

## INTRODUCTION

I never really got into the first generation of Star Trek when Captain Kirk directed the U.S.S. Enterprise. But when our girls were little, we really got into “Star Trek: the Next Generation” with Captain Jean Luke Picard. If you are a Next Generation Trekkie, you’ll recall one of the most famous lines from the entire series came when Captain Picard was captured by the Borg. The Borg was a race of cybernetic beings that assimilated civilizations throughout the universe into their collective “hive.” In the last scene of that episode, Captain Picard appeared as a Borg and was going to assimilate the entire crew of the Enterprise. He said, “We are Borg. Resistance is futile. You will be assimilated.” Fortunately, the crew *did* resist and they weren’t assimilated.

That line “We are Borg. Resistance is futile.” has become one of the most familiar lines from the entire series. In fact, someone with a lot more time than me imagined what it would sound like spoken by other characters. For instance:

- 1) We are Starbucks of Borg. Rest is futile. You will be caffeinated.
- 2) I am Homer Simpson of Borg. Resistance is futile. You will...Oooo...donuts!
- 3) I am Bond, James Bond of Borg. License to assimilate.
- 4) I am Yoda of Borg. Futile, resistance is, hmm? Assimilate you, I will.
- 5) I am Elmer Fudd of Borg. Wesistance is futile. You will be assimiwated, hehehehe.

Of course, the Borg are an imaginary entity. But we really do face a scary foe—the devil and his demonized army. Satan’s army wants to take control of your life and assimilate you into their wicked mind set. And Satan wants to frighten you by saying: I am Satan. Resistance is futile. You will be defeated. But he is *wrong*! It is possible to resist him and to have victory over the devil. Here’s how. Let’s read what the Bible says in I Peter 5:8-9:

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering.”

I want to share with you the truth about the terrible but toothless lion. If you are going to have victory over the devil there are three very important things you must do:

### 1. RECOGNIZE THE DEVIL

In verse eight the Bible says: “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy, the devil...”

If you saw the devil, would you even recognize him? It’s not easy because he’s the master of disguise. What does the devil really look like? Most people imagine he is some kind of evil looking red creature with a mouth full of sharp teeth and two ugly horns protruding from his head but that’s just a caricature of the devil. Satan *wants* you think that, because since you’ve never actually seen a creature like that, it’s easy to believe the devil doesn’t really exist.

The brilliant scholar, C.S. Lewis believed Satan was a real being who is responsible for much of the evil and suffering in the world today. He even wrote a book entitled *The Screwtape Letters*,

which contains a series of letters written from a head demon named Wormwood to a junior demon named Screwtape. Wormwood gives advice to Screwtape on how to torment and tempt Screwtape’s human subject. Although the names and letters are a work of fiction, they reveal Lewis’ keen insight into how the devil operates. In one letter Wormwood writes: “The fact that ‘devils’ are predominately COMIC figures in the modern imagination will help you. If any faint suspicion of your existence begins to arise in his mind, suggest to him a picture of something in red tights, and persuade him that since he cannot believe in that he therefore cannot believe in you.” (C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, p. 33) And as long as the devil can make us think he’s a joke, we won’t recognize him.

And Satan has been successful in this plan because most Americans don’t even believe in the devil. In 2002, the George Barna research organization interviewed thousands of Americans to determine their beliefs. They found almost 95 percent of Americans believe in God but only 41 percent of Americans believe in a living being called the devil. That’s an amazing disparity but we shouldn’t be surprised. Satan doesn’t want you to worship him; he doesn’t want to believe in him at all. He knows if you don’t believe in him, you won’t be on guard for his attacks. That’s why Peter says that we must “be alert.”

In his movie, “The Passion of the Christ” Mel Gibson cast Satan as a spooky androgynous creature. But Satan doesn’t want to spook you, he wants to entice you. If you think Satan is ugly, think again. He’s like some of those people on the television show “Extreme Makeover.” He can change himself into someone beautiful. The Bible says in II Corinthians 11:15: “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.” (II Corinthians 11:15)

In the 1981, the blind singer Terri Gibbs recorded a hit song that said, “Somebody’s knockin’ should I let him in? Lord, it’s the devil, Would you look at him? I’ve heard about him, but I never dreamed—he’d have blue eyes and blue jeans.” That description is probably more theologically correct than Mel Gibson’s!

You can’t recognize Satan by the way he looks, but you *can* recognize his voice. He’s a liar. Jesus said, Jesus said, “The devil 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.” (John 8:44)

I believe Satan has succeeded in convincing most Americans to believe his three greatest lies: (1) He doesn’t really exist; (2) Evil is good and good is evil; and (3) You can sin and you will not suffer. If you are going to have victory you must recognize him as a liar.

## **2. RESPECT THE DEVIL**

In verse eight the Bible tells us what Satan is doing. He hates you personally, so insert your name into the blank: Satan “prowls around like a roaring lion looking for (your name) to devour.” You shouldn’t admire the devil, but you’d better respect his power. Circus lion tamers who lose respect for the lions in their cage may end up losing an arm as well.

A lion is one of the most formidable powerful animals in God’s creation. A grown lion can grow

to over eight feet in length (not counting his tail) and weigh over 400 pounds. He can snap a zebra's neck with a single bite or crush the skull of a warthog with one swipe of his mighty paw. That's why lions are called "king of the jungle." I've done some research on the hunting methods of African lions and I've found at least three similarities between Satan and lions.

### **(1) Satan is sneaky**

The preferred hunting method of lions is to hide themselves near a water hole or trail and wait for an unsuspecting animal to pass by. Then, with a roar, they spring out of hiding and it is lunch time. Lions are naturally equipped with a camouflage color, and they are patient enough to wait for hours. They're sneaky.

Like a lion, the devil is sneaky. He always hides his true intent. He never tries to get you to hate God; he just wants you to doubt the truth about God. Wherever God puts a period, the devil puts a question mark. In the Garden of Eden, the first recorded words of the devil are a question. He asked Eve, "Did God really say 'you must not eat from ANY tree in the Garden?'" (Genesis 3:1) That's not what God had said at all, but Satan twisted God's word in his question. He's still using the sneaky approach. Satan would never say to you, "Don't believe God." That's too direct. But he'll try to get you wondering: "Did God really create all of this?" "Is the Bible really the word of God?" "Is Jesus really the only way to heaven?" "Is there really a heaven and a hell?" Watch out, he's hiding.

### **(2) Satan is stalking you**

The hunting method you often see on the Animal Channel or the Discovery Channel is when a lion or a pride of lions stalk a herd. Because lions aren't the fastest animal in the jungle, they are experts at silently slipping up on their prey. When they get close enough, they roar and spring forward with a quick burst of speed.

Lest you think lions are restricted to Africa, remember we have mountain lions in parts of Texas. I read an interesting article about a mountain lion that repeatedly attacked a mother and her three children in 1998 while they were hiking in Big Bend National Park. The determined lion, which weighed almost 300 pounds, followed them for several miles. The brave mother repeatedly drove the lion away with sticks and rocks, but the lion was undaunted. He kept pursuing them. Finally she was able to get back to her family back to her car safely.

That sounds like the devil. He's prowling around looking for an easy target. In Job 1, God and Satan were having a discussion when the Lord asked Satan what he had been doing. (God knew, He asked the question, so we'd have a transcript) Satan replied, "from roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." (Job 1:7). He was looking for someone to attack—and he had already targeted Job. Satan stalks you and his plan is to make you miserable. According to John 10:10, Satan's plan for your life is to "steal, kill, and destroy." He wants to steal your blessings, kill your joy, and destroy your happiness."

### **(3) Satan tries to scare you**

He is like a roaring lion. On a still night, a lion's roar can be heard almost five miles away. Zoologists say a lion's roar is the loudest noise made by a living creature and has been recorded at close to 100 decibels at a distance of 200 yards—that's comparable with the volume of a rock

concert.

There is no clear consensus on *why* a lion roars, but one study suggested a lion roars to terrorize its prey. In some cases the lion may be near its prey and when it roars, the prey is paralyzed with fear for an instant. That's all the lion needs to pounce.

In the same way, one of Satan's most effective methods is to keep you in fear. We are living in days of worldwide terrorism have people cringing in fear. We live in a time when terror alerts are part of our modern vernacular. The Bible says God has not given us the spirit of fear. Instead, Satan is the sinister minister of fear. If he can keep you paralyzed with fear, he can keep you defeated. But there is good news. We can have victory over the devil! The Bible says we must also:

### **3. RESIST THE DEVIL**

The Bible tells us in verse nine we must "resist him, standing firm in the faith." The truth is a lion can be scary and terrifying. So can Satan. But once you realize he is a toothless lion, you don't have to live in fear any more.

Of all of Aesop's fables, one of the strangest and most obscure is entitled, "The Lion in Love." Consisting of only five sentences, it's also one of the shortest fables. The story goes:

A lion demanded the daughter of a woodcutter in marriage. The father, unwilling to grant, and yet afraid to refuse his request, came up with this plan to deal with the lion. He expressed his willingness to accept the lion as the suitor of his daughter on one condition: that the lion should allow him to extract his teeth, and cut off his claws, as his daughter was fearfully afraid of both. The lion cheerfully assented to the proposal. But when the toothless, clawless lion returned to request to marry his daughter, the woodman, no longer afraid, set upon him with his club, and drove him away into the forest.

What's the moral of the story? I don't know. But I like the part of the father chasing the toothless lion away. According to the Bible that's what we can do to the old toothless lion, Satan. There's a great verse from James that says: "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)

I want to be very practical and give you three simple things you can do to resist the devil:

#### **(1) Satan targets stragglers, so don't stray from God's flock**

When a lion sneaks up on a herd, he is looking for a single animal that has wandered from the protection of the group. His plan is to single it out and isolate it from the herd. Once he does that, he has a better chance of killing it. But if an animal sticks with herd, he has a much higher chance of survival.

Lest you think lions are expert hunters, they actually fail more times than they succeed. Studies of lion behavior in Africa have resulted in some interesting lion kill statistics. When you

examine these numbers, a definite pattern can be seen.

For instance, when they attack a herd of warthogs, they'll get a meal 55 percent of the time. Warthogs travel in small groups, but when lions attack they seem to split up quickly: Every warthog for himself!

By comparison, when lions attack a herd of zebra, they get a meal only 35 percent of the time. The reason is because zebra herds tend to stick together. Zebras have even been observed defending other zebras when under attack.

What about impalas? (If you're thinking of Chevrolet impalas, they've never been threatened by anything more dangerous than members of the Lion's Club.) But for impalas in the wild, when they are attacked by lions, they are caught only 22 percent of the time. Impalas are more herd-oriented than zebras and warthogs.

But the value of herd mentality can best be seen among Thompson's Gazelles. When lions attack a herd of gazelles, they only have an 11 percent kill rate. It's not only because gazelles are fast, it's because they have an early warning system. They stick together and different gazelles watch in different directions and they warn the herd of impending danger. So, what can we, slow human beings, learn from this? There is safety in numbers—and in Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

The Bible says: "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25) Just as lions attack stragglers, the old roaring lion, Satan, will try to isolate you from the herd.

Satan doesn't want you to come to church. He wants you to get mad and stay away. He'll tell you a lie that you don't need to go to church where there's a bunch of hypocrites. He'll lie to you that you can get just as much sitting at home watching on television, or you can worship on your own at the lake. But the Bible says there is strength and safety in the herd. And the herd is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **(2) Satan terrorizes the weak, so memorize and recite God's Word**

Not only do lions target stragglers, they attack the weakest animals. Sometimes a lion will just run at a herd, knowing he can't catch them. But as the frightened herd starts to flee, he'll be looking for an animal that is limping or weak—and that's where he heads for his next meal. Satan does the same thing spiritually. He attacks Christians who are wounded and weak in the faith. And he attacks strong Christians at their weak points.

When Satan confronted Jesus in the wilderness, he tempted Him at his weak points. Jesus hadn't eaten for forty days, so Satan tempted him to turn stones into bread. Jesus came from heaven where He had been the object of worship for eons. Satan tempted Jesus to do something spectacular to gain men's adoration. Jesus left the riches of heaven to assume the poverty of humanity, and Satan tempted Him with the riches of this world. Jesus could have easily employed His Divine magic to defeat Satan. It would have been simple for Him to wiggle His nose or blink His eyes and "poof" Satan would have vanished.

But instead, Jesus resisted Satan by quoting three verses from the Old Testament. Three times Jesus said, "It is written..." And each time, Satan's attack was repelled. That's why we should memorize scripture, so we can quote scripture in the face of satanic attack and temptation. We don't memorize scripture so we can get stars by our name. We memorize God's Word because keeps us from sin. The Bible says, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:11)

The next time the old toothless lion starts growling at you, just start quoting the Word of God. Whenever Satan hears, "It is written..." he knows he has been defeated. Go ahead and quote the scripture. Say, "Get behind me, Satan." Somebody once asked me, "Should I talk to the devil? I'm afraid that sounds as if I'm *praying* to the devil." I said, "Well, you're not praying to a cat when you tell it to scat!" Resist the devil by using the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

### **(3) Satan trembles before God, so claim your victory in Jesus!**

The best way to resist the devil is to understand and claim the victory Jesus has already won. The devil really has no power over us because of what Jesus did on the cross. On the cross, Jesus broke the teeth of that roaring lion, Satan. Jesus fulfilled the scripture from Proverbs that says, "The lions may roar and growl, yet the teeth of the great (old) lions are broken." (Job 4:10)

In fact, when a male lion roars in the jungle, it is a fearful thing and all the animals tremble with fear except one—another male lion. And if the other lion is a bigger stronger lion, he heads toward the sound of the roar to challenge that lion for supremacy. The Bible says there is another lion in the Bible and He is far superior to the old roaring lion, Satan. The Bible says in Revelation 5:5, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has triumphed!" (Revelation 5:5). That's Jesus. The Bible says in I John 3:8, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." (I John 3:8)

Back in Genesis 3:16, God promised one day the seed of woman (Jesus) would crush the head of the serpent—that's when Satan's doom was signed. At the cross, the old serpent struck the heel of Jesus, but it wasn't a fatal blow. At the same moment, Jesus crushed the serpent's head—Satan's doom was sealed. And my Bible says in Revelation 20:10 "the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, (to be) tormented day and night forever and ever." That's when Satan's doom will be delivered. Signed, Sealed, Delivered; Jesus has won the victory over Satan!

So, there are two lions. Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and now Satan is a toothless lion. Everyone must ask themselves this question, "What's my lion?" You've got to read between the lions and decide which one you'll follow. If you are frightened and fooled by the lies of the old, toothless, paper lion, you'll end up in misery and regret. But if you follow the real regal lion, the Lord Jesus, your life will be filled with peace and purpose.

What does that mean for us? Victoria Boyson summarized the truth about the terrible but toothless lion it correctly: "Our enemy is defeated! He is a toothless lion who makes a lot of

noise! Jesus is our victor and it is He who has removed the sting of death from our enemy, knocking out his teeth. He has given us His victory and there is now more authority in even the youngest babe in Christ than there is in Satan's whole demon lair. For "Greater is HE who is in you, than he who is in the world!" (1 John 4:4). (Victoria Boyson, *More Than Conquerors*)

## CONCLUSION

My friend, you must understand victory has already been won. We don't have to fight for it; Jesus has already given it to us. We only need to claim it by faith! The Bible says in Romans 8:37 that we are "more than conquerors through him who loved us." We already have the victory, we don't have to fight for it or beg for it, we only have to claim it by faith!

There's a water fountain in the foyer. It contains cool, refreshing water for those who are thirsty.

Suppose after this service you walk out there and see me on my knees in front of that water fountain. My hands are clasped in supplication, and I'm begging, "Oh, please water fountain, just one little drink. That's all I need! Please, water fountain!" I can do that all day and nothing will happen (except maybe a couple of guys in white coats will come and lead me off in a straight jacket). I'd be crazy to plead with a water fountain like that.

You don't get water from a fountain from pleading and begging; you get it by going up to it, putting your mouth near the spout, and pushing the button. It's that simple. Jesus invited anyone who was thirsty to simply come unto Him and drink. He doesn't force our mouths open, you must do your own drinking. His living water is waiting, will you come and drink?

You see, all the promises of God are there for us to simply receive by faith. He offers you victory, are you living in it? He offers you forgiveness, have you accepted His offer? He offers you eternal life as a gift, have you received it?

## OUTLINE

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Jesus said, "The devil 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." *John 8:44*

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"...prowls around like a roaring lion looking for (your name) to devour." *1 Peter 5:8*

- (1) Satan is sneaky
- (2) Satan is stalking you
- (3) Satan tries to scare you

### 3. RESIST THE DEVIL

"resist him, standing firm in the faith." *1 Peter 5:9*

"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." *James 4:7*

- (1) Satan targets stragglers, so don't stray from God's flock!

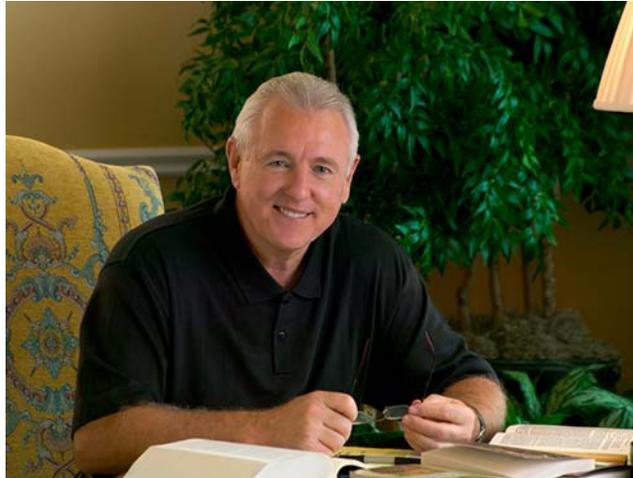
"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." *Hebrews 10:25*

- (2) Satan terrorizes the weak, so memorize and recite God's Word

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." *Psalms 119:11*

- (3) Satan trembles before God, so claim your victory in Jesus!

"Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has triumphed!" *Revelation 5:5*



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To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes