



Week of October 11, 2020

Religion and Politics:

The Real Enemy

John 10:1-10

Day One | Read Genesis Chapter 3

¹ The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?” ² “Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. ³ “It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’” ⁴ “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵ “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.” ⁶ The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. ⁷ At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. ⁸ When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees. ⁹ Then the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.” ¹¹ “Who told you that you were naked?” the Lord God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man replied, “It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.” ¹³ Then the Lord God asked the woman, “What have you done?” “The serpent deceived me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.” ¹⁴ Then the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live. ¹⁵ And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” ¹⁶ Then he said to the woman, “I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.” ¹⁷ And to the man he said, “Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. ¹⁸ It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.” ²⁰ Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live. ²¹ And the Lord God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife. ²² Then the Lord God said, “Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” ²³ So the Lord God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. ²⁴ After sending them out, the Lord God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

• The creation story closes with God declaring that all that was made was “good.” The serpent in chapter 3 causes Adam and Eve to question the nature of reality as God had described it. How does the Enemy do that to you?

Day Two | Read Luke 4:1-13

¹ Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ² where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry. ³ Then the devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread.” ⁴ But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone.’” ⁵ Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ “I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them,” the devil said, “because they are mine to give to anyone I please. ⁷ I will give it all to you if you will worship me.” ⁸ Jesus replied, “The Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.’” ⁹ Then the devil took

him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off!"¹⁰ For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect and guard you.'¹¹ And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone."¹² Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the Lord your God.'"¹³ When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came.

- It isn't long after Jesus arrives on the scene that the Enemy tries to blunt Jesus' progress. Do you find that you feel drawn to what the Enemy offers Jesus in this passage? What do you make of Jesus' replies to the Enemy?

Day Three | Read Luke 4:14-30

¹⁴ Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region. ¹⁵ He taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. ¹⁶ When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. ¹⁷ The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released,
that the blind will see,
that the oppressed will be set free,
¹⁹ and that the time of the Lord's favor has come."

²⁰ He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. ²¹ Then he began to speak to them. "The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!" ²² Everyone spoke well of him and was amazed by the gracious words that came from his lips. "How can this be?" they asked. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" ²³ Then he said, "You will undoubtedly quote me this proverb: 'Physician, heal yourself'—meaning, 'Do miracles here in your hometown like those you did in Capernaum.'
²⁴ But I tell you the truth, no prophet is accepted in his own hometown. ²⁵ "Certainly there were many needy widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the heavens were closed for three and a half years, and a severe famine devastated the land. ²⁶ Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them. He was sent instead to a foreigner—a widow of Zarephath in the land of Sidon. ²⁷ And many in Israel had leprosy in the time of the prophet Elisha, but the only one healed was Naaman, a Syrian." ²⁸ When they heard this, the people in the synagogue were furious. ²⁹ Jumping up, they mobbed him and forced him to the edge of the hill on which the town was built. They intended to push him over the cliff, ³⁰ but he passed right through the crowd and went on his way.

- This is Jesus' first recorded stump speech. How does it differ from what he just heard from the Enemy? Why do you think the people reacted so violently?

Day Four | Read John 10:1-10

¹ "I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber!" ² But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice." ⁶ Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant, ⁷ so he explained it to them: "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. ¹⁰ The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life."

- When have you felt like you participated in making it harder for people to enter into God's community? What might it look like to make a wider sheep pen?

Day Five | Read John 10:11-18

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. ¹² A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, ¹⁵ just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd. ¹⁷ The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. ¹⁸ No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded."

- What does it mean for a leader to give their life away for the people they lead? What does it mean to follow that type of person?