

# Christ Reformation Church

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## *Wise as Serpents – A Practical Theology of Evil*

**(Part 13 – The Consistent  
Motive of Evil is to Enslave)**

**March 6, 2016**

**Sermon Text:** Galatians 5:1

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 10:35-45

### **Introduction-**

Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men.... (Mat 10:16-17a)

I wanted to mention an observation related to last week's message on evil's inevitable path to Rome in which we examined the letters to the seven churches of Asia in chapters 2-3 of Revelation. You will remember that just two of the seven churches received full commendation from Christ,

Smyrna and Philadelphia. We also noticed that these two were apparently the "least" of the churches, Philadelphia being described as "having but little power" and Smyrna as "poor and suffering" – at least in human estimation. And we took encouragement from this. We are a very small church and we have experienced suffering for Christ and there are many enemies or people who are simply ignorant of the Lord's ways who tell us we are unsuccessful, and that the Lord is not blessing us. We know these accusations to be false and we know because of the authority of the Word of God and the example of churches like these two small churches of the first century. But here is another example from Scripture which I hope will encourage you.

I was listening last week to a sermon series preached 40 years ago by a pastor named Harold Sonnerma at the Mount Hermon Bible Conference Center. He made the following statement and I found it very accurate and encouraging. I have paraphrased his words here to condense them, but they are accurately represented here:

*“Noah preached the gospel for 120 years without one single convert. Now, Scripture tells us this-*

*Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all— so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. (Luk 17:26-30)*

*Not ONE convert, so hardened and evil were the hearts of men in that day. So it will be again, and so it seems to be in our day. So do not let anyone discourage you in this regard. If a righteous man like Noah, chosen and blessed by the Lord, preached and preached FOR OVER A CENTURY with not one convert, we must not be discouraged if we find ourselves living in the very same circumstances. Lot did not find Sodom and Gomorrah ‘a fruitful mission field’ either.”*

We know by now that the fundamental nature of evil, on its quest to be God instead of God, is it’s profound mentality of entitlement to unjust

power and control over all creation. Therefore you can be sure that:

*Evil always is at work to enslave us. To imprison us and make us serve the evil doer as his slave.*

In the kingdom of God, there is no place for evil and thus no place for any demand that others serve us:

And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. (Mar 10:42-44)

It is all entirely counter to evil, you see. Evil imprisons. Evil enslaves. Because evil demands to be worshipped and served as God:

Between 2002 and 2004, three young women, Michelle Knight, Amanda Berry and Georgina "Gina" DeJesus, were kidnapped by Ariel Castro in his home in the Tremont neighborhood of Cleveland, Ohio. They were subsequently imprisoned in his house on Seymour Avenue until May 6, 2013, when Berry escaped with her six-year-old daughter and contacted the police. Knight and DeJesus were

rescued by responding officers and Castro was arrested within hours.

On May 8, 2013, Castro was charged with four counts of kidnapping and three counts of rape. Castro pled guilty to 937 criminal counts of rape, kidnapping, and aggravated murder as part of a plea bargain. He was sentenced to life plus 1,000 years in prison without the chance of parole. One month into his sentence, Castro committed suicide by hanging himself with bedsheets in his prison cell. [Wikipedia]

This VERY SAME evil creeps in among us in our churches! Not rarely, but *typically*. And while the world applauds the escape of these three young women, many, many times when such victims of evil cry out for deliverance, they are disbelieved, disregarded, and sent back to their prison. Why? At best it is because Christians are foolishly and dangerously naïve about evil. At worst it is because the very people the victims seek help from share the same DNA as the evildoer.

Think it through. Here is a blog post that I wrote to be published later this month, only for our purposes in this present series I have substituted “evil” for “abuser” -

*"Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death. (Exo 21:16)*

*"If a man is found stealing one of his brothers of the people of Israel, and if he treats him as a slave or sells him, then that thief shall die. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. (Deu 24:7)*

...understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, **enslavers**, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, (1Ti 1:9-10)

I hope that the impact of these verses soaks into our minds deeply. And in particular, I hope that those churches and church leaders and church members who enable and protect evildoers will get a spiritual whack that will wake them up to the nature and gravity of their crime.

Evildoers are man-stealers. Evildoers enslave people. Kidnappers and slave masters are to be put out of our midst. God's Law pronounces their crime to be of a capital nature and all who do not repent of this evil will most certainly perish in hell for all eternity.

Evildoers are kidnappers and enslavers. Talk to any abuse victim. Most all of our blog readers know this quite well, having lived (or are still living) in these bonds. Evildoers kidnap their victim by deception, then keep them enslaved with all kinds of evil tactics. Financial abuse and bondage are a very, very common chain used to imprison the victim. Where can she go? She has no access to the money. He watches her use of every penny. She can't afford an attorney. The possibility of leaving and getting her own housing and car is simply impossible. She is a slave. She has been kidnapped and imprisoned.

The Lord pronounces the wicked man-stealer's punishment to be carried out with extreme prejudice. That is His Law. His people are to purge such a wicked one from their midst and will have the blood of the innocent on their hands if they do not.

Think on this further. Evil is about what? It is about unjustified power and control. Power and control = ownership. Enslavement. Kidnapping. Evil puts people in prison unjustly and torments them. Evildoers, in other words, are driven by the same spirit as their diabolic father, the devil. All of them.

*But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD,*

*and moreover, I will not let Israel go." (Exo 5:2)*

Now, think this through quite carefully. The Lord Jesus Christ is REDEEMER. The Son of God came to set His people FREE. Therefore, His church is to be a community of freemen where the very atmosphere exudes liberty. And yet, here we find this plague of bondage called abuse/evil growing like a corroding fungus in our midst. What will such "christians" do on that Day? What will such churches do who not only fail to purge this evil from amongst themselves and render aid and rescue to the victims, but who add to her chains? What will you do when the Son of Man comes, you who have so sorely treated His bride? You have told His Bride she must remain in prison, abused by her kidnapper and enslaver? For example, all who deny divorce for reason of abuse and all who refuse to help her get free...all stand guilty before Him. All who refuse justice to victims of evil in the twisted name of "grace" or "mercy" or a distorted and mangled form of "forgiveness".

Evildoers are kidnappers. Evildoers are enslavers. Purge this evil from among yourselves. That is the Lord Jesus Christ's command.

I was reminded of these things this past week when a very kind, godly

woman whom I have personally met sent the following article for us to publish at A Cry for Justice. Remember now, do not fall prey to the idea that these victims we deal with are merely “unhappy wives who just want to dump their husbands.” No! These are victims of pure evil, people who have known what its prison is like. Victims of death threats and prolonged psychological and emotional terrorism, so often at the hands of an evildoer cloaked as a “fine upstanding Christian” -

God used coupons to set me free!

One of the main reasons women stay in abusive marriages is because they cannot afford to leave. I faced this same problem myself. I desperately wanted to get out and away from my abuser. I had left once before, but made the mistake of believing the lie that he had changed and it was safe to return. The worst part about returning was the fact that now he knew I had the physical and emotional strength to leave, but he still had a way to keep me. He knew I couldn't leave if I couldn't afford to go, especially with five children in tow!

God always makes a way though. Through time, prayer and patience He revealed that way to me.

*Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he*

*exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him. –Isaiah 30:18*

I went to the grocery store one day, as I do most days, to pick up a few things we needed. Since I had a large family to feed and a husband that was not working, I had cut out some coupons to help keep the cost down. I was distracted at the store by kids, that were very much in need of a nap, and I forgot to hand the cashier my coupons. She told me that if I took my receipt and coupons to the customer service desk they would take care of it. I did as she suggested and they gave me cash back. It was a small trip, so I only had \$12 in coupons, but that \$12 was a gift from the Lord and He opened my eyes to my way out.

I continued to shop as I always did, but I would take my coupons to the customer service desk and get cash back. I was always very honest with the coupons (never take advantage of a gift from God! Be patient and He will provide). I took time to plan my meals and such around the coupons I had so I could use the most coupons (and get the most money back). I hid the cash and saved it up. My abuser never knew I was using coupons. To him, I was spending the money on groceries. He could look at the receipt and it all matched up (plus he was enjoying all

the new recipes I was coming up with to make the most of the coupons), but I was slowly but steadily saving up to be able to leave.

It did take time, but God worked it all out in His timing. I actually left sooner than I had planned, but God made it all work; not that there weren't struggles, but He saw me through each one.

I hope that maybe this will be an idea that can help other women make a plan to leave, or maybe just open eyes to see how God does care and will provide a way.

*The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; he is their stronghold in time of trouble. The LORD helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him. – Psalm 37:39-40*

Now, this lady's story of God's faithfulness to her is encouraging, but I also find it incredibly infuriating. Because here we have the story of a sister in Christ suffering at the hands of intense evil that was and continues to parade as "a fine Christian man" who was left on her own to fend for herself in order to get out of that terrible imprisonment. Where was her church back then? She and her children could have been set free much, much earlier.

### Spiritual Bondage

Over and over again, the Word of God warns us of this enslaving aspect of evil. The thing is *absolutely* present wherever evil is. Evil kidnaps, imprisons, and presses people into slavery. Jesus Christ sets us free.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, (Luk 4:18)

Very early in the history of the New Testament church, we know that evil came prowling around, working to enslave the ones Christ had set free, setting themselves up as antichrists:

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. (Gal 5:1-4)

These wicked ones came to the churches of Galatia preaching a false gospel, and here was their motive as always:

They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. (Gal 4:17)

Do you see what Paul is saying? The evildoers, these false teachers who had crept into the churches with their faith plus works “gospel” were using flattering, but not for a good reason. Their goal in it was to lead the Galatians into worshipping *them*, or as Paul puts it, “...*that you may make much of them.*”

Evil always, always, always betrays its presence by its goal of enslaving, of kidnapping a freeman and making him a slave. Always. Watch for it and you will be wise.

Here it was at Corinth:

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you

put up with it readily enough. (2Co 11:3-4)

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds. (2Co 11:13-15)

For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. (2Co 11:19-20)

Evil is *abusive* and its goal in this abuse is *to enslave. To rob your freedom.* So let's put this right down where we live.

*Whenever you are in the presence of a person or a community of persons where the freedom Christ has given you as His own child and as a human being created in His image is being threatened, you can be certain that you are in the presence of evil. Evil is a kidnapper and an enslaver. The wicked one is the keeper of his dungeon and he is always looking for new prisoners. He charms, he flatters, and then he enslaves. Beware.*

This evil can be in the guise of a “marriage,” as we well know by now. It can come in the form of a supposedly “Christian” church or individual. Sometimes evil manifests its lust for power and control on the political scene, and thus the rise of the evil dictators the path of history is so littered with. Or more commonly it might be some family member or a fellow worker at the office. The consistent element to always watch for in all of these cases is this lust for power and control, this quality of evil that works to erode our freedom and enslave us.

This is how we watch and stand against the devil who is always prowling, always looking for an opening to strike. Be wise. Beware of men.