

THE "GOSPEL" ACCORDING TO SATAN

SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction: Satan knows the Scriptures *and* human nature

"The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose. An evil soul producing holy witness is like a villain with a smiling cheek, A goodly apple rotten at the heart. O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!"

— William Shakespeare, "The Merchant of Venice"

Luke 4:9-11 – 9 ... "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, 10 for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you," 11 and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone." (See Genesis 3:1.)

1. An extravagant promise

Psalm 91:1, 10-12 – 1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." ... 10 no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent. 11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. 12 On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

2. Some problems with the promise

Psalm 91:10 (NCV) – Nothing bad will happen to you; no disaster will come to your home.

See Mark 10:17ff – The rich young man.

Job 42:7 – (The Lord to Eliphaz) ... "My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right..."

By ripping Scripture from its context, Satan tempted Jesus to think He could presume that God would act contrary to His character, enabling Jesus to cheat death in a spectacular way, gain a following, and avoid the pain and humiliation on the cross.

"It seems easier to be God than to love God..."

– Henri Nouwen, "In the Name of Jesus"

3. Solutions to these problems

- contextual • theological • personal

Psalm 91:14-15 – 14 "Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. 15 When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.

Matt. 10:28 – (Jesus) "... do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

Luke 21:16, 19 (NIV84) – (Jesus) 16 "You will be betrayed ... they will put some of you to death... 19 But not a hair of your head will perish. By standing firm you will gain life (= your immortal soul)."

Psalm 91:4 – ...under (the Lord's) wings you will find refuge...

Luke 13:34 – (Jesus) "... How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!"

Matthew 11:28 – (Jesus) "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Purposeful reflecting...

- Silence helps us develop the skill of paying attention to the Lord. Ask Him to speak, then spend five minutes in silence. (Start with less if that helps.) When your mind wanders, gently re-direct your attention to God's presence. Be patient. This takes practice.

Experience

- React to the Nouwen's statement, "It seems easier to be God than to love God..."

- Take a moment to identify negative emotions that you frequently experience—e.g., frustration, fear, jealousy, anger, bitterness. What do they reveal about your deepest beliefs about God?

- Every week our Sunday service ends by asking God to bless us with "peace that passes understanding." How might that prayer speak to you differently in light of today's message?

Transform

- Read Mark 10:28-31. How does what Jesus says give us new insight into understanding Psalm 91? How can you apply that insight in your life? (Be as specific as possible.)

- Do you ever fall prey to relating to God *transactionally* rather than *personally*? If so, when are you most likely to notice it? What biblical image of God or verse of Scripture offers a spiritual course correction you can use whenever you catch yourself relating to God transactionally?

Share

- Ask a friend if you can share something you experienced, discovered or plan to do as a result of this message.
- Do you know anyone who seems trapped in believing Satan's lies? Would you commit to a season of praying specifically, by name, for that person to find refuge under the shelter of Jesus?