



Satan Stalks

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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AM & PM Assembly



Introduction:

A friend of mine once went through a horrifying experience. She began to receive phone calls. The voice at the other end, which she did not recognize, said things like, "I am watching you. I know where you live. I know what you do. I am going to kill you." Sometimes the person called and spoke to her husband. He would say things like, "I have seen your wife. I know who she is. I know where she goes. I am going to kill her." Can you imagine that? How would you feel in that situation? What would you do? Would you begin to constantly look over your shoulder? Would you start doing some research about how stalkers behave? Would you call the police? Would you talk to your friends and have them be on the lookout? Would you start making sure you were never anywhere alone? Would you take self-defense classes? Would you start carrying a knife or a gun?

Imagine another scenario. If your daughter told you she saw a man in his car across the street from the school bus stop, then saw him hanging out near the school's playground, then driving down the street as she walked home, what would you do? Would you wait at the bus stop with her? Would you pick her up at school? Would you let her teachers know? Would you start training her in "stranger awareness" and self-defense? Would you make sure she was with someone at all times?

What would you do when someone said they thought you were going overboard? What would you do when someone asked, "Do you think it is really necessary to do all that?"

Someone is stalking you. Every breath you take, every move you make, every step you take—he is watching you. Every single day, every word you say, every game you play, every night you stay—he is watching you. He knows where you live, where you work, who your friends are. He knows what you do, how you respond, where you are weak. And he has one thought on his mind. He wants to take you captive, torment you and kill you. His name is Satan. He is real and he wants you. He knows your spouse. He knows your children. He is watching and wants them too. **I Peter 5:8** says, "Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." **II Timothy 2:26** says he wants to hold you captive to do his will.

Discussion:

- I. We are not ignorant of our stalker's schemes (**II Corinthians 2:11**)
 - A. *Satan lies* (**John 8:44**). How did Satan take Eve captive in **Genesis 3:4-5**? He lied. Granted he mixed in enough truth to make it look good, but he lied. Don't believe everything you hear, think or feel because Satan lies. Do not be deceived.
 - B. *Satan uses our natural desires* (**I John 2:16**). He will use the wants of our flesh, the delight of our eyes, and the desire to be wise and esteemed to pull us to his path. Isn't that what he did with Eve in **Genesis 3:6**? Interestingly, according to **Genesis 2:9** all of the trees in the garden were a delight to the eyes and good for food. Satan deceives us into believing that everything that seems delightful must be ok. After all, God wants us to be happy and never suffer, right?
 - C. *Satan disguises himself and his messengers* (**II Corinthians 11:12-15**). Satan doesn't walk up to us and say, "Hi, I'm Satan. I am tempting you and attempting to take you captive. Won't you please submit?" He attracts us with things that look godly, but aren't. For instance, I am always receiving notices from groups with names like "Teenmania" and "Acquire the Fire" asking me to let our teens know about some moving worship weekend that is going to capture the heart of this Millennial generation that everyone is afraid is leaving the church. It sounds good. Many parents are happy their children are doing something that has something to do with God. But for all of the spiritual message they claim to present, Satan has his fingers on it, turning worshipping God into a time of feeding the flesh, presenting entertainment as worship and emotionalism as connecting to God. Do not be deceived.
 - D. *Satan takes away the Word* (**Luke 8:5, 12**). Satan doesn't want us to know God's word. He wants to build barriers to it. He will bombard us with distractions so we never get around to reading it. He fills us with doubts so we are not sure we can trust it. He provides skeptics who question everything. He fills us with resentment against God's messengers so that when they say something we don't like, we don't have to listen. He provides us with a sense of satisfaction that just "going to church" and listening to the sermon is enough.

- E. *Satan uses natural disaster and sickness (Job 1-2)*. When Satan attacked Job, he used the armies of men (**1:15, 17**), he used the “fire of God”-lightning?-(**1:16**), he used a great wind-tornado?-(**1:18**) and a sickness of boils (**2:7-8**). Through these means Satan took away Job’s possessions and even killed Job’s children. When Jesus healed on the Sabbath, he defended himself saying “this woman...whom Satan bound for eighteen years...” (**Luke 13:16**, ESV). When Peter preached and described Jesus’ work in the flesh he said, “He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (**Acts 10:38**, ESV). I am not saying every natural disaster or sickness is directly caused by Satan. I am simply saying Satan uses those things to take us captive.
- F. *Satan uses others (Matthew 16:22-23)*. Jesus called Peter Satan. Why? Because Peter’s words were a tool of Satan to tempt Jesus away from God’s plan. He will use our family and our friends. In **Job 2-3**, Satan used Job’s wife. Why didn’t Satan kill Job’s wife along with his children? Because she, in her personal rebellion against God, was more useful to Satan alive than dead (**2:9**). Then Job’s friends, who were supposed to be a source of comfort and encouragement, ended up being Satan’s most effective approach to taking Job captive. Their accusations came the closest of any of Satan’s temptations to getting Job to stumble.
- G. *Satan uses our emotions against us (Ephesians 4:26)*. One of Satan’s biggest attacks is to take advantage of our emotions and passions. The best example is that of anger. How many sins do we commit because we got angry? Unwholesome words, slander, bitterness, wrath, vengeance, clamor, etc. all come out when we allow the devil a foothold in our lives through not dealing with these emotions quickly.
- H. *Satan doesn’t care where we are (Job 1:6)*. Satan came into the presence of God by coming into the midst of the sons of God. The fact is Satan doesn’t care that we are the sons of God and have come into this place to gather to worship and present ourselves to God. He will come even here and attack us. How many are being attacked right now by Satan with distractions, with irritation, with bitterness? How many are being attacked to ignore or discount what they are hearing and experiencing right now? How many are thinking, “This isn’t such a big deal”? How many are thinking, “I can’t believe Edwin classed that with the work of Satan”? How many are thinking, “That’s just preacher talk”? Those walls are not from God, they are from Satan; he attacks us even here.
- I. Here is the long and short of it. Satan is stalking us. He is attacking us. He may attack us using our weaknesses, our desires, our friends, our family, our brethren, our co-workers, our feelings, our eyes, our pride. He may attack us with natural disasters, sickness, oppression, persecution. He may attack us using something we see on tv, hear on the radio, see at the checkout counter of Wal-mart, hear at work. He will attack us at home, at school, at work, and at church.

II. God’s involvement.

- A. Before we look at our defense, we must honestly recognize God’s involvement in all of this.
- B. God is in control of the world and Satan only attacks because God allows it. The story of Job is the greatest demonstration of this. In **Job 1-2**, Satan came into God’s presence and sought permission. In **Luke 22:31-32**, Jesus said Satan had demanded permission to sift Peter like wheat. We must honestly admit that when Satan tempts us, God has allowed it.
- C. However, God never allows Satan to tempt us beyond our limits (**I Corinthians 10:13**).
- D. God always provides a way of escape (**I Corinthians 10:13**).
- E. God desires to be our refuge, our rock, our defender and our deliverer (**Psalms 18**). Note **vss. 1-3**. **Vs. 30** says “he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him” (ESV). Read **vss. 31-36**. God desires to do more than just provide a way of escape. He has offered to protect and deliver us from Satan, but we must take refuge in Him. If we seek refuge in Him, He will gird us with strength. He will provide us with maneuverability in battle, making us sure-footed (hind’s feet). He puts us on the high ground, trains us for battle, shields us, holds us up, makes us great and provides a place for us to stand in which we will not fall. But we must take refuge in Him.

III. Our defense—refuge in God.

- A. It is one thing to take refuge in God. But how do we do that? Do we just sit around saying, “I expect God to deal with this?” I think not. We could travel all over scripture to find the various aspects of what we must do to take refuge in God but I think **Acts 2:42** presents the four-pronged assault on Satan that is seeking refuge in God. “And they devoted themselves to the ¹apostles’ teaching and the ²fellowship, to ³the breaking of bread and the ⁴prayers” (ESV, numbering mine *ELC*).
- B. The early disciples did not devote themselves to these things because they are God’s assignments for Christians. They devoted themselves because they had been set free from the grasp of Satan and were taking

refuge in God that they might remain free and not be taken captive again (**II Peter 2:20-22**). We will look in depth at each of these at a later date. However a quick note about each of them and their refuge in God.

- C. *Devoted to the apostles' teaching.* That is, they were devoted to God's Word. In **Psalm 18:20-24**, David said God's deliverance was directly proportional to his devotion to God's Word. He put God's ordinances before Him. He read them. He meditated on them. He followed them. **Psalm 119:11** says, "Your word I have treasured in my heart that I might not sin against you." Even Jesus himself conquered the attack of Satan because of His devotion to the Word of God (**Matthew 4:4, 7, 10**). Sadly, we often view Bible study as a homework assignment to procrastinate. We question how much Bible reading and study we actually have to do to get to heaven. Beloved, Bible reading is not a daily checklist item to keep God from zapping us. It is an absolute necessity to keep Satan from taking us prisoner. If we wish God to shield and deliver us, we must seek refuge in Him by seeking refuge in His Word. Let me ask you, if you started seeing a stranger following you around or started receiving threatening phone calls would you not start learning how stalkers act, what you could expect from them, and how to defend yourself? Why not do the same in the face of Satan the ultimate stalker?
- D. *Devoted to fellowship.* That is, they were devoted to God's people. They were devoted to joint spiritual participation in God's work with God's people. **Psalm 82:1** says God takes His stand in His own congregation. Why would we want to be any place but in the midst of God's congregation? (I am not saying we will never spend time with those in the world, but that must be in the proper context, after our refuge in God through His people has been established. That discussion is for another lesson.) In **Psalm 141:5**, David prayed that God allow the righteous to smite him with kindness. That is, he understood God would deliver him from the tempter by using the chastening and encouragement of his brethren who also wanted to overcome Satan. **Hebrews 10:24** says we are to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. That is why God has developed local congregations, to provide not only a haven of truth but a haven of help in the battle against Satan. Too often we argue over the absolute necessity of congregational membership or attendance, when we do we lose sight of the real issue. We want to know if God will zap us into hell if we are not a member of a local church or if we don't attend all the assemblies and classes. The reality is Satan will take us captive if we are not taking refuge in God by taking refuge in God's people. But this is more than being a member and making it to the assemblies. This is being part of the community. This is being in each other's lives. Watch a nature show sometime. It is rarely the gazelle in the middle of the pack that the lion attacks. It is usually the isolated one that isn't with the group. Spending time with Christians is not another duty or obligation, it is a safety net. Let me ask you, if you started seeing a stranger following you around or started receiving threatening phone calls, would you not spend as much time with other people as possible and with people you expected to be able to help and protect you if attacked? Why not do the same in the face of Satan the ultimate stalker?
- E. *Devoted to the breaking of bread.* That is, they were devoted to remembering God's Son, God's sacrifice, and God's grace. Why do we take the Lord's Supper every week? Is it because God's rules say so? If that is the only reason, it does us little good. We devote ourselves to this because the constant reminder of God's Son, sacrifice, and grace is absolutely essential to our refuge in God. Every week we are reminded that God has already won the victory for us through the death of Jesus (**Hebrews 2:14**). We are reminded that Satan, whose name means "accuser" can have nothing to say against us because if God freely gave us His Son, He will give us all things (**Romans 8:31-33**) and will save us from His wrath through His Son (**Romans 5:9**). And yes, we are reminded that when we sin, we have an advocate with the Father through whom we can approach God and receive forgiveness (**I John 1:8-2:2**), remembering that God knew we would commit our sins when He sent Jesus to die, but He did it anyway. The Lord's Supper reminds us that our sins are not a surprise to God, we can confess them and be forgiven. We take refuge in God by taking refuge in His Son, His sacrifice and His grace. Let me ask you, if you started seeing a stranger following you around or started receiving threatening phone calls would you not want to be repeatedly reminded of what has been done to protect you and help you win the victory? Why not do the same in the face of Satan the ultimate stalker?
- F. *Devoted to prayer.* Considering our circumstance, how can we be anything but devoted to prayer? Let's face it. Our stalker is too much for us. But He is not too much for God. If we want God to be our deliverer, we need to ask Him. When Jesus modeled prayer in **Matthew 6:12-13**, part of the prayer was "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (ESV). In **Psalm 18**, David says God was his rock, his shield, his deliverer because "In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears" (**Psalm 18:6**, ESV). Not only will we be devoted to prayer for ourselves, but devoted to prayer for

others knowing that Satan is stalking them as well (cf. **Ephesians 6:18**). Further, we will be devoted to seeking others prayers on our behalf (cf. **Ephesians 6:19**). As we see the victory God provides while we take refuge in Him, we will not be able to help but be devoted to praising, thanking, and magnifying God. That, in fact, was the basis for **Psalm 18**. Read **vss. 1-3**. We take refuge in God by taking refuge in worshiping Him. Let me ask you, if you started seeing a stranger following you around or started receiving threatening phone calls would you not repeatedly and continually report the stalkers attacks to the police, would you not inform your friends, would you not seek help from any source you thought could provide it? Would you not be profuse in your thanks for those who actively helped you overcome the stalker? Why not do the same in the face of Satan the ultimate stalker?

Conclusion:

Read **Psalm 18:46-49**:

*The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock,
And exalted be the God of my salvation—
The God who gave me vengeance,
and subdued people under me,
who delivered me from my enemies;
yes, you exalted me above those who rose against me;
you rescued me from the man of violence.
For this I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations,
and sing to your name.
Great salvation he brings to his king,
and shows steadfast love to His anointed,
to David and his offspring forever (ESV).*

Satan is stalking. But God will deliver those who take refuge in Him. God delivered David and He will deliver us. Let us take refuge in Him, devoting ourselves to His Word, His people, His Son, His sacrifice and grace, and His worship. Let us exalt the God of our salvation!