone who wants to keep them in their place so that he doesn't have any equals
- 4. Eve and Adam disobey (v. 6)
They choose independence rather than dependence and relationship with God

II. Job 1

A. Before: A great relationship between God and Job

- 1. Job's great faith and obedience (v. 1)
- 2. God's great blessings on Job (v. 2-3)

B. Enter the Splitter

- 1. Satan gets between the relationship by calling into question Job's authentic faith. "Does Job fear God for nothing?" He suggests Job simply loves God for all the gifts God gives him (v. 6-12).
- 2. Tragedy strikes Job (v. 13-19)
The temptation again is, first, to distrust God: to think God has forsaken him and no longer loves him. The temptation is, second, to disobey God: curse him to his face.
- 3. Job's faithful response (v. 20-22)
He continues to trust and obey God as his faithful creator.

III. Matthew 3:13-4:11

A. Before: a great relationship between with God and Jesus (Mt 3:13-17)

1. Jesus receives God's Holy Spirit in a beautiful way (v. 16)
2. Jesus hears wonderful words of affirmation from his heavenly Father (v. 17)

B. Enter the Splitter (Mt 4:1-11)

1. "If you are God's Son": Again, he tries to get Jesus to distrust God. He points to his radically changed circumstances (in the desert, hungry, tired), and calls into question God's faithfulness to his son. Is he really God's son, and if so, what kind of a father leaves his son alone in middle of desert?
2. Temptation #1: "tell these stones to become bread"
You're father isn't providing/feeding you, so you need to provide for yourself. Don't choose dependence on God, choose independence.
3. Temptation #2: "throw yourself down from the temple"
Don't take God's words ("you are my son, I love you") on faith. Jump, and find out for sure if he really loves you or not.
4. Temptation #3: "I will give you all the kingdoms if you bow down to me" (v. 9)
You don't have to go down the path your father has for you that involves pain and suffering. I will give it to you quick and easy. I don't make people suffer like your father does.

Conclusion

I. What does this look like in your own life?

How does Satan get in between your relationship with God?

- How does Satan tempt you to distrust God (his goodness, his plan, etc)?
- How does that distrust lead to disobeying God?

II. Possible Examples

- A. Satan uses accusation to get you to question God's forgiveness so that you live in guilt and shame.
- B. Satan uses temptation to get you to think that there is better life to be had outside of God's commands.
- C. Satan uses distractions
 1. Being led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ (2 Cor 11:2-4)
 2. Being like the seed that is sown among thorns and is choked out by all the other stuff such as cares of the world and deceitfulness of wealth (Matthew 13:22)
 3. The problem is: we live in the greatest place on earth. There are so many things this world here has to offer (even good things), but they can become a distraction getting in the way of a pure devotion to Christ and choking out a fruitful life.
 - a. Materialism
 - b. Busyness
 - c. Entertainment
 - d. Even children
- D. In all this, the call is to "stand firm" by trusting in God and his promises and by obeying his commands and walking in his ways.

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. In Genesis 2-3, how do you understand the significance of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Why would God not want them to eat from that tree (isn't knowledge of good and evil a good thing)? What does that say about his desire for our lives and our relationship with him?
3. Looking at the three temptations in Satan's dialogue with Jesus in Matthew 4, what would be modern day parallels to each of those temptations? That is, how might the core of each temptation translate into an everyday situation in our time and place? Do you have an example from your own life or a friend's life?
4. Satan tries to get us to distrust God. What part of God do you have the hardest time really trusting (e.g. his love for you, his forgiveness, his justice, his goodness, his desire to give you good things, his control over life, his working all things for good, etc)?
5. On Sunday, Satan's use of distractions to separate us from God was stressed as a primary way he works in this time and place. What specifically does he use to distract you from a pure and simple devotion to Christ? How does that play out in your life?