

## **“The Devil Who Substitutes the Enemy”**

Ephesians 6:10–13

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### **Ephesians 6:10–13 (PowerPoint)**

#### **Preface**

We have now come to the concluding part of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

In the previous message, I shared this: *“To encounter Jesus Christ, to believe in God, and to come to know God means to realize that up until now, you have been living while mistaking who your true opponent in battle is.”*

That is to say, the ones we see with our eyes—the people and things visible to us—are not our true opponents. Rather, though almost unseen to our eyes, there surely exists one who makes opposition to God his occupation; one who knows well that to attack human beings—those who were created in the likeness of the one true Creator God—is what grieves God the most. It is the god of this world, who seeks to imprison people in the world of darkness that does not know the true God, who cunningly maneuvers to keep humanity within an atmosphere and air void of the true God by shaping the currents and tendencies of this world. It is this battle against the devil and evil spirits that constitutes the true battle for human beings—and, especially, for those who believe in the Triune God.

In essence, the enemy of human beings is not other human beings.

Therefore, naturally, the opponent of the Christian—who has been made to realize this truth—is not human beings either.

Furthermore, to say more, the existence of “another person” is not an enemy to be fought but a being to be *loved*; one to whom love is shown and with whom love is nurtured; a companion who together embodies the God of love and the love of God; even more, a necessary and irreplaceable member of the same body whose head is Christ, with whom we rejoice in our oneness in God and savor that joy together to the fullest.

Originally, the worldview that “people are enemies of one another” did not exist at the beginning of this world.

But in today’s world, the enemy of human beings is always human beings.

From the very moment of birth, we are placed in relationships of comparison and competition, being made to think such hostility is natural. We live thinking so, and before we know it, we come to regard other people as enemies—and sometimes even live each day thinking things like, *“True victory is to win over oneself,”* treating even our own selves as enemies.

As if that were the most natural thing.

And the one who creates such a worldview and value system—where people are made to think it natural to regard others as enemies—who entices people to stake their lives and dearest things on that false “naturalness,” who plants and cultivates in human hearts a worldview and value system utterly different from what God originally made—That is the devil.

The greatest work of the devil is to make people think, “*The enemy of man is man.*”

### **Part One**

Regarding the origin of the devil, or Satan, I plan to speak about it more in detail next time. But simply put, he is the former archangel who, while harboring the desire to “become like God,” rebelled against the one and only eternal God who has no beginning, and those former angels who sympathized with his rebellion and fell together with him became the fallen angels.

In the Bible appear heavenly archangels such as Michael and Gabriel. It is thought that before them, there was an archangel—Satan—who once held that position, and that one-third of the angels who followed him became the devils and evil spirits.

Therefore, Satan is *not* an opponent of God, nor can he ever *become* one.

Satan is not the opponent of God, but of Michael and Gabriel.

He is merely one who, of his own accord, has rebelled against God, trying to make himself appear as though he were like God. Since God—who exists from eternity past, not bound by time, existing by Himself alone—possesses incomparable power, there can never exist any true “opponent” to Him.

Talk about the devil and evil spirits—or even about the supernatural being who is the Holy Spirit—has the power to deepen our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to move us more profoundly, and to confirm how glorious and great are the things we believe and possess. Yet, I feel that in this world, governed by materialistic viewpoints, such talk about Satan or evil spirits is unfamiliar or even avoided—not only among those who do not yet believe in God, but also among churches and Christians.

It is unfortunate, but the reality may be that even Christians hesitate to speak or think about the existence and works of the devil and evil spirits.

The reason is probably only one:

Because in this visible world, *to be happy* has become the goal of life.

Moreover, perhaps because even faith itself has been turned into a means for pursuing that happiness—or even into something like, “*How can I use God for my own benefit?*”

In this world we have built, it has become possible—or at least seemingly so—to eat good food, wear good clothes, and live in good places. And we live as though that world were everything.

Of course, to eat good food, wear good clothes, and live in good places is not wrong. They are indeed blessings and grace from God. But that is not the *essence* of the blessing the Bible speaks of.

The blessing the Bible speaks of is always about relationship with God. Under any condition or circumstance, relationship with God itself is the blessing. And because of that relationship, even in whatever circumstance, we are led into a place of contentment—that is the grace that comes from blessing. That is exactly the blessing that the Apostle Paul, who wrote this Epistle to the Ephesians while in prison—suffering persecution precisely because he desired to live godly in Christ Jesus—was enjoying. What the Apostle Paul saw was entirely different from what the world sees.

### **Philippians 3:7–4:1 (PowerPoint)**

This is our battle.

While saying or thinking, *“If we start talking about things like evil spirits or the Holy Spirit, people will think we’re weird,”* we end up fearing human eyes more than God. And before we know it, Satan switches our focus—from knowing Christ Jesus, which is surpassingly precious—to being absorbed only in what merely *appears* splendid on this earth, until the values of the Kingdom of God are no longer reflected in our way of living. That is the battle: against being tamed and accustomed to the worldview and values of Satan.

In every Sunday worship, when we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we say, *“May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* And as Jesus said, *“Do not worry about what you will eat or drink or wear. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”* The perspective and worldview demanded of us is one that sees the unseen Kingdom of God behind this visible, material world that boasts, *“Only what we can touch, see, and hear is real.”* This does not mean that we may neglect or disregard this world. On the contrary, it is the exact opposite.

To live truly in this uncertain world, to live with care, to live with dignity—the essential perspective for this is a relationship with the true God, invisible to the eye, yet precisely because it is invisible, all the more certain.

And it is to know and acknowledge the existence of those evil spiritual beings who seek to destroy that relationship and to confine our focus entirely to worldly hostilities.

### **Part Two**

In his book *The Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis wrote the following about the devil:

Regarding demons, humans can fall into two errors. These two are opposite but equally mistaken. Namely, one is disbelieving in the existence of demons, and the other is believing in them and developing an excessive and unhealthy fascination. The devils delight in both equally. That is, they welcome with open arms both materialism, which sees everything as merely physical, and sorcery, divination, superstition, man-made religions, and the like."

And he adds another important feature about the devil:

"We must never forget that the devil is a liar."

The devil is a liar.

To whom? — To human beings.

Why to human beings?

— Because human beings are special creations made in the image of the one true God, and to cause humans to stumble and fall is what grieves God most deeply.

Then, *how* does the devil lie to humans?

There may be many ways, but this morning, I want to focus especially on one of them:

**He substitutes the enemy—he replaces the true enemy we should be fighting.**

As seen in Paul's confession earlier, he substitutes our battle: from the fight to live as citizens of heaven with a Kingdom-of-God perspective in this world, to a fight that makes *desire* one's god, that glories in what is shameful, and that thinks only of earthly things.

In this way, the most important scheme by which the devil leads human beings to think only of earthly matters is to make them think that *other people are their enemies*.

He makes people think of one another as enemies, causes them to hurt and hate each other, destroys the relationship in which they were meant to be indispensable members of one body.

By breaking relationships between people, he makes them doubt their relationship with God, and in the end, makes them think that even *God* is their enemy.

In the previous message, we also spoke about how the devil makes people think that others are their enemies. The very root of that teaching lies in the Word of God in Genesis chapters 1 through 3, which record the origin of how humans came to see one another—and even God—as enemies.

### Part Three

#### Genesis 1:26–28 (PowerPoint)

God created human beings as the only creatures among all creation to be made in the likeness of God.

To say “in the likeness of God” in one word means “**precious.**”

The being called “human” is a precious being, and when one looks at a human being, the preciousness of the divine being—God Himself—is manifested there.

And God created human beings as **male and female.**

He created them as unique beings who recognize each other as precious, who relate to one another, and who live together as one.

In Genesis chapter 2, Adam offers to Eve, with no greater expression possible, the first love song in human history, saying, “*This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. You are myself; I exist because you exist.*” The Scripture depicts Adam rejoicing as he sings this.

Above all, that relationship—where each is an irreplaceably precious being to the other—was nurtured and expressed **within the relationship with God.**

The God we believe in is the Triune God—God the Father, God the Son Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit. And the relationship among God, Adam, and Eve bears resemblance to that image of the Triune God.

In other words, that is how perfect their human relationship was.

However, one appeared who desired to destroy that relationship.

Relationship itself was the very essence of human preciousness, and relationship with God was the source of eternal life. But there appeared one who sought to destroy that relationship—by destroying it, to make humans hostile toward one another, and to make them think that God is their enemy. That is what appears in **Genesis chapter 3.**

### **Genesis 3:1–13 (PowerPoint)**

As mentioned earlier, the characteristic of Satan—the devil—is that he is a **liar.**

To be a liar is to hide oneself and not reveal one’s true nature. Likewise, Satan hid himself, did not show his true nature, but approached humans while concealing himself behind the serpent, one of the beasts of the field.

In Revelation chapter 12, this Satan, who hid behind the serpent and disguised himself as a snake, is described as “**the great dragon, that ancient serpent.**”

### **Revelation 12:7–9 (PowerPoint)**

The true form of the one called Satan or the devil, the deceiver of the whole world, is that of a great dragon—an ominous, dreadful, and ancient serpent, aged and worn by endlessly accumulated corruption and cunning.

Yet, hiding such a dreadful figure, he took the appearance of a quiet, small serpent that might even appear cute, and he hissed his deceitful words.

And what did he say?

He said, with even polite speech, *“Did God really say?”*—thus gently enticing humans (Adam and Eve) to doubt God.

This was the very beginning—the sprouting—of the first seed of doubt toward God in human history.

The Bible teaches us that the reason humans ceased to believe in God is **not** simply that people are somehow born with a vague, instinctive disbelief toward a divine being—but that there was a definite reason: there was **a scheme of Satan**.

And regrettably, Adam and Eve accepted that twisted deceit, holding in their hearts the same impossible desire as Satan himself, who had said, *“I want to be like God.”*

As a result of accepting that deception, Adam was completely transformed.

The same Adam who had once rejoiced, saying, *“You are bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. You are myself; I exist because you exist,”* now, in Genesis 3:12, said, *“This woman—this woman!—it is because of this woman that all this happened!”* Using perhaps all the physical advantage that man possesses.

With a terrible expression and overwhelming force, he lashed out and accused Eve.

It was the moment Eve became an enemy to Adam.

And likewise, for Eve, it was the moment Adam became one she could no longer fully trust—a perceived enemy.

Furthermore, both Adam and Eve, who had once shared a beautiful harmony resembling that of the Triune God—a relationship under God as their head—by their own will destroyed that unparalleled harmony, and fell into a state where even God seemed like an enemy to them.

This was the beginning of human unhappiness, the beginning of the curse.

As we continue into **Genesis chapter 4**, we see that the firstborn son of Adam and Eve, **Cain**, driven by jealousy, regarded his younger brother Abel as an enemy and killed him.

The first murder in human history occurred within what should have been a beautiful and happy family relationship.

From the lineage of that Cain was born a man named **Lamech**, who said without hesitation—indeed, with pride and boldness before people and the world—*“If anyone harms me, I will repay not merely double, but seventy-sevenfold.”*

Does not such a figure as Lamech remind us of today's leaders of nations, including Japan? It truly overlaps with them.

And do we not also see in those leaders a reflection of ourselves—the ones who choose them, who set them up, and who are mirrored in them?  
If you think, “*No, not at all, there’s no resemblance,*” then that, too, means you are lying—just like Satan.

### Conclusion

Throughout the history of humanity—from Lamech’s declaration of seventy-sevenfold vengeance until now—there has never been a time when war has ceased.

Even when we look at Japan today, it seems that after eighty years without war, there is a growing restlessness—a yearning to wage war again. Currents of thought that had long been treated as taboo are now beginning to surface, and an atmosphere that seems to celebrate hostility is being accepted—an atmosphere that says, “*Let us surrender ourselves to this current, let us build once again a nation to be proud of before the world.*” Do you not feel that way?

Even among Christians—those whose citizenship is in heaven—there are some who, caught up in worldly nationalism, prioritize being Japanese, Korean, Chinese, American, Israeli, or some other “-an,” symbolizing division, over being citizens of heaven. It seems to me we are seeing here and there such scenes where people have been deceived—completely caught in the devil’s scheme of **switching the enemy**, twisting God’s Word cleverly to his advantage. Is that merely my imagination?

Time has run out, so I would like to end here today. But now, the enemy we must clearly face is **not human**.

Nor is it **God**.

It is **the devil**. The enemy is the devil.

It is the devil—who excels more than anyone in the schemes and devices of substituting the enemy.

If now there is someone whom you hate, someone you cannot forgive, someone you wish to accuse, look down upon, corner, or criticize, then I pray that you will first be shown—through prayer, through the Word of God, and above all, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit—that that person is not your enemy.

And once you are shown, I pray that together with God, together with Jesus, together with the Holy Spirit, you may consider how you can put that revelation into practice—and, little by little, embody love.

Our enemy is neither human nor God. It is **the devil**.

Let us pray.

**Benediction: Ephesians 6:12**