

Kington Baptist Church

MESSAGE BOARD – 86

The truth about Satan is he is a liar. And the great deceit of Satan is to persuade us that it's good to sin, that it's the way to a happy life. That's the lie he insinuated into the mind of Eve and Adam in the Garden of Eden.

His purpose is to persuade us that darkness is light and evil is good. And, judging by the world we live in, he's having good success! His way is to suggest to us that whatever gets in our way is cheating and depriving us. It's this that explains the nature and thinking of men and women left to themselves, without the grace of God. Satan's objective is for this thinking to dominate our lives. His cunning is to disguise the hook and hide the bait.

In his mercy God doesn't allow that evil intention to reach its extreme. He *restrains* Satan's campaign, for the sake of his people and the good of mankind. The world has never seen the full intensity of Satan's abilities – except for one moment, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the world doesn't see that. Apart from that one moment, the world hasn't seen the evil of which Satan is capable, the full wickedness he incites in men and women.

This explains the whole problem of the Christian life. It's Satan's ability, by deceit and lies, to entice the Christian. Our problem is the effect his deceit has on our minds, hearts and lives – it's called 'indwelling sin'.

To suggest Satan continues to make sin attractive is one thing. To suggest we feel attracted to it is another. But that's our struggle, the conflict we face day by day as Christian people. We see this in the Bible, with its challenge that we overcome temptation and invitations to sin. If we didn't find sin attractive, pleasurable, life-enhancing we wouldn't need to be warned away from it! We're told to avoid it because it has magnetic force.

This is what makes the Christian life a challenge. When we hear the invitation to *sanctification* we react; we feel a resistance that's like resentment. As the call of Christ comes to us, Satan, in the very instant, injects into our minds the idea we're about to lose something we want – about to suffer some sort of deprivation. Sanctification seems an unwanted burden – until we *feel* the evil, destructive character of the thing called sin; until we grasp the truth that sin offers only ugliness, regret, shame, sorrow, distress, guilt and desperate loneliness.

It's only then sanctification is seen to be a pleasure and a joy. Now it becomes something to desire and strive for. We see on the path to sanctification all is gain, all we will lose is what we hate – sin itself.

Now we don't only want to *do* good; we want to *be* good. Not just to do good but to be like Christ. Christ now becomes our 'all in all' – one who frees us from the deceit of sin and its grip on our minds and hearts. We see and feel we've been made alive in Christ, freed from sin. We don't only want to do good, we want to stop slipping and sliding into sin. Now we sing: *'Take away the love of sinning...set our hearts at liberty'!*

Now we see through the lies of Satan; the gross ugliness and lethal nature of sin. We come to hate it, to turn from it. More than that, we become indifferent to his enticements. We lose interest in his tawdry salesmanship; it loses its attraction and fascination. Now, when Satan tempts us, when he thrusts the 'glamour' and 'attraction' of sin into our faces we couldn't care less. His old temptations lose 'pull', they bore us like an advertising flop.

*I need Thee every hour,
Stay Thou near by;
Temptations lose their power
When Thou art nigh.*

I couldn't care what happens to something I've no interest in. The devil tempts but now, seeing where his finger points, we lose interest. His inducements look exactly like what they are – a scam! That brings freedom!

Satan sees this is going on in our souls. So he uses new temptations, ones that look 'innocent'. He'll go for our 'strong' points. Just keep in mind there's no *new* sin; we have no strong points; Satan is monotonous and tedious.

Paul tells us what we are in Christ – which is different from what we *feel* ourselves to be. God *knows* what we are – dead to sin and alive to God. If my life is being ruined by what is *dead*, then, when I realise that, I have an overwhelming sense of relief and security. Dead to sin and alive to God! That's a fact for the child of God!

We are to respond to this by becoming what we are! *Becoming* in our day by day what we already *are* by God's grace and mercy. The Christian's calling, project, goal and ambition is: *become what you are!*