



Schemes of the Devil  
Women's Discipleship Class – January 18, 2018

Verses Covered This Week

*Ephesians 6:10 - 11*

*1 John 5:13*

*Romans 8:15 – 16*

*Genesis 3:4 – 6*

*Romans 5:8*

*Ephesians 1:7*

*2 Corinthians 5:21*

*Psalms 103:12*

*Isaiah 38:17*

*Micah 7:19*

*Matthew 13:20 - 21*

OK. So we have looked at Satan, we've looked at Demons, so today I want you to turn to Ephesians 6. We're going to fly again. I've got a ton of Scriptures I want to run through. It says:

*<sup>10</sup>Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. <sup>11</sup>Put on the whole armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*

He uses this unique word, he uses a Greek word for method. So Satan does have a distinct set of methods that he will use to go after you. Now we're going to walk and look at some of the ones that I think are general for all of us. There are certain schemes that he has in your life that are distinct from other people. All of us have our own issues that we wrestle with. And he's going to take your greatest weakness and go after you in that area. We're all different in numerous ways. For example, my wife and I, when she walks in a room, she assumes everybody likes her. When I walk in a room, I assume nobody likes me. And it impacted my life deeply when we went through a staff issue that we went through probably five years ago. It probably impacted me in a way that it would not have impacted somebody else. I still deal with residual things from that. So I think whatever your particular issues are, and one of my best friends in seminary, actually the best friend I ever had in the ministry emotionally, we'll look at this when we look at the difference between men and women, we'll look at marriage here in a few weeks. But he had my struggle and he wound up leaving his wife and the ministry; left a gorgeous wife for a woman that was the

antithesis of that. But she valued him in a way he didn't feel his wife did. And so you're going to have certain things in your life because of your personality, because of the way you were raised, you're going to have certain things in your life that he goes after on you that he can't use on somebody else because they don't have that issue. But there are certain things that are general that I want us to look at and walk through.

For example, here's the first one. I want you to go to 1 John 5:13. And we're going to look at this in detail probably next time we meet. So listen to what he writes.

<sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

So he puts two things, right; believe and then eternal life. Now that's pretty simplistic. If you're talking about an eternal destiny with God versus and eternal lake of fire, this is pretty simplistic. But that's how it works. First thing the enemy will do to you is he will make you doubt your salvation. Now I want you to look at Romans 8:15. In connection with this you have Numbers 13:25 – 33. Here's what he says in Romans 8:15.

<sup>15</sup>For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, you received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry out, "Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup>The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we're children of God,

And then he goes down through the consequences. First thing the enemy's going to do is make you doubt that you're a believer. You're going to struggle with that. I don't know anybody that doesn't struggle with that. As a matter of fact, my position really is if you struggle with whether or not you're a believer, that's the proof that you are. The enemy would never make you doubt if you're not because that would make you think about accepting Christ and that's the last thing he wants for you. So I think the fact that you doubt is proof that you are. But it's the first place he takes you because if you go back to 2 Peter 1:2 – 4, he makes the statement that it's through God's promises that you're able to conquer the enemy and that you're able to pull down God's nature into your life. If you don't think you're a believer, you can't possibly put your faith in those promises because you're not sure they apply to you or that you can have them. So the very first place that he's going to deal with everybody is here. He's going to make you doubt. He's going to find some area in your life that is a chronic issue for you. And you're going to read some verse like 1 John where it says a Christian cannot continue in sin. And you're going to have a chronic area in your life and you're going to beat yourself up over it. He's going to beat you up over it. And he's going to make you believe that you do not have eternal life because if you really did, you wouldn't have this chronic issue. So that's the first place he goes. I remember I made this statement on a Wednesday night, and one man in the back said, I said, "The proof of your salvation really is that you doubt." I had one man in the back that said, "I must be the greatest Christian ever born." So it's the first place he goes. He's going to make you doubt your salvation.

Second, Genesis 3. Go back to Genesis 3. One and two are creation. Three is the fall of man. Now I want you to listen to what he does, particularly, and he will do this with you. He particularly does it with men inside their marriages. Let's look at verse 4.

<sup>4</sup>The serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die!

She’s told him, “If we eat from the tree we will die.”

<sup>5</sup>For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” <sup>6</sup>So the woman saw the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise,

Boom! So here’s the second thing he’s going to do. First he’s going to make you doubt. The second thing he’s going to do is make you feel like God is cheating you. That’s really his argument to Eve. He says, “Look the reason God doesn’t let you eat this tree is because if you eat it, man, you’re going to be blessed and He’s ripping you off with this commandment.” If you were here last Sunday morning, I read a quote by Rob Bell who is a renowned preacher among the younger generation. Bell basically said that loneliness is critical in our life and if you’re, even same sex, if you’re a guy and you want to go through life with a guy and that removes your loneliness, that that’s OK. And that basically God’s dusty, old 2,000-year-old letters are damaging these poor people who need this loneliness fulfilled. Rob Bell’s argument is basically Satan’s argument in Genesis 3. The position of same sex marriage or relationships is unholy and immoral and that position, according to Rob Bell, is an old letter of 2,000 years, it’s dusty and it’s cheating you because it’s robbing you of the ability to conquer your loneliness. If you could just have a man, and you’re a man or a woman, that would ease your loneliness and so God’s rule that’s in this book is really ripping you off. And that’s the second thing he’s going to do.

It’s what he does with Christian men inside their marriages when they have affairs. If a man’s lost and he has an affair, it’s generally because there’s an internal desire that has pulled him away from his wife and he’s lusted towards another woman. But inside a Christian man, the enemy can’t control him from within. So what he does is he makes him believe; he comes home, there are issues between a man and a woman, and we’re going to look at that in marriage. I don’t care who you are, I never trust these people that say to me; they’ve never fought. I think that’s because they’ve never talked. At some point, dude, you’re having issues inside your marriage. It’s always tough in premaritals. You don’t want to make them think this is going to be the hell-hole of life, but you do want them to understand it’s not going to be Walt Disney either. So there’s always this fine tune thing you try to walk through. But at some point when the guy goes to work and he’s got this gorgeous secretary and she’s telling him how wonderful he is and then he goes home and his wife’s going, “You know I told you to take the trash out today. I don’t know why you can’t remember this.” I don’t know any husband that hasn’t heard that; I’ve heard that daily. When you go home and you hear that and then the woman at work’s going, “Oh, you’re just so wonderful.” Well, yeah, you’re wonderful because she doesn’t live with you. The enemy will make the guy think you’re being ripped off by staying in this marriage. This woman would be better for you. And so the second method that I think he uses is he will make you believe that God is somehow, His directives in your life aren’t really a blessing for you, but they’re in fact cheating you. It’s why you hear the syllogism, God wants me to be happy, I’m not happy in this marriage so God wants me out of the marriage. That’s the syllogism. It’s the argument; it’s a three-pronged argument that God’s ripping me off, this marriage is ripping me off, so I can leave. So the second thing he’s going to do to you is he’s going to make you believe that God’s commandments are ripping you off.

Third. This is a unique one now in view of what Calvinism has come to. Slide over to Romans 5:8. Here's what he says:

<sup>8</sup>But God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

I think the third thing that he's going to do to you is he's going to say, "God does not love you." Now this is a key, pivotal issue. There are two things that cause this. One is the new Calvinism and the other is the theodicy. Theodicy is a combination of two Greek words: *Theós* (God) and *dikē* (His justice). You're going to face issues in life where God's justice is going to be questioned for you. We had a young college student who lived with us, I think I've shared this before, for nine months who was a believer. She was one of our adopt-a-students. She lived with us for nine months because two men savagely raped her in her apartment. Now she's got to wrestle through "Where was God? Why wasn't He there? He wasn't just or He would have been there and someone would have heard it. Someone would have stopped it." So she's got to wrestle through theodicy. I've dealt with this on numerous occasions, you've got a young couple, they're married, they're doing it right, they love Jesus, they were virgins when they married, they've done everything right. They go to Sunday school. They go to church. They're godly and they can't get pregnant. And the girl down the street, at age 18, has had three abortions. Now for them, they're asking God, "OK, now we're doing it right and you won't let us get pregnant." And there are all sorts of tough verses in the Bible where it says God closes the womb. So they're sitting there going, "You won't let us get pregnant and yet this girl." So when you face this, it will make you question. The enemy will come to you and go, "You know, if He really loved you, this would not be true in your life." The neo, I should say this, the neo-Calvinism movement is really making this difficult. There's a guy, John Piper, who is kind of the guru of this thing. Piper makes a statement, I mean basically, he makes a statement that God only loves Himself. It's all He's capable of. He can't love anything beyond Himself. And so His love for you is simply something that falls out from within Him, but it's not really directed at you; it's directed at Him. The problem with that is two things: number one, the Bible never says God loves himself. It's never in the scripture. But over and over it says, "God loves us." Now you've got to lock this down because if you have this combination, you're this guy, you know I don't think He deeply loves you, and then you hit this, and a real bitter one of these, not just you don't have any cash. If the enemy can get you to believe He doesn't love you, you can't possibly have any kind of relationship with Him. So it's the next scheme that he uses. It's actually quite brilliant.

Then look at Ephesians 1:7. It will deal with you on forgiveness. That you are not really forgiven. Now I want you to look at Ephesians 1:7. You go there and I'm going to read 2 Corinthians 5:21. So you go to Ephesians 1:7. Let me pop there and then I'll fly to the other. It's probably the simplest picture. Listen to what he writes.

<sup>7</sup>In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

So my forgiveness is rooted in, right, His blood. Now listen to 2 Corinthians 5:21.

<sup>21</sup>For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

So clearly my forgiveness is in the blood of Christ. I've made a trade here. I've given Him my sin; He's given me His righteousness. So I have God's righteousness and His blood has washed away my sin. Now the problem is, again, the enemy right here will beat you up. What you've got to understand, we talked about this a little bit when we talked about being filled with the Spirit. Forgiveness is not a cessation of memory. You are going to remember, and if you don't, he will remind you of the really crappy things you've done in life. We've all done them. We've all got closets and there some small little skeletons and there are some big skeletons. And the enemy, at the proper time, will pull out these skeletons and say, "Hey, dude, God has not really forgiven you." So here's what I want to give you. I want to give you three verses today that I want you to lock down for the rest of your life.

Number one: and we're going to look at three and I'm going to tell you why we're looking at them. Psalm 103:12. It used to be when I grew up and we were doing Bible drills that you could say, "Turn in the middle of your Bible and it will fall open to Psalm." But with all these study Bibles, it's not even close. Now we're going to look at these three verses quickly and then I'm going to come back. Listen to what he says:

<sup>12</sup>As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us.

So he says east to west. Look at Isaiah 38:17. Now listen to what he writes:

<sup>17</sup>Behold it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but in love You have delivered my life in the pit of destruction, for You have cast all my sins behind Your back.

So they are behind God's back. Then look at Micah 7:19. Listen to what he writes.

<sup>19</sup>He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all our sins into the depth of the sea.

So you have three metaphors, right. He says He's going to throw them east to west, He's going to put them behind His back, and He's going to put them in the depth of the sea. Now let me ask you a question. Can He go east to west? Yes. Can He reach behind His own back? Yes. Can He hit the depths of the sea? Yes. Can you go east to west? No. Can you reach behind His back? No. Can you go to the depths of the sea? No. So why does He give those three metaphors? Because He's telling you He's put your sins where you can't pick them up anymore. So if you pick them up, why are you picking them up? Because the enemy's reminding you of something and God's intent in these metaphors is to tell you, "I want you to give up believing that you're some foul person. I have traded your sin for My righteousness. You're as holy as I am. And I've put your sins where you can't pick them up ever again. So quit listening to the enemy and his argument that you are somehow not forgiven completely by God and beating yourself up over your sin." These are the three most powerful metaphors on your own personal forgiveness that I think there are.

We've talked about this, we won't go here, but remember we talked about 1 John 5. I pray His will not my will in my life. I have to do that. It's the only way we have the guarantee of the answered prayer. One of the things the enemy will do is have you pray what you want instead of what He wants. It's a catastrophic thing. You waste your time in prayer. When you pray what you want, which He will not answer. If it's against what He wants, then you waste your time. It's one of the genius tools of the enemy. He gets us to pray, we feel like we're involved with Christ, and yet we're praying in a way that He will not honor.

Go to Matthew 13. This is another one, particularly for the connecting points of women, which we'll look at when we deal with marriage. Listen to Matthew 13. Now His disciples were obviously Southern Baptist. How do we know that? Because they didn't understand anything He said. So in Matthew 13:20 listen to what He says.

*<sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup>yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, when tribulation or persecution arise on account of the word, immediately he falls away.*

Secondly, he will get you to focus on what you feel; not what God says. Now this is a really difficult thing. It is a continuous work that he does. When I, it was probably the biggest struggle, the first real hard struggle I went through. I grew up in a home where we had no relationship. I wasn't a popular kid at school so when God saved me when I was 17, it was powerful in my life, but oddly enough, again the impact in my life was deep, when at 18 He called me to preach, and I realized there was this personal agenda that He had for me. Now the call was quick, very powerful, and very, very emotional. I couldn't get enough of the scripture. Couldn't get enough of prayer. And every time I prayed and every time I read my Bible, I had this deep, passionate sensing of His presence. I remember when we went to Florida, my parents and I, about two weeks, and again they did their thing, I did my thing. And so at night I would go out and pray just to God for about four hours on the beach, watching the night sky and I loved being alone. Loved being outside. So it was a really powerful thing for me. It was almost like He was right there on the shore with me. So I had this intense emotional, that's the only way I can say it. I have an intense emotional passion in my soul that I have not had my whole life. So abruptly, it's gone. I pick up my Bible one day, I read it and nothing's happening. I pray and nothing's happening. So at this point now I'm in intense struggle. I hated my pastor for what he said, but he was right. But I hated him. I would go down like every Sunday night for literally six months. I would go down and I would say, "Oh, Brother Nelson, I don't sense God's presence." And He had this phrase that he used. I just hated hearing it. He said to me every time, and he was right, I was an idiot, but every time he said, "You have to walk by faith." When you hear the same thing over and over and over, like you're the moron and you know he's wrong because you've lost something. So I had this immense struggle in my life. It took a long time; it was my first real struggle in Christ. It probably took me about seven to nine months of feeling nothing when I read the scripture. Feeling nothing when I prayed. But at the end of about seven or nine months, what pulled me out was basically the Holy Spirit said to me, "I want you to seek Me whether you feel Me or not. I don't want you to seek Me because I make you feel good; I want you to seek Me for who I am in your life." That was a fundamental shift and ever since then I've discovered in my own walk there are days when I open this and it's just like, bam; and there are days when I open this and there is nothing. Because it's God's reminder to me, "I want you to seek Me for who I am; not for your feelings."

Charles Spurgeon had a great quote. He was a pastor in England. He had a great quote. He said, "When I looked at Jesus, the dove of peace flew in my heart. But when I looked at the dove of peace, it flew away." The enemy will get you to focus on what you feel because your feelings are going to come and go. The problem with emotions is, they're legitimate, but they'll follow whatever you believe, generally. I remember I'm dating Peggy. So we're home in Minden, Louisiana, she's gone to bed with her mom, I'm up with her dad. We're watching John Wayne, Leathernecks. It's a movie about John Wayne flying in the war. So my father-in-law begins to regale me, you know, and of course you're dating his daughter so you're trying to like get in there. So I guess the word would be bond. So he's regaling me with all the flying he did in World War II and all this stuff, and so it's over I'm just like mesmerized. I'm thinking, "This is really great! We really bonded." I get up the next morning, Mrs. Proctor's cooking breakfast, I walk in and go, "Man! It's great what your husband did in the war." She never even looked at me. She just flipped one of the eggs and went, "He was never in the war." It is amazing how quickly feelings can leave you because I got up thinking, "Man! We have bonded." And within a nano-second, I want to shoot him. So he's going to get you to focus on what you feel because if he can, he can turn you any way he wants to.

Now, last thing, and then I want to make a summary. Numbers 13:25 – 33. We're going to asterisk this and we're going to asterisk Romans 5:8. Now, Numbers, listen to what he says. Because when you combine these two, it's devastating to your walk. It's about the spy sent into Canaan. They come back. I want you to understand, both reports are correct.

<sup>25</sup>At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land, <sup>26</sup>they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation and the people of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. <sup>27</sup>They said, "We came to the land in which you sent us; it does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. <sup>28</sup>However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. (That would be Goliath's people.) <sup>29</sup>The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negev, the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites dwell in the hill country, and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the Jordan."

Everything they said is correct. The land's good, but the people they cannot conquer. Then Caleb is also correct.

<sup>30</sup>Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses said, "Let's go up at once and occupy it, we're well able to overcome it." <sup>31</sup>Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, they're stronger than we are."

That is also accurate. Nobody is wrong. They're right. Those people are too big for them. But they're not too big for their God. So what he will do is make you think that your problem is too big for God to handle. Now I want you to watch this. You go to 2 Peter 1:2 – 4 and it talks about the fact that His promises are how I pull Him into my life and how I conquer the situations in my life. I've got to believe two things about those promises. I've got to believe He wants to enact them. I've got to believe He can enact them. If I don't think He loves me, and I think He's too

small to handle my problems, I can't put my faith in a single thing He's got. And if Satan can put several of these things in your life, if he can make you think, "You know you may not be a believer. God's ripping you off. Really doesn't love you. He's not big enough to handle your finances. I'm not sure you're really forgiven." And your life is beginning to focus on what you feel and not what He says, he owns you and he will take you anywhere he wants to take you.

I want you to notice every single one of these issues are trust issues. None of them are an internal battle. You either believe what God says or you believe what he whispers. Everything in your life boils down to the whisper of Satan versus God's word. Now here's the problem. God makes the statement one time. Satan whispers all day long. God gives you these metaphors, but Satan will tell you all day long. And I'm going to tell you, he will beat you up. I can't remember if I shared this, Peg and I were talking, she actually asked Stephen this year, she had a moment of every parent where she did something and she felt she had failed as a parent, she'd thought she'd messed up as a mom, and it was a big thing to my wife. The failure was huge. So she asked Stephen, "Do you remember this moment?" He didn't remember a thing. But I guarantee you, there are times when he's beaten both of us up for things we've done as parents and yet children don't remember those things. He's really good here. And if he can get more than one of these things in your life, where you don't think He really loves you, you're not sure He can really handle your problems, he's just going to run you on a circle. And then if you add to that your own personal proclivities, your own personal struggles, he's really good. Somebody said, "Is there anything good you can say about Satan?" And there is. He has one divine quality. He's tenacious. He grabs. He stays. You wrestle against a group of demons. Now we're going to look at angels next week. You're going to be assigned an angel at birth. If you're assigned an angel at birth, I guarantee you the enemy has assigned a demon at your birth. So you're going to wrestle through both these guys. And we're going to look at angels next week and how all this relates. But I simply want you to understand. These are his methods in a general way. And if he can get more than one in you, then he'll take you anywhere he wants to take you. Not because you're bad. Not because you're stupid. Not because you're evil, but because he's good at what he does and it's hard to trust, and I'm going to tell you, you think about it, trusting God for these things is the hardest thing you can do.

There's a guy in town, really liked, still liked, he got caught, most of you know who I'm talking about, it's public information, it was all over the Bryan Eagle, but he got caught voyeuring one of his assistants in his office. He was taping his assistants, women, undressing. So this one particular assistant found it, her husband happened to be a Bryan Police officer. She called him. They came up. He was probably my age when this happened. So he has no time to recoup it. He's lost everything. He wound up losing his business. He was well known in the community for his Christian stance. Now when you go through what he went through, if you're really repentant from what he did, then He still loves him because you can't do anything to make God love you less. You can't do anything to make Him love you more. So you can't lose this. If he's really repentant, grieved, this becomes true. But after what he did and the public setting of it, my bet is these two things he wrestles with every day when he gets up. So you're going to screw up somewhere in life. And the enemy will just wrack you. I want you to lock these down. God puts your sin where you can't reach it because He wants you to understand you've got to forgive yourself as much as you are forgiven by Him. It is a difficult thing. We tend to beat ourselves up. And here's the really hard part. The deeper you grow in Christ, the more sensitive you become to sin and the more sensitive you become to sin, the more you wonder if you're forgiven. When I used to preach

youth revivals in college and early in my ministry, you know who would always walk the aisle? It was always the 80-year-old woman who was about as godly as you can get, but she would be the first one to walk the aisle and grab my hand and say, “Well, Brother Chris, I need to repent of this and that.” And I’m thinking, “No, you put your holiness against mine, we’re on a whole different scale.” But it was her sensitivity to the Spirit that hit her. So it becomes actually even more difficult the more you grow in Christ because you become more sensitive to this. So you have to keep in mind, He’s put your sin where you can’t get it.

### **Questions**

- Q.** So I think you pretty well covered it when you talked about how the enemy makes you doubt you’re a believer, but a verse that has personally tripped me up is the one where He says, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ and there are many who will think they are, but then ultimately will find out that they are not. So then there’s the struggle. Well am I really? Because He says there are those who think they are secure, but they’re not.
- A.** We’ll look at that in a few weeks. We’ll look at that when we look at assurance of salvation. It is the most frightening verse because if you take Matthew 7, many will say in that day we knew you, and I didn’t know you. But then you go to the simple little statement in 1 John 5 if you believe, you are saved. I mean it is difficult to coordinate those two statements. We’ll look at Matthew 7 in detail when we look at that, along with Hebrews 6 and wherever else we have to fall.