TOPIC: DEFEAT THE DEVIL'S DEVICES

We need to know the devil's devices and fight them with intensity and without ceasing.

KEY POINTS

- On March 28, 2011, during the U.N. Coalition Forces war against the Taliban in Afghanistan, we lost a young Canadian soldier who was killed by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) while on foot patrol in the Panjwaii District.
- IEDs weren't designed to shoot down fighter jets or blow up army camps. Their main targets were individual soldiers, and, as unsophisticated as they may have seemed, they worked. These deadly devices killed more Coalition soldiers than any other weapon or enemy strategy in the Afghan war.
- Ephesians 6 reminds us that the devil has schemes and devices he uses against the people of God. We are not unaware of them, and we must be on constant guard against them.
- We know that the devil cannot destroy the church, just as the Taliban could not destroy the whole infrastructure of the Coalition forces, but he *can* and *does* destroy many individuals with his devilish devices.
- And as this war against hell continues, the most favoured device and strategy he uses is to have the people of God attack each other. He incites saints to improvise ways to kill each other, and we often do a really good job of it!
- This is to be expected, is it not? The enemy will use any device, any method of mass destruction or individual destruction he possibly can. He seeks to:
  - Divide and conquer the people of God;
  - Sow seeds of discord among brethren (Proverbs 6:16-19);
  - Divide a house against itself so it will fall (Matthew 12:25);
  - Incite spousal wars, tribal wars, civil wars, political wars, spiritual wars and economic wars whenever and wherever possible.
- In Old Testament times, God caused many of Israel's enemies to be defeated in battle by causing them to kill one another, while Israel would triumph without losing a single soldier. (See Judges 7:22, 2 Chronicles 20:23, 1 Samuel 14:16.)
- Having seen God at work, the devil is now employing the same tactic against God's own people. And it's working wonders for him.
- Some may be wondering why we're doing this review of the devil and his devices yet again. The answer is simple: we continue to review it because it's part of our "basic training."
- We train, practice and review our strategy again and again so that when we are actually out in the battle, we instinctively know what to do and how to fight.
- Our understandings and strategies for spiritual warfare are many and varied, and they are powerful and effective. But unless we employ them in the battles we fight, they are totally useless to us!
- We must understand that along with egging us on to fight each other, the devil also uses a number of other schemes and devices in his attempts to destroy us:
  - He uses lies (John 8:44);
  - He uses rebellion (1 Samuel 12:14-15);
  - He uses self-centeredness—the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17);
  - He promises a crown without a cross (Romans 8:17);
  - He encourages us to live undisciplined lives (1 Corinthians 9:27).

KEY SCRIPTURE:

*Ephesians 6:10-12; 2 Corinthians 2:11; Proverbs 6:16-19; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Corinthians 13:4-5; James 4:7

- So, how do we apply this teaching to our own lives? By saying:
  - I willingly choose not to intentionally injure my brother or sister at any time, for any reason, even when he or she has wronged me (1 Corinthians 13:4-5);
  - I will always communicate directly with my brother or sister to resolve issues and conflicts, so that my words and actions will never be based upon false information, speculation or hearsay (Matthew 5:21-24).
- If that proves unsuccessful, Matthew 18:15-17 gives us the next step.
- And finally, if necessary, there is the adjudication process outlined in 1 Corinthians 6:1-7.
- The pattern never changes: self-discipline and love.
- Prayer and analysis, personal conversations, group conversations, and mediation if necessary; these are the ways in which we defeat the devil's devices
- Let us commit to the following:
  - I will always attempt to be a peace-maker and a peace-maintainer (Matthew 5:9, Hebrews 12:14);
  - I will always do what is right, despite the actions of my brother or sister (James 4:17);
  - I will vigourously and viciously fight against the enemy of my soul who constantly incites me to fight against both my church family and my human family (Ephesians 6:12, 1 Timothy 6:12).
- We must not fall for the devil's devices. We must fight him as consistently and viciously as he fights us, so that we can maintain unity, harmony and love in the body of Christ.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Ephesians 6 lists the devices the devil uses against the people of God.
   - From your own experiences/observations, have you seen some of these devices at work? In what way specifically?
   - What were the methods used to confront these devices? Were they successful or unsuccessful?
   - If unsuccessful, what do you think should have been done differently?
2. What are the strategies that the people of God can employ to combat the devil's schemes? Use scripture to support your answer.
3. Take a moment to pray. Ask God to help you to be more aware of the devil's devices and to give you the wisdom and strength to combat them.

Prayer Time

Lord, help me to be aware of the devil and his devices. Help me to exercise self-discipline and love, rather than intentionally injure my brother or sister in Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.

L.G. ice-Breaker: When you are faced with a difficult task, what do you do to prepare for it?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, MAY 21, 2017

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

(Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

(Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS