

Audio Transcript of Sermon

August 5, 2023

Evil Distances Itself and Others from God

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Evil is personified in many different ways, and people suffer at the hand of evil. Sometimes we are made aware of so many different acts of evil that we are overwhelmed by evil. For the past several weeks we have been studying evil focusing on what David wrote in Psalm ten, and in that Psalm it seems like even David was overwhelmed by the evil of his time. Let's read Psalm ten starting with verse one.

Psalm 10:1-4

- 1. Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?**
- 2. The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.**
- 3. For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.**
- 4. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.**

We have studied how evil persecutes the poor, how evil boasts of desire, and praises greed. Today, we will see how evil distances itself and others from God. In the very beginning we are told that God made people after the image and likeness of God, and to the people, God gave dominion over all animals, and various fruit, vegetables, and grains for food. Genesis one verse twenty-six.

Genesis 1:26-31

- 26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.**
- 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.**
- 28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the**

This transcript Copyright Tom Laign 2023 and is free to be used for non-commercial purposes.

sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

30. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

31. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Since that time where people were created in the image and likeness of God, people have become confused and many think of God as being after the image and likeness of man. Even though God came to man in the form of the human Jesus, that was to bring salvation to people. We were not created so God could become like us. We were created so we the people would be after the image and likeness of God. One of the very first steps evil uses to distance us from God is to bring confusion on that point. When we incorrectly believe that God is to become like us, there is nothing higher for us to ascribe to. There is nothing in us that needs improving. Those who think that God is to become like us have already begun rejecting God.

Rejecting God can happen at any time throughout our life. For instance when the spies of Israel went to spy on the land of Canaan, it was only Caleb who wanted to go forth and claim the promise of the promised land. The other spies feared the people who were there, even though God who had already destroyed the Egyptians, had promised this land to them. Numbers thirteen verse twenty-six.

Numbers 13:26-33

26. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.

27. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.

28. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.

29. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

30. And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

31. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

32. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.

33. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

When the spies rejected the promises of God because of fear, they rejected God. Today, when we reject the promises of God, we also reject God. We have this hope called eternal life, that at the return of Jesus Christ we will be resurrected. We can reject that promise by completely walking away from God. We can also reject that promise through lack of faith by going through all the motions of what we believe, but deep down not being fully convinced that at some future time, Jesus Christ will return and the dead in Christ will be resurrected. When Jesus walked on earth and discussed his return with his disciples, he asked one telling question to conclude a parable. Let's read Luke eighteen starting with verse one.

Luke 18:1-8

1. And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

2. Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

3. And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5. Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

6. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

7. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

8. I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

There is no room for unbelief in the faith we have, because unbelief in even the smallest form, like the mustard seed of faith, can grow dangerously large in our life. The majority of spies rejected the promise of God and the people followed suit. Much later, both the nations of Israel and Judah would also reject God instead becoming like the people they saw around them. Second Kings seventeen verse seven.

2 Kings 17:7-20

7. For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods,

8. And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

9. And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

10. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree:

11. And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger:

12. For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.

13. Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

14. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

15. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about

them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.

16. And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

17. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

18. Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

19. Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.

20. And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

During the time of Jeremiah, this rejection of God was on full display. God was not seen as incredible and awesome because of the people's sins, with evil and wickedness growing and growing. In all of this evil the people became fat to the point their complexions shined. With evil growing exponentially, the needs of the less fortunate were overlooked, while those claiming to represent God promulgated lies and deception to the delight of the people. Jeremiah five verse twenty-three.

Jeremiah 5:23-31

23. But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.

24. Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

25. Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.

26. For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men.

27. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich.

28. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge.

29. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

30. A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land;

31. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

The very first record of people rejecting God can be found with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Even though they were told not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and had the opportunity to eat of the Tree of Life, Adam and Eve rejected what God told them. Genesis three verse one.

Genesis 3:1-7

1. Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

7. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

What Adam and Eve did was through the deception of the serpent in the Garden of Eden, Satan. Long before the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, Satan rejected God, who had created him in perfection as the covering cherub. It was his own beauty that caused pride to develop and warp his thinking. Ezekiel twenty-eight verse twelve.

Ezekiel 28:12-19

12. Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

13. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

14. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

15. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

16. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

17. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

18. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

19. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Satan who rejected God because of his own vanity used the same strategy to try and separate Adam and Eve from God, and Satan tries to separate each and every one of us from God using similar techniques, appealing to vanity. One thing we need to do is understand that what Satan wants for us and what God wants for us is very different and summarized for us in John ten verse ten.

John 10:10

10. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Through God and Jesus Christ we have abundant life. Through Satan is death and destruction. The difference between those two choices should be easy for everyone to see, and yet Satan works through deceit. Just like Satan drove a wedge between Adam and Eve by implying God was not being totally honest with them, Satan tries to do the same with us today. Satan tries to get us to reject God by rejecting God's love for us, and that would have us become something like salt that has lost its flavor. Luke fourteen verse thirty-four.

Luke 14:34-35

34. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

35. It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Faith which works through love and not obedience to the law is what saves us. Satan's attempt to have us reject God's love for us sidesteps faith and focuses on what we do. For instance, we all know we are to do what God expects, and if we do that without faith, we are justified by the law. When we are justified by the law, it is not God and Jesus who saves us, it is our own actions found acceptable by the law that saves us. When we are justified by the law instead of focusing our attention on a loving God the Father and Jesus Christ, we have been deceived into focusing our attention on printed words. Galatians shows it is by faith we await salvation. Galatians five verse two.

Galatians 5:2-6

2. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

3. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

5. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

6. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Faith requires love. Paul wrote that even with incredible faith a lack of love invalidates that faith. With incredible faith must come incredible love or we are nothing, and there are things that love doesn't do. First Corinthians thirteen verse one.

1 Corinthians 13:1-7

- 1. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.**
- 2. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.**
- 3. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.**
- 4. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,**
- 5. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;**
- 6. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;**
- 7. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.**

Love never thinks highly of itself and is not puffed up. That is so different than the reasons given for Satan's fall from grace in Ezekiel who became puffed up because of his good looks. If we don't want to be like Satan, having love is essential, and when we have love as the Bible teaches, we are told to not worry about the day of judgment. We are told in the day of judgment we can be bold. First John four verse seventeen.

1 John 4:17-19

- 17. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.**
- 18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.**
- 19. We love him, because he first loved us.**

Having love for God the Father and Jesus Christ does not mean we ignore what we are told to do. The connection between keeping the commandments and loving God and Jesus Christ is made clear in the New Testament. Let's read John fourteen starting in verse fifteen.

John 14:15-18

15. If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;

17. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

In the first letter of John we are told that loving God is keeping His commandments. First John five verse three.

1 John 5:3

3. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

We are saved through faith with love that matches the faith, and while we keep the commandments, we know it is faith tied to love that saves us, not our own actions. It is through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that we have faith, the love that is tied to it and our hope of eternal life. Philippians two verse five.

Philippians 2:5-11

5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus shared that it is through believing in Him we have eternal life. That's faith that needs to be coupled with love. John three verse thirty-one.

John 3:31-36

31. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

32. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

33. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

34. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

35. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

We take comfort that even though we live in an evil and chaotic world where Satan seeks to separate us from the love of God, Jesus will advocate for us to God the Father as long we don't abandon Jesus in our lives. Matthew ten verse twenty-nine.

Matthew 10:29-33

29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

30. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

32. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

33. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Instead of trusting in people, our trust, our faith, and our love needs to be with God and Jesus Christ. The human heart is very deceitful, and we need to make sure our love is focused on God and Jesus Christ and not solely our own actions. Jeremiah seventeen verse five.

Jeremiah 17:5-10

- 5. Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.**
- 6. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.**
- 7. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.**
- 8. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.**
- 9. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?**
- 10. I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.**

We live in a world where people deny God, and every bad thing flows from that viewpoint. What this world does is of and by its own efforts denying God. What we must do is live by faith acknowledging God in how and what we do. Psalm fourteen verse one.

Psalm 14:1-7

- 1. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.**
- 2. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.**
- 3. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**
- 4. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD.**
- 5. There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous.**
- 6. Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD is his refuge.**
- 7. Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.**

We live in a world that when they knew God did not glorify God, neither were they thankful. We have to live a life of faith with love that glorifies God with gratitude. Romans one verse eighteen.

Romans 1:18-32

18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

19. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

20. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

21. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23. And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

24. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25. Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

When we forget that we were made in the image and likeness of God and instead make God to be after our image and likeness, we like Satan get puffed up over our own beauty, and like Satan, will have consequences come our way. Some of those consequences are listed starting in verse twenty-six.

26. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

27. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

28. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

29. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30. Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31. Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32. Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

We can focus on the here and now, on our own actions that lead us to be justified by the law, or we can focus by having faith coupled with love in God the Father and Jesus Christ knowing we will eventually receive the gift of eternal life if, and if is the biggest two letter word, if we faint not. With all of that in mind, that's a good reason to do good to all people, especially others of the household of faith. Galatians six verse seven.

Galatians 6:7-10

7. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Jesus was very clear that not everyone who called on His name would be part of the Kingdom of God. Doing the will of God the Father remains a requirement. That means having faith with love, and as we looked at earlier in the Book of John and First John, it includes keeping the commandments. Matthew seven verse twenty-one.

Matthew 7:21-23

21. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

We know that when Jesus came to earth, it was not to condemn the people. Jesus came so that as many people as possible might have eternal life, through faith coupled with love walking from darkness to light by doing what God expects of us in keeping the commandments. John three verse sixteen.

John 3:16-21

16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

21. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Through Jesus we have access to eternal life through forgiveness of sins. Ephesians one verse three.

Ephesians 1:3-11

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

- 8. Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;**
- 9. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:**
- 10. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:**
- 11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:**

Sin is easily defined as a violation of God's law, which is why in the New Testament, Jesus said if we love Him, we keep His commandments, and why John tells us the love of God is keeping His commandments. Beyond that, anything that is not of faith coupled with love is sin. Paul explained this while writing about making peace and edifying each other. Romans fourteen verse nineteen.

Romans 14:19-23

- 19. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.**
- 20. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.**
- 21. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.**
- 22. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.**
- 23. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.**

We can take great comfort that nothing aside from our own actions can separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ. Romans eight verse thirty-five.

Romans 8:35-39

- 35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**
- 36. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.**

37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Only we can choose to reject the love of God which is in Jesus Christ, and Satan so desperately wants us to make that choice. Satan will use every type of deception to cajole us into making that choice, but we know no external force can succeed in this effort, unless we allow it. That is why we live a life of faith coupled in love knowing that as we keep the commandments of God and Jesus Christ, it is that faith coupled in love that brings the opportunity for salvation, and when that day of judgment comes, we won't need to be afraid. We are told we can boldly approach that day because we have lived lives of faith coupled in love. Evil distances itself and others from God, but through faith coupled in love, evil will not succeed with us.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.