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St. John's Lutheran Church – Kimball, NE (Dual-parish service with Immanuel)

Advent III – Midweek

December 20, 2017

Text: Job 1:1–2:10; Revelation 12:7–11

Pictures of Redemption – Satan

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I've attempted to paint verbal pictures of redemption these past couple of weeks. Redemption is a divine act whereby a person is saved from God's judgment and condemnation. Isaiah was redeemed from sin when a holy angel touched his lips with a burning coal taken from God's heavenly altar. An unnamed dead man was redeemed from the power of death when he was raised back to life when his lifeless body came into contact with the buried body of the prophet Elisha. Both of these OT events are pictures of redemption, from sin and from death. Tonight, I paint a picture of redemption from Satan.

Satan is a very curious figure in popular imagination. Modern imagination typically sees him as being a red angel, often with wings, with a pointy goatee, a long sharp tail, burning yellow eyes, horns, and a pitchfork. Some depictions are comical like the Bugs Bunny version; others are much more devilish. It is very curious however, that Satan and fallen angels have been recently depicted as being benevolent in TV shows like *Fallen* and *Lucifer*. These spiritual creatures, like so many modern remakes of dark characters have been misunderstood; you just need to get to know them.

The inspired Word of God presents a wholly different picture of Satan. I want you to picture him as the Bible describes him: a fallen archangel, Lucifer, bearer of light (Is. 14:12, KJV). The apostle Paul (II Cor. 11:14) says that Satan is able to disguise himself as an angel of light. His primary description, however, is that of being the deceiver of the whole world, the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:9–10); the Lord Jesus says Satan was a murdered from the beginning and the father of lies (John 8:44).

Picture this...all the elect, holy angels present themselves before the Lord God Almighty. These are "the sons of God" mentioned in Job 1:6 and 2:1. Imagine myriads and myriads of bright, flaming angels of God gathered around God's heavenly throne. Then Satan, that deceiving liar, walks arrogantly up to God's throne. "From where have you come?" the Lord asks Satan. "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it" (vs. 7). Does that not sound very similar

to Peter's description (I Pe. 5:8) of the devil being a lion prowling around seeking (going to and fro, walking up and down) someone to devour (a murderer from the beginning, as Jesus described)? God the Father Almighty knows exactly what Satan wants: Job. Before God Himself, Satan accuses Job of being a protected, overindulged, spoiled brat.

<sup>10</sup>Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. <sup>11</sup>But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face" (Job 1:10–11).

Accuser, liar, murder, and thief. That's what Satan is. He failed to mention the truth that God said about Job, that "there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil" (vs. 8).

Dear saints of God, we need not pass over this severe trial and affliction too hastily. The book of Job is not a fictional story nor is it a mere moral lesson. These events happened. Imagine them for a moment. Job lost everything, including his 10 children. Instantly, he went from being one of the greatest men of the east (1:3) to utter destitution. After that bitter trial, the truth God spoke about Job is revealed all the more brightly, "In all this Job did not sin or charge God with sin" (1:22).

Satan still desires to destroy Job's faith in God. Satan goes back to another assembly of God's angels (2:1). Satan is still Job's accuser bent on devouring him whole. God the Father describes Job as he did before – blameless, upright, fears God, turns away from evil – but God adds this, "He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason" (2:3). Satan launches one more lying accusation: Job's most important possession is his body. "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face" (2:4–5).

Imagine the physical and emotional anguish Job endured at Satan's hands. He was covered with loathsome sores from head to toe and sat in mourning upon a heap of ashes; his only medical care was a broken piece of pottery used to scrape the soars (2:7–8). Job's response, "Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" The final evaluation ... "In all this Job did not sin with his lips" (2:10).

We need to pause here for a moment and consider Satan's lying accusation: the body is everything. Think about our how our culture prizes and cherishes the human body.

Directly and indirectly, we are told the most important thing in the world is your body, your physical existence. Health care is now a fundamental human right because the body is supreme. All the images you see on television, movies, internet ads, billboards, and various print media are telling us this Satanic lie; it's all about the body. Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. And so we witness a fevered, irrationally desire to achieve the perfect, healthiest, most beautiful, most powerful body money and human ingenuity can buy. Biotechnology, cloning, plastic surgery of the most extreme forms, children designed at conception to exhibit desirable characteristics.

I was shocked to learn just recently that there are Youtube videos of preteen girls asking the virtual world if they are pretty. It was a cry for love and acceptance based upon the appearance of their body. Skin for skin. All that a man has he will give for his life. Just tell me that I'm pretty and I will be happy. Full disclosure – I learned of these videos as I was listening to a seminar sponsored by a Christian congregation on the biblical view of marriage and human sexuality. But what does Jesus say to us and those preteen girls – and if you think boys aren't asking similar questions “Am I strong and bold enough, handsome enough? – then you have another thing coming?

<sup>25</sup>“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ... <sup>31</sup>Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup>For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. <sup>33</sup>But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you (Matt. 6:25, 31–33).

Satan desired to reduce Job to nothing but his possessions and his body. Satan likewise desires to reduce. But God speaks differently about us. Our lives are more than those things.

I have asked you to imagine Satan before God and to see Job's sufferings. But tonight's picture of redemption won't be complete until we see the Lord Jesus pictured in Job's sufferings and ultimate vindication; you must read Job 42:10–17 to see how God restores Job's fortune, fame, and family.

Picture this...the eternal Son of God, possessor of all power, glory, and honor, bore our sickness and physical infirmities. He emptied Himself of His heavenly glory; He sacrificed all possessions, health and vitality, even life itself, that He might redeem us

from Satan's power, from his accusing lies, his murdering threats, and his deceptive allurements.

Because of Christ's redemption, Satan is no longer able to stand before God and accuse us as he did Job. We heard the results of Christ's redemptive act described in the reading from Revelation 12:9–11:

<sup>9</sup>And the great dragon was thrown down (from heaven) ... who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world... <sup>10</sup>And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. <sup>11</sup>And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

The body isn't everything. For the saints loved their lives in Christ even unto death knowing they were redeemed from sin, death, and Satan. The living and resurrected Lord Jesus now stands before the throne of God the Father Almighty and speaks on our behalf! Jesus is our advocate, the voice of salvation and glory.

But we need not only imagine this act of redemption from Satan. We also experience it in confession and absolution, especially private confession and absolution. Do we not confess in the Small Catechism, "Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven." And those who repent and receive absolution are given the promise that "this (absolution spoken by the pastor) is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself." I encourage you to take advantage of this great gospel gift which silences Satan's accusations.

The three pictures I have verbal painted can never do adequate justice to the redemption we have in Christ; redemption from sin, death, and Satan. Nevertheless, by the grace of the Holy Spirit let us fix our eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

✠ In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ✠ Amen.

Now the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. Amen.