

Angels, Demons & You

Good & Evil on Display

World Outreach Church
Sermon Discussion Guide
Sunday Sermon: **February 23, 2025**



Spiritual forces continually impact your life. Scripture plainly presents this truth beginning with the Bible's first verse: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Almighty God, a spiritual force, gave rise to the matter of this world and the universe we know. But the Church has drifted far from that biblical presentation. Instead, we're deeply influenced by secular ideas that are void of scriptural authority. The result is we now judge Scripture instead of allowing Scripture to judge us. We've removed the authority of Scripture and the value of personal service to our King. We have emphasized personal salvation: "I'm saved, and I don't have to serve anybody but myself." Church, that's a false gospel! With spiritual forces influencing our lives every day, what is your plan for cooperating with God and resisting evil? Jesus taught us to pray, "God, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." But will we align ourselves with the values of Scripture or side with evil by remaining silent? We have a choice to make.

I. JOHN'S GOSPEL (Lesson Built from Our Daily Reading)

A. Demonic Opposition

John 7:28–32 ²⁸ Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, ²⁹ but I know him because I am from him and he sent me." ³⁰ **At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come.** ³¹ Still, many in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, "When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?" ³² The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.

John 10:37–42 ³⁷ Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. ³⁸ But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." ³⁹ **Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.** ⁴⁰ Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days. Here he stayed ⁴¹ and many people came to him. They said, "Though John never performed a miraculous sign, all that John said about this man was true." ⁴² **And in that place many believed in Jesus.**

**PRAYER: Almighty God, open my eyes to see what You're doing.
Give me the wisdom to say yes to you and no to ungodliness. Amen.**

***Spiritual forces are influencing your daily life. Share practical ways that Christ-followers can plan to cooperate with God and resist evil.**

***God has raised up voices for truth in our culture. In what unlikely places have you seen expressions of God's Truth?**

B. Lazarus, Good & Evil on Display

John 11:1–16 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. ³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." ⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." ⁵ Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. ⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." ⁸ **"But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?"** ¹¹ After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." ¹² His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." ¹³ Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. ¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶ **Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."**

***How can believers today apply Jesus' example of obedience to God's will, even in the face of opposition?**

John 11:21–27, 38–40 ²¹ "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." ²³ **Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."** ²⁴ Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." ¹¹ ³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone

laid across the entrance.³⁹ “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, **“Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”**

John 11:43–48⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.⁴⁶ But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. “What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many miraculous signs.⁴⁸ **If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.**”

John 12:9–11⁹ Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.¹⁰ So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well,¹¹ for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him.

***The spirit that wanted to destroy the evidence of God’s activity during the time of Lazarus is the same spirit operating in the Earth today. What do these passages teach us about the dangers of hardened hearts and spiritual blindness?**

C. A Spiritual Dimension –Are You Aware?

John 12:23-34, 37, 13:1-3²³ Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.²⁴ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.²⁵ The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.²⁷ “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.²⁸ Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.”²⁹ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.³⁰ Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine.³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.³⁴ The crowd spoke up, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this ‘Son of Man’?” ...³⁷ Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him.

13¹ It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.² The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God.

***The world tells us to live for the moment, cast off restraint, and pursue whatever your “heart” leads you to. How is being obedient to God different than “following your heart”? When was a time in your life you felt God calling you to a greater obedience, and what steps did you take to respond?**

PRAYER

Father, thank You for Your Word—for its truth, power, and authority. Thank You that You're moving in the earth today in the most remarkable ways, dramatically raising unlikely, unanticipated, courageous, and bold voices for truth. Holy Spirit, help us. Give us discernment, wisdom, and a hunger for God’s Word, so we might know Your truth and have the wisdom to recognize what's happening in our world. Forgive us for our indifference and for not wanting to be distracted from chasing our own dreams and endeavors. Father, we're sorry. We come before You to present ourselves as living sacrifices. You called us to be ambassadors for You to our communities—in our schools, hospitals, courtrooms, job sites, neighborhoods, and even at our ballgames. May we have the courage to stand for You. Forgive us for when we have compromised and betrayed You by being embarrassed of You, and for when we’ve been more fearful of the consequences of upholding your truth. We want to please You! Thank You that You've awakened us. Help us to see and understand, and give us a new boldness from You. In Jesus' name, amen.