

“BEing Spirit Led Into A Sabotage”

Matthew 4:3a

September 22, 2024

INTRO:

When was the last time the Devil devastated you...

What would you say & how would you respond if I promised you that today's sermon will give you the tools needed to learn, lead, love, & live through emotional sabotage... all while resisting the anxiety that will wreck your family, destroy your church, and ruin the world.?

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

- Series: **mMm** The Gospel of Matthew
- **Jesus The Christ... our Lord AND Savior...**
 - How divine is your Jesus?
 - How human is your Jesus?
- **How sinister & how strategic is your Satan?**

BIG IDEA: Never, never, NEVER underestimate your spiritual enemy(s)!

PREVIEW:

1. Satan
2. Snipers
3. Sanctification

T/S: *How personal is your relationship with Jesus The Christ?*

- Personal LORD?
- Personal Savior?
- Personal Friend? (cf. John 15)

NOW... how personally aware are you of your personal, **spiritual enemy, tempter, & accuser?**

TEXT:

[Matthew 4:3a](#)

“And the tempter came and said to Him,”

I. SATAN

- a. Remember who we are dealing with...
- b. Remember, don't think too much or too little of him.
- c. Remember, he is dangerous, deceptive, & defeated!
- d. Our text has a real, raw, & relevant warning for us...
- e. See the text's context AND content:

- i. Jesus is being intentionally Spirit-led into this temptation...
- ii. Jesus has been declared the Christ, King, and Savior...
- iii. **The Devil is fully aware of Who Jesus is...**
And YET... he/Satan still comes to fight.
 1. **Learning God's truth is not enough...**
 2. **Loving God's truth is not enough...**
 3. **Living God's truth is not enough...**
 4. *You need to have **faith** in God's Truth...*
 5. *You need to **BE** God's **family** of Truth...*
 6. *You need to **FIGHT** for/in God's Truth...*

II. SNIPERS

A. **BEWARE SATAN'S SNIPERS!**

- **Slithering** snipers are obvious...
- **Sophisticated** snipers are not...

INTRODUCTION:

WE LIVE IN AN AGE OF ANXIETY, CONFUSION, and TURMOIL. There's something "in the air" that feels highly combustible, a highly reactive atmosphere that pervades all institutions of society: from families to churches to businesses to governments. There's a sense that we're sitting on a powder keg—one small match and *kaboom*.

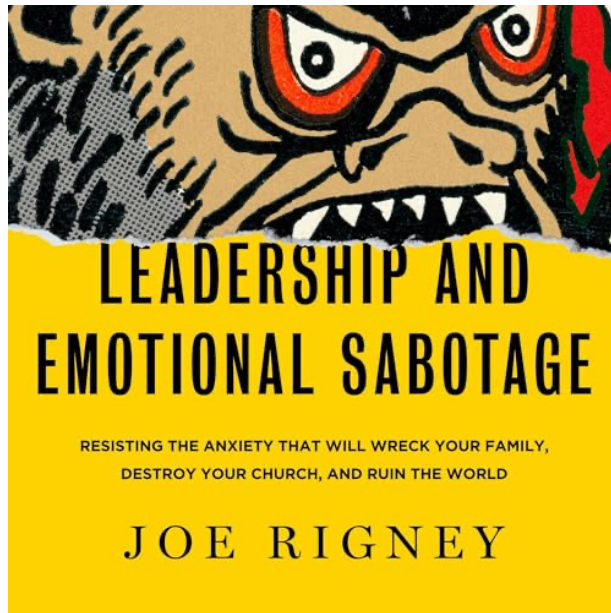
In other words, we live in an age of angst and agitation, marked by fierce *anxiety storms* that shoot through society, and reactive *social stampedes* that trample everything in their path. Our world demands that whole communities adapt to their most reactive, unstable, and immature members. *We've turned blame-shifting and excuse-making into an art*, so that hardly anyone takes responsibility for themselves, their emotions, their actions, and their situation. Instead, *we point fingers and throw stones* at “those people” (whoever they are) because *they* are the real problem. We live in a culture constantly looking for a quick fix, a silver bullet, a magic spell that will solve all our problems.

As a result, the individuals and institutions that ought to act as shock absorbers in crisis are instead *held hostage and paralyzed by indecision and failures of nerve*. Leaders are bombarded by interest groups and agitators, and then put in impossible situations: *“We need you to fix the problem, but you can't bring up the elephant in the room.”* As a result, *they adopt appeasement strategies in order to avoid conflict...* So, what should we do about it (a.k.a. “chronic anxiety”)?

BACK COVER:

SABOTAGE IS COMING.

Attempts to steer us will come. The world will seek to call us names in order to manipulate and render us mute and impotent. But by God's grace, we can resist the lure of people-pleasing and man-fearing. We can be steadfast and immovable, grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ as we seek His approval above all else.



VIDEO:

When Things Are Going Well – Watch Out!
<https://youtu.be/Bro0wuZ7dzg?si=C2k52Od9eW-eS-y>

(See also JoinCanonPlus.com for access to a 30 day free trial.)

Click the link below for a comparable discussion on the “Sin of Empathy”
<https://youtu.be/6i9a3Rfd7yI?si=-HmNTtSPcPGEf-ku>

BEWARE SATAN’S SNIPERS!

- Smiling/Smirking snipers
- Smooth snipers
- Savage snipers
- Social snipers
- Spare-tire snipers
- Steering wheel snipers

- Sexual snipers
- Joy-sucking snipers
- “Sacred” snipers
- Spiteful snipers
- Seemingly Senseless snipers
- Spineless snipers
- Selfish snipers

T/S: Today I come to you like Amos...Paul...Peter... Jesus!

Today I pray you are stirred to the point of change...

III.SANCTIFICATION

a. Salvation

- Know the 5 divine “Solas”
- Know the 5 Great C’s

b. Satan

Remember God’s warning Word:

- *Hey Eve...* (in a perfect haven...)
- *Hey JESUS...* (to the perfect God-man)
 - The tempter is coming for You...
 - Hear the double meaning of “for You”

c. Snipers

- Strategic snipers
- Systematic snipers
- Sloppy snipers
- Seductive snipers
- Soaring (drone-using) snipers
- Sorrowful snipers
- Sincere snipers
- Stubborn snipers
- Sneaky-Sideways snipers
- Sorry snipers
- Self-sabotaging snipers
- Super (best in class) snipers
- “Somebody else” snipers
- Samson/Snuggling snipers (Delilah)
- SHREWD snipers

d. SAVIOR

- i. He was **sent...**
- ii. He was **born...**
- iii. He was **tempted...**
- iv. He was **hungry...**
- v. He **wept...**
- vi. He **suffered...**
- vii. He **bled...**
- viii. He **died...**
- ix. He **rose...**
- x. He **reigns!**
- xi. He **saves.**
- xii. He **sends!**

e. Shrewdness (*wrapped in innocence*)

Studying shrewdness does not make one shrewd...
Yet the truly shrewd will study to grow in shrewdness.

- JDP

You can't learn how to ride a bike at a seminar...

You can't be truly trained in Judo...
thru Zoom meetings.

**BE-ING A STUDENT OF WAR...
DOES NOT MAKE YOU A WARRIOR!**

- JDP

VIDEO: *Ordinary Ordination 1*

The Messiah's missionaries realize that they need to keep progressing & growing as they mature from milk, to mashed potatoes, to a steady diet of biblical meat. (cf. **Hebrews 5:12**)

In a very real sense this is a battle over guts & glory! - JDP

- **Guts** = the battle of courage over cowardice...
- **Glory** = the battle over who gets the credit...

Never forget... ALWAYS remember...

It's one thing to copy Christ... It's another thing all together to be miraculously changed by Christ. - JDP

VIDEO: *Ordinary Ordination 2*

REVIEW:

Ornaments of Ordinary Ordination:

1. Selected
2. Set apart
3. Sent out
4. Sheep (true biblical sheep)
5. Submerged & Surrounded
6. Susceptible
7. STRATEGIC
8. SHREWD

S... BE a Spirit-led, Stabilizing Soldier

H... BE Holy, Humble, Hope-filled, & Helpful

R... Remember, Repent, & Repeat...
BE Refined, Refreshed, & Resilient!

E... BE an Evangelist... Engage, Explain, Equip,
Empower, and Exemplify (Truth IN Love)

W... Worship, Walk, Work, & War as or with your
Worshipful Witness

D... BE Devoted to Development and Deliberate
Discipleship (D3 Devotion)

CLOSE:

For any who still think this word & warning are not for you...

Luke 22:31-32

*“Simon, Simon, **behold**, Satan demanded to have you, that he might **sift** you like wheat, ³²but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”*

Amos 9:9

*“For behold, **I will** command, and **shake the house of Israel** among all the nations as one **shakes with a sieve**, but no pebble shall fall to the earth.*

NOW, forevermore, take these Scriptures to heart:

- 1 Peter 5:8 & 2 Cor. 4:4 & 11:14-15
- John 3:3; 3:16; 3:36 & Ephesians 2:1-10
- Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20; & Titus 2:15
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 & Colossians 2:13-15
- Genesis 3:15; 1 John 3:8; & John 19:30

PRAYER

WORSHIP:

Bless God & He Won't

What does it mean that Satan wanted to sift Peter as wheat (Luke 22:31)?

At the [Last Supper](#), Jesus warned Simon Peter that a test of faith was coming: **“Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat”** ([Luke 22:31](#), NKJV).

The outspoken disciple seemed to be in the same predicament as Job when [Satan](#) sought to put him to the test ([Job 1—2](#)). Satan wanted to “sift Peter as wheat,” which means that he wished to shake Peter’s faith so forcefully that he would fall, proving that God’s faithful servant was lacking.

It was not just [Peter](#) who was in danger, though. The word for **“you”** in [Luke 22:31](#) is plural.

Jesus was speaking to Peter, informing him that Satan had his sights set on all the disciples. Some translations, such as the Berean Standard Bible, specify the whole group:

“SIMON, SIMON, SATAN HAS ASKED TO SIFT EACH OF YOU LIKE WHEAT.”

The name *Satan* means “adversary” or “accuser.”

He accuses God’s people of doing wrong ([Zechariah 3:1](#); [Revelation 12:10](#)). As Peter would later testify, the devil “prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” ([1 Peter 5:8](#)).

Sift as wheat is a metaphor that could also be expressed as “shake someone apart” or “break a person down.” [Amos 9:9](#) gives us a similar image of God shaking Israel: “For I will give the command and will shake Israel along with the other nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, yet not one true kernel will be lost” (NLT).

In biblical times, wheat or other grain was sifted through a sieve or large strainer. As it was shaken violently, the dirt & other impurities that clung to the grain during the threshing process would separate from the good, usable grain.

In sifting Peter and the other disciples as wheat, Satan’s goal was to crush them and wreck their faith. In truth, the adversary wants to destroy the faith of every believer ([John 10:10](#)). But Jesus assured Peter, “I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers” ([Luke 22:32, NLT](#)). Peter’s leadership role in the early church proved that the Lord’s prayer for Peter was answered.

Jesus did not promise to remove Peter's impending test. On the contrary, He predicted that Peter would fail the test by denying Christ three times ([Luke 22:34](#)). Trials are to be expected in the Christian life. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," say the missionaries in [Acts 14:22](#). God uses these experiences for our good ([Romans 8:28](#)), to refine our character and strengthen our faith ([1 Peter 1:6-7](#); [James 1:2-4,12](#)), and to make us more like Jesus ([Romans 8:29](#)).

Whenever we do experience a test, Jesus is with us to strengthen us and intercede for us ([Philippians 4:13](#); [Romans 8:26-39](#)). In challenging times, it's reassuring to remember that Satan's power to sift Peter as wheat was limited by Christ's intercession. When Satan comes after us, we should remember that Jesus Christ always lives to intercede for us ([Hebrews 7:25](#)).

Jesus was confident that Simon Peter would get back up again and go on to strengthen the other disciples. Another reason the Lord allows us to suffer through experiences of testing is so we can learn how to help others grow in faith:

“Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer” ([2 Corinthians 1:6, NLT](#)).

Before Peter's [threefold denial](#), he was overconfident, trusting in his own strength ([Luke 22:33](#)). But after being sifted like wheat, Peter learned that failure is possible because the flesh is weak (see [Mark 14:38](#)). Now that he understood how easy it is to fall, Peter would have compassion and mercy for others while helping them avoid the same mistake.

Our true faith and [perseverance](#) are revealed not in a walk of sinless perfection but in repentance and restoration. We get up and keep going, like Peter, after we fall. When Satan comes to sift us as wheat, we have an advocate, Jesus Christ, who intercedes for us ([John 17:9, 11, 15](#)). He will protect us so that the devil can never destroy our faith and hope ([John 10:27–28](#); [Hebrews 7:25](#)). Jesus Christ began a good work in us, and He is faithful to complete it ([Philippians 1:6](#)).