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Disciple: The Battle We Are In

Date: Sunday 9th February

Speakers: Andrew & Rosie McNeil

Key Verses: Ephesians 6:10-18

Talk Summary:

- Jesus speaks of an enemy whose sole agenda is to block our spiritual progress and do us harm (John 10:10).
- American author Andrew Delbanco in his book *The Death of Satan* says “A gulf has opened in our culture between the visibility of evil and the intellectual resources available for coping with it.”
- Jesus speaks of an enemy (John 17:15-17) and the Bible makes it clear that both evil and Satan exist. Right through the Bible, evil is spoken about, not in an abstract sense but in a personified sense. We see the serpent, the tempter, the enemy, the accuser.
- It’s worth acknowledging that any concept of the enemy or the devil that we hold in our minds has probably been shaped more by caricatures in art or film makers in the 21st Century than a biblical worldview.
- Jesus describes the enemy as a liar (John 8:44). The enemy can’t change our identity in Christ, but if he can get us to believe his lies, we will live as though they are true.
- Some lies are: That Satan doesn’t exist, Satan is equal in power to God, Satan is more powerful than we are and we are immune to Satan’s tactics.
- His main tactics are to tempt, accuse and deceive us (in our thoughts).

- If we knew a thought came from Satan then none of us would listen to it, so he disguises himself. (2 Cor 11:14) The implication is that he's not always easy or obvious to spot. The stories of Judas (John 13) and Ananias and Saphira (Acts 4-5) illustrate the point.
- The devils first tactic is to tempt us into sin. Temptation is where we try to meet our needs for safety, security and significance outside of God.
- Satan tempts "It doesn't matter, God will forgive you" Then if we sin, he accuses – his second tactic. "God will never forgive you now, that's it, you've blown it." He's the accuser of God's people (Rev 12:10)
- Satan deceives. This is the hardest attack to resist because it's the hardest to spot. The Spirit of truth guides us (the Holy Spirit).
- Pain that is unhealed or not reflected on can be the basis for a lie (belief). We then face life with a set of expectations and that affect our behaviour. This self-reinforcing cycle can be rooted in distortion or deception. The Holy Spirit leads us into truth, so we can live from Godly beliefs.
- Jesus invites us to take an active stance to resist the enemy.
- Stand. Hold your ground when pushed. Put on the full armour. Become aware of the resources we've been given in Christ. Prepare to struggle / wrestle.
- We need to submit ourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

Small Group Discussion

1. How hard do you find it to believe that devil and demons are real? Why do think that is?
2. Which of the four lies are you most susceptible to? What can you do about this?
 - a. That Satan doesn't exist.
 - b. Satan is equal in power to God.
 - c. Satan is more powerful than we are.
 - d. We are immune to Satan's tactics.
3. Read about the armour of God in Ephesians 6:11-18. What do you think it means in practice to put on the armour of God?
4. Is it surprising to think that every thought that comes into our minds is not our own? Is it more important to work out where a thought is coming from or to test whether or not it is true?
5. If the enemy was to tempt you what would be his main strategy?
6. How does the enemy try to accuse you?

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