

Dealing with Persecution in Today's Environment

Class for Feb 26, 2023

Special Lesson

Logos Class. Mod 5 Room 1

Class Schedule for the next few weeks

- ✓ *Feb 19, 2023 - Matthew Ch 19B & 20*
- ✓ *Feb 26, 2023 - Dealing w Persecution and Satan's Attacks*
- *Mar 5, 2023 - Matt Ch 21*
- *Mar 12, 2023 - Matt Ch 22*
- *Mar 19, 2023 – Matt Ch 23*
- *Mar 26, 2023 – Matt Ch 24*

Apr 2, 2023 – Palm Sunday

April 9, 2023 – Resurrection Sunday

A lot going on in the world today...

Do you feel the same way?

- Terrorism, Acts of War, and Violence happening
 - Not just in Ukraine, but in Israel, Arab countries, Iran, Russia, Eastern Europe
 - Revolution and anarchy are everywhere it seems
 - Senseless acts of Violence – even in the US
 - Cultural wars and chaos abound
 - Open Borders, not just the southern border any longer.
- Sabotage to critical infrastructure
 - Food Supplies and Manufacturing locations
 - Electrical Distribution and Generation grids
 - Pipelines, Train derailments, toxic chemical spills
 - Gasoline and Diesel shortages and increasing costs
 - Water Supplies and sources
- Surveillance by other countries, and by our own government
 - Balloons, green lasers, face recognition, location monitoring thru Technology
- Fiscal Armageddon coming due to excess spending and no attention to budgets
- Earthquakes of Biblical proportion in record numbers and frequency
- Pandemics, famine, fires, disruptive weather, floods

What is the US Government worried about?

- Woke ideas – pronouns, gender transitions, society enforcement, cleansing society of God and His influence, armed forces diversity
- Shutting down all forms of energy sources that go against the green new deal. Environmental controls through Agency Enforcement
- Shutting down the police and decreasing lax law enforcement
- Revolving door with Criminals and Criminal Aliens
- Punishing any cultural resistance to the “new” way
- Diminishing National Sovereignty through both the small arms treaty and the WHO control of pandemic response in the US. Plus, the open border issue and foreign drugs entering the US
- Finding the money to pay for the bloated federal debt and annual spending through adding 87,000 new IRS agents and raising taxes

A Little closer to home

- We are seeing (it seems to me) an increase in the personal health crises in our families, friends, **class**, and people in the public eye.
 - Younger and younger people dying from cancers, respiratory issues, and heart issues. Covid related? Just the age we are? I don't know but it seems much higher to me than normal
 - Suicide, Depression, and Anxiety are plaguing the young. There is a feeling of malaise in the air...not just in politics, but in society and our personal life as well.
 - Culture wars are tearing our society apart...ripping God out of our lives
 - Our youth and children are taught to hate America and support racial hatred
- Yet, we are seeing hopeful signs from God
 - **Asbury University awakening**
 - Spreading awakening to other college campuses
 - Testimonies that appeal to the young, but are a blessing/answered prayer to the old
 - Parents awakening to the culture wars in Schools and re-asserting control
 - Some governmental overreach is being challenged by states and organizations
- It can be overwhelming to consider what is happening all around us

Asbury University Event (SW of Lexington, KY)

- Small Christian University affiliated with the Wesleyan Holiness Movement
- No slick marketing or visual effects.
- Completely unstaged with raw emotion
- No out-of-town talent to amp up the crowd
- President and Administrators with short, meaningful talks
- Student testimonials of how they have been changed
 - Both Asbury students and other colleges and universities
- Prayer...lots of prayers
- Sharing and praying together in audience small groups
- Music and singing that is simple but effective
- Packed facilities and engaged young and older people
- Request that we adopt a college or university and pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to awaken them <https://collegiatedayofprayer.org/>

For us, how do we react and what do we do?

- First, understand that Satan would love nothing more than to discourage us, keep us out of the Word, and keep us from praying and supporting one another. ***We must fight this***
- Christ in Prophecy – a video on ***Drowning in a Sea of Lies***
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oaiRCqIKB9Y>
 - ***Know the truth and you will discern the lies***
 - ***Don't just know the truth but proclaim it and be able to define it since most people don't know any longer what it is.***
 - ***Barna – only 14% of Christians read or study their Bibles daily. Much higher % the older the responder => vacuum in the young***
- ***We are to be encouraged ourselves and encourage others with the truth of the Bible***

A plan for action

- *Read and study your Bible every day. Seek out **His Wisdom***
- *Put aside your fear and look forward to the **Blessed Hope** Titus 2:11-14*

*¹¹ For the **grace of God** has appeared that **offers salvation to all people.** ¹² It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live **self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,** ¹³ while we wait for the **blessed hope**—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

When Jesus was asked about the end times, in Luke 21:7-19 he said:

⁷ “Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?”

*⁸ He replied: “Watch out that you are **not deceived**. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ **Do not follow them.**”*

*⁹ When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. **These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.**”*

*¹⁰ Then he said to them: “**Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.**”*

*¹¹ There will be **great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.**”*

How does that relate to us? In our time?

Luke 21:12-16

12 “But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name.

13 And so you will bear testimony to me.

14 But make up your mind (now) not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves.

15 For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.

16 You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.

17 Everyone will hate you because of me.

18 But not a hair of your head will perish.

19 Stand firm, and you will win life

When your world turns against you

- Devotional from **Max Lucado's** book ***"And the Angels were Silent"***



- ***Betrayal – A tool of those we love, or who we are in close relationship with.***
 - ***A hurt beyond the damage it does, a hurt to our hearts***
 - ***Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss***
 - ***Disciples ran away from Jesus in the Garden***

Luke 21:16-19

Betrayal and Deliverance

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17 Everyone will hate you because of me.

18 But not a hair of your head will perish.

19 Stand firm, and you will win life

How do we prepare ourselves for living today?

How do we resist the “snares” of the devil?

Snare, what are they?

SNARE - noun

- 1. A trapping device, often consisting of a noose, used for capturing birds and small mammals.*
- 2. Something that **lures** or **entangles the unwary**.*



Common snares of the Devil

- *False Doctrine*
- *Pride*
- *Deceit and lying*
- *Evil thoughts*
- *Anger and Accusation*
- *Sexual Immorality and Lust*

Snare of False Doctrine

- *1 Tim 4:1-2 The Spirit clearly says that in later times **some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.** ² Such teachings come through **hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron***
- *2 Cor 11:13-15 ¹³ For such people are **false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ.** ¹⁴ And no wonder, for **Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.** ¹⁵ It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.*

Knowing the Truth is a key defense against false teaching and doctrine

Snare of Pride

- *Pride is a sin that is the root of many sinful things. It is the sin of Lucifer that caused him to fall*
 - *Isa 14:21-15 – recounts the **I WILLs** of Satan*
 - *I will ascend to the Heavens*
 - *I will raise my Throne above the stars of God*
 - *I will sit on my throne on the Mount of Assembly*
 - *I will ascend above the tops of the Clouds*
 - *I will make myself like the Most High*
 - *1 Tim 3:6 Paul warns Timothy not to elevate a newby to Minister*
- ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.***

Pride goeth before a Fall

Snare of deceit and lying

Christ's assessment of the Devil in John 8:44

He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- Adam and Eve were deceived by Satan*
- Ananias and Sapphires deceived and lied to Peter and the Holy Spirit*

Two people...church people...following Satan's temptation to lie

Snare of Evil Thoughts

James 3:14-16

¹⁴ But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.¹⁵ Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

James 3:17-18

¹⁷ But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

The Wisdom of the World is evil, but the Wisdom from Heaven earns a harvest of Righteousness

Snare of Anger and Accusation

Eph 4:26-27

26 “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold.

Ps 4:4

***4 Tremble and (in your anger) do not sin;
when you are on your beds,
search your hearts and be silent.***

Follow this advice from Heb 12:14-15.

14 Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness, no one will see the Lord. 15 See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Are you an accuser?

Are you in the habit of accusing people? Remember that Satan is the accuser of our brethren. Rev 12:10

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

*“Now have come the salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God,
and the authority of his Messiah.*

***For the accuser of our brothers and sisters,
who accuses them before our God day and night,
has been hurled down.***

***Having an angry accusatory mindset can allow us to fall into this snare of
Satan***

Finally, the snare of sexuality and lust

Western society in particular has diminished belief in sexual propriety and adopted the hedonistic practices of the “world”. This has caused untold problems, but they are not “new”. They have been around since Sodom and Gomorrah or earlier.

*1 Cor 6:13. **The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.***

*1 Cor 6:18-20. ¹⁸ **Flee from sexual immorality.** All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but **whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.** ¹⁹ **Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;** ²⁰ **you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.***

Sadly, in our culture, this is of little concern outside the church, and I’m afraid only mild concern within the body

How do we avoid Satan's snares?

➤ *Seek God's Help!*

- *James 4:8. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you.*
- *Matt 6:13 Pray...the model prayer says...*

*And lead us not into temptation,
but **deliver us from the evil one.**'*

➤ *Resist the Devil*

James 4:7 ... Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

➤ *Put on the Armor of God-*

*Eph 6:14-17 ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist, with the **breastplate of righteousness** in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the **gospel of peace**. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And **pray in the Spirit** on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, **be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.***

Armor of God

1. Put on the **Belt of Truth**
2. ...the Breastplate of righteousness
3. ...Shoes of the Gospel of Peace
4. Pick up the Shield of Faith
5. Put on the Helmet of Salvation
6. Use the Sword of the Spirit

But two additional items:

7. Praying in the Spirit
8. Knowing how to put on the Armor of God

I will add a PDF on more on the Armor of God

Our time here is short

- *A believers, we know we depart before the **Wrath of God** becomes in full force.*
- *We need to be **salt and light** for those we encounter and **do what God has called and equipped us to do**. We want to be found faithful when He comes*
- *We also know the End of the book and that Satan is defeated. We must live a life worthy of the salvation He gave us. **Then we will be ready no matter what comes our way.***
- *We will cover some of this again in Matt Chapters 24 & 25*

Things are not falling apart, they are falling in Place

For Next Week...

- *Come back again...either in person or online through Zoom*
- *Return back to Matthew Ch 21*
- *Pray for our country, State, County, and their leaders*
- *Pray for our Church, Pastors, and all members/visitors*
- *Thank God for all He has done for you and us*

God Bless you all

Thank God each day for the strength to continue...