

John 49 – Offspring of the Devil

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Scripture 1: (Jn. 8:31-45 ESV)

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."

They answered him, "Abraham is our father."

Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did."

They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father-- even God."

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me."

Scripture 2: (Gen. 3:1-19 ESV)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you."

And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Sermon:

As the children of our fathers and mothers, we all tend to resemble our parents; the adults who have raised us. Sons generally echo their father, while daughters echo their mother. This seems to be because most people learn best through imitation, explaining why Paul said to {Imitate me as I imitate Christ} (1 Corinthians 11:1). Thus we often share similar mannerisms, expressions, attitudes, our likes or dislikes with our parents and often, our activities and the ways we do them. This principle appears throughout Scripture to explain and encourage the Christ-likeness of Christians and to explain the unregenerate, reprobate person's likeness to Adam and the world's unholy prince and ruler (John 14:30; Ephesians 2:2).

Christians, the "offspring of Abraham" are being made to be "like Christ" through our sanctification by the Holy Spirit; therefore, we do things "like Christ". We do the same kind of things, doing them in the same kind of manner, and for the same kind of reasons. We do them because they are right, because they are good, and because they bring our Father in heaven glory and honor. Similarly, all the rest of people in the world live and act like the devil by living in persistent and unrepentant sinfulness.

So, continuing within the context of Jesus teaching in Jerusalem, after He defined and clearly described who really are the **true** "offspring of Abraham": those who are inheriting God's covenant promises according to their faith in Christ; Jesus next more fully directed His attention toward those who refused to believe in Him, but especially against the Jewish leadership: the Pharisees, scribes, and priests. While Jesus had already been dialoging with them now, after prophesying that soon they would {*lift up the Son of Man, and that then they would know that He really is the Christ*} (John 8:28), He turned up the heat against them and their sinful self righteousness.

Leading up to this, John has made it clear that Jesus' audience was divided between those who believed in Him (8:30) and those who did not. Meanwhile, Jesus was publicly proclaiming that His teachings are the source of freedom giving truth, and something exclusively claimed by His disciples. His claim upon such truth followed His claim of divinity as the "*light of the world*" (8:12), as the LORD God, and after declaring that "*unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.*" (Jn. 8:24 ESV); that {unless they have *pisteuo* in Jesus Christ as the LORD, they would die without atonement.} Through all of this, Jesus taught that He is God the Son: the faithful, firstborn of God (Exodus 4:22) and therefore, the true and absolute heir of Abraham; teaching that the LORD God is His heavenly Father and that He is also equally God, and that therefore, He alone possesses the right, the authority, and the power to share these covenant promises with whomever He chooses. Then, after

explaining how a person can know that they have been freed by their faith, because they abide in His word and live obedient to God's commandments in response to His grace, Jesus next explains that all the rest belong to the Devil.

But, before we consider these “offspring of the devil” and their relationship with their infernal father, we must first correct certain assumptions about the devil and his attendant demons that many people make. While it is not good for us (or anyone) to dwell overly much on the devil or his evil machinations {it can quickly become spiritually dangerous}, it is good for us to remind each other of his limitations; to encourage each other against granting him any more power, authority, importance, attention, or even relevance than he warrants. {I would like to suggest that he deserves none, but his evil does ultimately require the attention, judgment, and wrath of God; therefore, he does warrant some attention.}

- Number one, the devil **is real**. He is not an abstract idea, nor is he just a metaphor for evil. He is not a mythological character born of superstitious imaginings, and he certainly does not wear red tights or carry a pitchfork {that imagery is not Biblical but is sourced in medieval and Puritan Christian thought, building upon the idea that since Satan's great personal sin is pride then, if/when he is mocked and ridiculed by Christians for being silly, he will flee}. Scripture makes it clear that he is a **real, spiritual person**; literal, actual, and active; and that both 1st Century Jews and Christians believed and knew that he exists (e.g. Job 1:6-12, 2:1-7; Zechariah 3:1-2; Acts 13:10; 2 Corinthians 11:14; Ephesians 4:27, 6:11; 1 Timothy 3:6-7; Hebrews 2:14; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8; Jude 1:9; 1 John 3:8). The devil is also called Satan, a Hebrew term meaning “adversary” or “accuser”. He is utterly evil and corrupt in his nature; depraved to the max in his wickedness and sin. He was the first rebel against divine sovereignty; gladly leading all who follow him into damnation. He is a problem that troubles humanity and the whole created order.
- Number two, while the devil **is powerful**, he is NOT **all powerful**. He is NOT omnipotent. His knowledge and understanding is not perfect. He cannot read our minds. He is NOT omniscient. He is naturally limited in his capacity and location (Job 1:6-12). He is NOT omnipresent. Although he is greater than a man, he forever remains less than God because he is a creature (Genesis 3:1). Therefore, as a creature, he cannot create anything new; he can only copy or corrupt what God has already done (Exodus 7:8-13; Matthew 4:1-11).
- Number three, the devil is NOT God and he is NOT equal with God. Although there is a present cosmic struggle: Satan's rebellion and his sinful opposition to the LORD; the parties in this conflict are not evenly matched. Jesus Christ has already won the war, but He has not yet imposed the fullness of His reign and triumph over the devil (Revelation 20). While at times, it appears as if Satan's power is in ascendance, by God's good providence he is permitted a false sense of authority and a semblance victory (Matthew 12:29) because truly “*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*” (Prov. 16:18 ESV). The Apostle Peter describes the devil as a “roaring lion” seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8), but because of Christ's victory on the cross, that lion is functionally “toothless”.
- Number four, although people like to attribute their every misfortune to him (Satan did it) or blame him for our every act of personal sin (the Devil made me do it), since the devil is not omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent he cannot force anyone to do anything. He cannot directly cause nor be directly involved with every act of evil and wickedness. The sad truth is instead that our human sinfulness, our corrupted nature is to blame {therefore making Satan an indirect cause or influence upon all human evil}. We are each individually responsible for all of our personal sins because we retain free choice of action. We give the devil way too much power, giving him too much credit for far more than he is capable of doing.

- It is also important to remind us that Christians cannot be possessed (no matter what Hollywood might suggest) because we are already indwelt by the Holy Spirit (therefore, there is “no room in this inn...” and God does not share {He is a jealous God (Exodus 34:14)}). However, we may still be oppressed and attacked by demonic forces, but it is very unlikely that any of us will draw the personal attention of Satan himself. While we are each important to God and we are each important combatants in this spiritual battle, few of us are important enough to attract the devil's direct ire.
- Number five and finally, while the devil is frightening, he is NOT to be feared because He is also subordinate to Christ and we are united into Christ. Jesus Christ is also Lord over the rebellious Devil, no matter how much Satan denies it or complains. Therefore, Jesus will protect and defend us. Jesus has given us the “*shield of faith*” (Ephesians 6:16) to extinguish the devil's “*flaming darts*” which he casts against us. We have the Scriptures and we have read the end of the story.

However, even understanding all of that there is one fundamental line of questioning we must be certain to specifically attend to:

- Who is the devil, really?
- What does **Scripture** *actually* say?

Sadly, much of what we think we know about the devil and his demons, about angels and heaven, comes from either the realm of “speculative theology” or from non-Scriptural manuscripts like the Book of Enoch {which is the originating source for all things *nephilim*}, the “War of the Sons of Light and Darkness” {the War Scroll} which was a important text to the Essenes at Qumran, the apochryphal book “Tobit” or, worst of all {because they are just utter fancies, even disconnected from Roman Catholic doctrine}, the fictional works of John Milton, “Paradise Lost” and Dante Aligieri's “Inferno”. There is a lot that we can not and should not know. But, since Scripture is the revelation of Jesus Christ, it tells us only as much as we need to know about th3 creature, Satan, who has set himself in opposition to the non-created and only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ. Scripture says that:

- He is crafty and devious; moreso than any other creature (Genesis 3:1).
- He is a liar and a murderer (John 8:44).
- He greatly desires and works towards the destruction and corruption of all humanity (Genesis 3; Job 1-2; Mark 4:15; Luke 22:31-32; John 13:27; Revelation 12:9).
- He is cursed by God, on account of his own sins and for his enticement of Adam and Eve to sin also (Genesis 3:14-15).
- He is fallen because of his pride; because he desired to overthrow and replace the LORD, as God (Isaiah 14:12-17; Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:7-9).
- He deceived and convinced other angels to join him in rebellion and sin against the LORD (Matthew 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 12:7-9), thereby becoming the demons.
- He will offer temptations to humanity, to try and lead them into greater sinfulness (Matthew 4:1).
- He will blind humanity, trying to keep us from the truth about God's grace and love (Matthew 13:38-39).
- He may still deceive people by masquerading as an “*angel of light*” (2 Corinthians 11:14).
- He or his demons may possess those who belong to him, those whom the LORD would allow (John 13:27).

- He has a specific place reserved for him, prepared by the LORD, where he is condemned to suffer in eternal fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10) while yet, even now, he and his “angels” (demons) are confined and restrained by “*chains of gloomy darkness*” (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6).
- And most importantly, he is already defeated (Revelation 12:8). All of his strength, power, ability, ambition, and pride is vain and fruitless because Jesus has already won the victory.

The main thing that Scripture teaches us to understand about the Devil is that: no matter how powerful he might seem, no matter how much authority and influence he has over the world, no matter how many victories he seems to win; Satan is and remains a **loser**. He lost before he ever began. As much as he tries to build his kingdom, it is falling down around him even more quickly. God **wins**. The devil **loses**. End of story. The age long struggle is not between God and the devil, but simply the devil's rebellion against God. Once Christ returns to sit in judgment and the LORD pours out His almighty wrath, the eternal Sovereign will be the only Person left standing, because every knee will be bowed (Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10), even the Devil's.

When you think about it that way, that really is good news!

Now, returning to John, the thing to understand about Jesus's present audience is that the true “*offspring of Abraham*”: those who believe Him and believe in Him; are, by virtue of their union into Him, winners while those who do not believe Him: those who belong to the world and its favored prince, the devil; are losers like their infernal father and lord. Anyone who does not believe Jesus, is not the “*offspring of Abraham*”, even if they might be descended from him. If they do not belong to Jesus and “Father Abraham”, then there is only one other person that they can belong to, the devil. Therefore, just as there is a “likeness” in the relationship between the “*children of god*” (John 1:14) and Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:24) so too, there is a similar relationship of “likeness” between the devil and his offspring and **that** is the relationship to which Jesus now calls our attention to and explains.

After explaining that “...*everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.*”, Jesus affirmed “*I know that you are offspring of Abraham...*” but then, He publicly charged the disbelieving Jews with conspiracy to commit murder, by saying “...*yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.*”.

Meanwhile, these incensed and perpetually offended Jews retorted, “*Abraham is our father.*”, at which Jesus responded, “*If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did.*”.

However, based upon their response, while the implied identity of the “father” of these Jews' could seem ambiguous to us, His audience surely understood what Jesus meant because they protested, “*We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father-- even God.*”.

Some might suggest that their response is a continuation from when they asked Jesus, “*Where is your Father?*” (Jn. 8:19 ESV); suggesting that they were alluding to rumors about Jesus's legitimacy and questioning whether His father truly was Joseph. While that interpretation might be valid, considering the more simple and plain understanding of the word translated here as “*sexual immorality*”: the Greek term *porneia*; I do not think it is reasonable, based upon the rest of the surrounding context. {The NIV translates their protestation as “*We are not illegitimate children...*” (Jn. 8:41 NIV), with the King James as “*We be not born of fornication...*” (Jn. 8:41 KJV). Throughout the Septuagint *porneia* is used to describe both the sexual behavior of Tamar (Judah's widowed daughter in law; Genesis 38:24) and Israel's idolatry (Numbers 14:33 and as a metaphor throughout Hosea).} Reasoning from the recent analogy to Ishmael: Abraham's “illegitimate son” and the product of

unlawful fornication (of union with his wife's servant, rather than his wife which, even if culturally permissible at the time, it is not in line with God's natural order of one man/one wife); makes their response a denial and rejection of Jesus's allegation that they {and their religious tradition and order} were not Abraham's rightful heirs.

Instead, they themselves did what they were negatively accusing Jesus of doing: falsely claiming the LORD God, as their “father”; but, they did not mean this in the same natural, paternal sense that Jesus did. They assumed this status as their right because the LORD claimed all of Israel as His firstborn son (Exodus 4:22), the Levites as His firstborn inheritance and possession (Numbers 3:13), and also even the schismatic northern Kingdom of Israel {as ruled by the tribe of Ephraim, Joseph's heir, with his firstborn rights, as the three eldest sons of Leah were disinherited (1 Chronicles 5)} was still claimed as His son (Jeremiah 31:9); however, they either forgot or did not understand that (as Paul would teach in Romans 9:6-8) every Israelite did not belong to God's Elect Israel.

These Jews were living in denial of the truth. They were not who they thought they were. They lived in an age when a person was *ordinarily* defined by who their father was, by their family, and by their ancestry, but their assumed pedigree was false.

- Jesus was a carpenter {Greek: *tekton*; carpenter, woodworker, builder, or general craftsman} because His earthly father was a carpenter.
- Andrew, Peter, James, and John were fishermen because their father's were fishermen.
- John the Baptist's father, Zechariah, was a priest because he was a Levite from the division of Abijah.
- The Jews were Jews because their family was Jewish; because they were descended from Jacob and Abraham, while the Gentiles were Gentiles because they were neither descended from Jacob nor adopted into Israel {as Jewish proselytes}.

When we view all of this through the lens of covenant, there are only two functional relationships that matter, those which define how we relate to the LORD, by: whether one is “in Adam” and a child of the devil, or whether one is “in Christ” and therefore, a child of God (1 Corinthians 15:22). Whether a person is subject to Adam's covenant of works or to Christ's covenant of grace, not only defines whose they are, but it also influences and directs what they do, and that is Jesus' next point, that: those “in Adam” are enemies of God, while those “in Christ” are God's children.

“Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.” Explaining that people who belong to Christ, who have God as their true Father, love Christ, and they will obey Christ because He is the perfect image {representative} of the Father who sent Him (Colossians 1:15). Whereas, people who do not belong to Christ, do not love Him but hate Him instead. They cannot withstand His presence and they will staunchly and obstinately refuse to obey Him. Rather than loving and obeying Jesus Christ and the Eternally Sovereign Father, they are just as closely related to their infernal father, and in the same manner as the Elect are related to Christ.

Jesus tells them, *“You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.”*

- Jesus says that the devil “*was a murderer from the beginning*”, because his ultimate goal and intention for approaching Eve in the guise of a serpent, was the death and destruction of the human race. The devil

knows that the LORD God is true and that the LORD does not make empty threats. When God told Adam that “...*in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*” (Gen. 2:17 ESV), the devil knew that God would be obliged to carry out His judgment and enforce justice, if Adam and/or Eve transgressed His commandment.

- Jesus also explains how the devil is a liar, by his very nature, because the only means he had to effect humanity's downfall was through deviousness, deception, and by sowing doubt and distrust of the absolute truth; God's truth, the truth about God, and the truth about the <Capital T> Truth: God the Son, Jesus Christ, the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*.
- Therefore, since their father, the devil, is a murderer and a liar, they are also murderers and liars because their inclination, desire, and “...*will is to do [their] father's desires.*” (Matthew 5:21-30).
- Thus Jesus explains why they were then seeking to kill Him (8:40):
 - because He is the truth, and
 - because He was telling them the truth, and
 - because He was leading them to the truth and into fellowship/communion with the truth.

Throughout Jesus's ministry, the devil and his children were doing everything they could to try and stop Christ. They were trying to thwart God's sovereign will and eternal plan because, Jesus came to undo the damage the devil did to humanity's relationship with the LORD, God our Father. That was the purpose and point of the Incarnation: God became man in order to restore humanity to a right relationship with God; “[*Because*] *God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.*” (Jn. 3:16-17 ESV). The devil tried and the devil is still trying to thwart God's plan, but he cannot and he never will. Rather, all of the devils schemes, plots, and machinations were thwarted and rendered utterly futile the moment Jesus died upon the cross and had risen again on the third day.

Yet still, although the war has been won, the spiritual and moral conflict continues to rage around us. It will continue to rage until that great and glorious day when Christ returns and puts a final end to it. Each and everyone of us are soldiers in a spiritual army, but the big question is, which army? Are we the “children of Abraham” marching in God's army, or are we the “children of the devil” marching in Satan's army? Whose side are we on? Whose side do we want to be on?

Considering the choice objectively: knowing who and what Scripture says God is and knowing who and what Scripture tells us the devil is; the choice should be obvious.

- There is no hope and no help to be found with the devil; and,
- our only hope and our greatest help is only to be found in and with Jesus Christ.

So, recognizing that we remain in the midst of this conflict, we can and should take comfort by understanding the things that are going on around us.

- We can see how these two armies are lined up against one another.
 - Good versus Evil, right versus wrong, order versus chaos
- We can identify individual battles and see how they affect one another, because of how they are related.

- Things like: mercy ministry and charity work, relational evangelism, Christian charter schools or home schooling versus Planned Parenthood, sexual grooming (of all kinds), social lawlessness or civic violence, and immoral media content
- We can also see how things that could seem minor, can have a broader and deeper impact upon the wider spiritual landscape.
 - A kind word and a helping hand versus belittlement and stolen opportunities, encouragement versus discouragement, “leaving a penny” versus emptying out the change cup, letting a hurrying car merge into your lane versus cutting off others when rushing through traffic yourself.

Every kind of these things and their like, add to the spiritual environment either positively or negatively, because each of the many things that we do, flow out of our heart (Matthew 15:18-20) and our heart is fueled by the one who dwells within it (Romans 8:9-14); by the one to whom we belong: our commanding general.

- As Christians, as the “*children of Abraham*”, all of our good works are done from out of our love for God, because God has already saved us from out of His love for us (Ephesians 2:8-10). We demonstrate our love for God through loving our neighbors. We live with hope, expecting a future far better than what we presently know. We share the Good News that we already enjoy, because we want others to *also* enjoy its benefit. We want to see the world become a better place, both because we know that God **will** make it a better place when Christ returns, but also as part of our repentance from sin; our active repentance, working to restore the damage that we (our collective “We” as humanity) and our wickedness have done to the world (Genesis 3:17), because we each have been given a “*ministry of reconciliation*” (2 Cor. 5:18 ESV).
- Whereas, the reprobate and unregenerate “children of the devil”, do everything they do out of hate. They are motivated and fueled by their hate for the LORD and the sovereignty of His created order. They hate God's moral law and everything reasonable. They hate the world because God made it. They hate whatever is good within themselves; hating all vestiges of the Image of God, which they willfully blind themselves to with their sinfulness, making themselves into an idol, worshiped through their selfishness, self-centeredness, and greed; this is what drives our human, self destructive activities like drug use, sexual sin, our “thrill seeking”, and all our other “risky behaviors”. They hate everyone because they remind them of God. This is the true source of racism and sexism. Without understanding, all that they want and everything they do works to further the devil's ultimate goal and desire: the destruction of all things, until he alone remains as the lord of an ash heap.

So, no matter whomever we serve; no matter who we owe our allegiance to; no matter through whom we relate to God: through Adam or through Christ; we echo or in a vague sense, channel our spiritual fathers, by living and willing and doing as they would. Regardless of which, we each will to do as our respective father desires. Just as we cannot rightly claim that “The devil made me do it.”, he remains the initial instigator and influencer of our sins; so too, we cannot claim that “Jesus made me do it.”, except that He is the first cause, the source, and the driving impetus for all the good that we do for God's glory and honor.

- Therefore, because like attracts like, we know who we are and we know to whom we belong because of the company that we keep and because of the things that we do together.
- Therefore, because we know who and what the devil is: the “Biggest Loser” (copyright); impotent and ineffectual, and because we know who and what he is not: he is not God; we shall not fear him.
- Therefore, because we know who and what Jesus is: the LORD, God Almighty, the Truth, and the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*; we shall not fear for we are in Him and He is in us, thus His rod and His staff both are a great comfort to us (Psalm 23:4).

There is no neutral ground. We are all on active duty as spiritual soldiers. While we may each have different roles or tasks, different skills and abilities, we are all marching together: in the same army, in the same direction, with the same purpose and goal. We cannot and must not shirk our duties. We have each been called, by one side or the other, and everyone will answer.

So, fear not. Trust Jesus Christ in faith. Believe that Jesus, God the Son, has set you free: free from sin, free from service to the devil, and free from fear; and know that you are free indeed. Then, live out your freedom by serving Christ and advancing His kingdom in the world, against all the powers of darkness until He returns and establishes His reign at the final victory.

AMEN