

Hackers - Ephesians 2:1-3
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Saw a video this week that freaked me out. It was scary. A woman at a tech trade show was able to hack in to the cell phone account of the man sitting right in front of her and get herself in a position where she could steal all of his personal information. All she had was his phone number, but using that (and the voice track of a crying baby) she was able to call his provider and get them to change his password, add her to the account, and give her complete administrative control over the account. It was insane. Of course, this was just a demonstration, but it proved again to me that unseen hackers are enemies that can rob us of our digital identity.

As followers of Jesus we too have to be aware of even more scary, unseen hackers who are enemies of our identity in Christ. It takes way more than a few changed passwords to protect us from these enemies. Our text for this week is a statement about our condition before we converted to Christ. Paul tells us that before Christ we were, "following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air," and we, "once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and mind." In this text Paul by the Holy Spirit opens our minds to the three enemies seeking to steal our true identity, the world, the devil, and the flesh. Those who have not been redeemed are defined by these enemies, enslaved to them, and their sense of self and identity is wrapped up in these things. Yet, those who have experienced rescue because of the cross and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit have been given a new identity that is in Christ and defined by Scripture. We are new creations. Still, these hackers lurk working diligently seeking to lead us to believe old lies about ourselves and the world around us, leaving us broken and our faith ineffective.

From the earliest pages of Scripture we are told there is a foreign agent, the personification of evil that exists in the world. The Devil or Satan, along with the demonic forces with him are an unseen army of darkness who have rebelled against God and His authority, and whose goal is to destroy image bearers. That being said, Satan rarely shows up like the cartoon caricature from Bugs Bunny. Instead, he shows up as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), looking beautiful and good. His first appearance with Adam and Eve reveal his tactics, as he questioned God's Word and authority and then told humanity's parents that they could be their own god choosing right from wrong for themselves. As it relates to our identity, this is one of his key tactics, seeking to convince us that our happiness is wrapped up in throwing off the restraint of religion and pursuing our own desires and wishes. Be your own authority, follow your own goals, make much of you, find your identity. He is the originator of that message which is pretty much a steady drumbeat in the culture around us. The second tactic is tied to his name, Satan, which means "accuser". His subtle voice speaks into our lives when we seek to pursue Christ and honor Him in our lives, and the voice simply tells us that we are not able, we are not worthy, we are not deserving. He accuses the brethren (Revelation 12:10), seeking to move us from grace to guilt as our motivation. As believers, we need to know that his goal is our destruction, so we need to learn his voice.

The second enemy is the world. Before explaining how the world stands as an enemy to our identity in Christ, we first need to know that God loves the world and gave His Son for the world. While the writers of Scripture use the Greek word for "world" in several different ways, one key way is to show the world as a set of systems, governments, values, and messages that set itself up against God. This happens in many ways, but central to the messaging of the world is that happiness is the most important pursuit, the here and now is all that matters, and you are the most important thing. Notice how the world's messaging is just an echo chamber of Satan's voice. Yet that messaging is all around us, in every ad, every movie, every political campaign.

Finally, the flesh is the way the Bible speaks of the sinful nature within us. When we

are saved Christ redeemed us from the penalty of sin and forgave us. Yet, that old person who was deceived by Satan and enslaved in the world is still around. It is that nature that tells us that we should fulfill our desires and live our lives for that which makes us happy in the moment. Read Romans 7 sometime, and notice all the language Paul uses about the battle with the self. He says that he wants to do certain things as a follower of Jesus, but fails, and at the same time wants to avoid other things yet keeps running to them.

Now, notice a common thread. The way our enemies hack our spiritual identity is by convincing us that our happiness is wrapped up in making much of me, of pursuing my desires and dreams. Then listen to Jesus in Matthew 16 as He says that the person who wishes to find his life does so by losing it, and that the path to truly knowing ourselves is by denying self, taking up the cross, and following Jesus. In other words, our true identity is found not by discovering or creating my identity, it is found when I lay my self-made identity down, take up my cross and follow Him. My true identity is found when I lose that identity in Jesus. This is the path to wholeness, to peace, and to joy.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Ezekiel 30	Ezekiel 31	Ezekiel 32	Ezekiel 33	Ezekiel 34	Ezekiel 35	Ezekiel 36

Reading from this past week: Ephesians 2:1-3

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Ephesians 1:3-14

Family Worship

Song - *Our Great God*

<https://youtu.be/rBX2AkFuupw>

Gospel Project

Story: Letters to Church Leaders
 Story Point: Paul told church leaders to trust and obey God.
 Big Picture Question: What is our mission as Christians?
 Answer: Our mission is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 Scripture: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus

New City Catechism

Question #18: Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished?
 Answer: No, God is righteously angry with our sins and will punish them both in this life, and in the life to come.
 Verse: Ephesians 5:5-6

Scripture

Ephesians 2:1-3

- What are the three enemies who seek to rob our identity?
- How can we learn to recognize the voice of the devil in our lives? What sort of things does he speak to us?
- Where can we go to fight

Prayer

*Pray that God would help you know and stand against the enemies of our identity in Christ, the flesh, the world, and the devil.

*Pray for our annual May Prayer Emphasis as a church and be sure to get the book and start the devotionals.