



Pastor David's Weekly Devotional

Demons unfortunately have been domesticated in our current English vernacular. People all too often speak of demons in casual, even flippant, conversation. They joke about demon possession. They playfully talk about getting rid of their personal “demons.” Today, people dedicate websites to demons, write books about demons, watch movies and television shows predominately featuring depictions of demons, tattoo images of demons on their bodies, and play video games named after the devil and his minions – there is even a comic book series devoted entirely to demons.

In the Bible, however, demons are anything but playful, harmless, or comical. In Mark's Gospel we read of a boy who was possessed by a demon that had robbed him of his speech (9:17). The father gave the grim and gory details: *“Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid”* (Mk.9:18). Luke recorded that the father also said, *“It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him”* (9:39).

Randy Alcorn, in his must-read book titled If God is Good, wrote: “Demons oppress, attack, and possess people, sometimes empowering them to do evil, always doing them great harm. They prompt people to hurt themselves and inflict evil and suffering on God's image-bearers. Perhaps this is the closest demons can come to avenging God for casting them out of Heaven because of their sin” (p.47).

God's Word tells us that Satan *“is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short”* (Rev.12:12). While Satan is certainly not omniscient, he is aware that he is fighting a losing battle. His obituary has already been written: *“And the devil...was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever”* (Rev.20:10).

Satan is the arch-enemy of God, but he is a defeated enemy of God. Alcorn states this very well, “The devil sits on death row. He lashes out against God's image-bearers, trying to kill God in effigy” (p.51). Truly this is a terrifying reality. But Alcorn offers this important reminder:

Satan is not God's opposite, fighting a cosmic duel with an uncertain outcome. What's the opposite of light? Darkness. What's the opposite of good? Evil. When asked to name the opposite of God, people often answer, “Satan.” But that's false. Michael, the righteous archangel, is Satan's opposite. Satan is finite; God is infinite. God has no equal. ...

Satan gathers people for battle and they march. But in the end one side suffers not a single casualty, while the other side has not a single survivor. Fire consumes all the enemies of God. The whole conflict ends before it begins. It's not a battle at all; it's an execution.

Satan and God do not engage in hand-to-hand combat, with Satan sometimes getting the edge. That's not the Bible; that's Star Wars. Many of us make Satan too big, and God too small (p.51-52).

Christians do not need to fear Satan or demons, for God's sovereign grace and power can protect them. The Bible assures us that if we submit ourselves to God, we can *“Resist the devil, and he will flee”* (Jms.4:7). However, this does not mean we should be cavalier or complacent with regard to the spiritual battle around us. Scripture gives this sober warning, *“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour”* (1Pet.5:8). “Satan is a lion,” writes Alcorn, “but a lion on God's leash” (p.52).

Together in and for Christ,
Pastor David
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Scripture Readings for the Week (Monday – Sunday ~ Week #16):

Exodus 9-12; 1 Samuel 26-31; Psalm 45-47; Job 31-32; Jeremiah 17-21; Mark 11-12; 1 Corinthians 15-16

Recommended Reading:

“If God is Good: Faith in the midst of suffering and evil” by Randy Alcorn