

“The Bad Guys Wear White”  
Matthew 2:9-18

- I. Our theme this December is “Finding Our Way Through Narnia.”
  - A. We have already talked about the amazing parallels Lucy (the youngest of the four children in the story), with Jesus’ mother Mary.
  - B. Last week we talked about Edmund and the religious leaders who were duped by Herod and drew parallels to our own struggles with sin.
  - C. Today, we turn our attention to the Enemy.
    - 1) What can we learn about the devil?
    - 2) How can we avoid the devil’s traps?
- II. In TLTWaTW the enemy is Jadis, who calls herself the Queen of Narnia.
  - A. She has kept the land of Narnia in perpetual winter.
    - 1) Lucy describes her to Edmund this way, “She is a perfectly terrible person. She calls herself Queen of Narnia though she has no right to be queen at all.”
    - 2) Although it is always winter, it never gets to be Christmas.
  - B. She enslaves the land and keeps a careful eye on all who might oppose her.
    - 1) She uses Mr. Tumnus to keep his eyes open for sons of Adam and daughters of Eve.
    - 2) She turns those who oppose her into lifeless statues and uses them to decorate her castle.
    - 3) She turns Edmund into a betrayer and abuses him, making him her slave.
  - C. And in the midst of all this evil, manages to keep the hero Aslan at bay. At least for a while.
- III. In the Biblical story of Jesus’ birth, Herod personifies the Enemy.
  - A. Herod was placed on the throne of Judea by the Roman authorities.
    - 1) There hope was that someone who was ethnically Jewish could better control the people.
    - 2) But in reality Herod didn’t follow the Laws of Yahweh and did everything he could to ingratiate himself to the leaders in Rome.
  - B. He was known as a cruel and vicious man who squashed dissension with an iron fist.
    - 1) He would use whatever tools he had available: His personal guard, Roman troops, or the Jewish chief priests and scribes to accomplish his ends.
    - 2) His subjects had little respect for this man they saw as a betrayer of his people.
  - C. In Matthew 2, we see the devious politician emerge, with no real concern for anyone or anything beyond himself and his power.
    - 1) He hears the stories of Wise Men (visiting dignitaries) from the East inquiring about the “king of the Jews.”
      - a) Herod, while he claims the title of king, knows that the wise men aren’t looking for him.
      - b) How hard would it be to find the palace? Herod’s palace was bigger and taller than the Temple itself!
    - 2) He quickly finds a way to use the Wise Men to solidify his power base and remove this threat immediately.

- a) After conferring with his advisors, he cons the Wise Men into reporting back to him.
    - b) Unwittingly they become his tools.
  - 3) When this plan doesn't work, he becomes more desperate.
    - a) Seemingly without remorse or conscience he orders the death of all boy babies two years old and younger in Bethlehem.
    - b) Fulfilling a prophecy in Jeremiah 31:15 – “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning. Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”
- D. Herod is able to keep the peace and keep his power intact for a while, but only for awhile.
  - 1) Before many years pass, the political situation deteriorates and Herod dies. His kingdom gets divided up among his family.
  - 2) And the plans of God move forward.
- IV. Both enemies, the White Witch or Herod, are concerned with preserving their power.
  - A. They would go to any end to keep it.
  - B. Both are really pretenders to a throne that doesn't belong to them.
  - C. Likewise, we face a real and threatening enemy.
    - 1) The Bible speaks clearly on this point – God's plan doesn't go unopposed.
    - 2) And whether we admit it or not, there is an Enemy (an evil one) who we must be prepared to encounter.
- V. How does this Enemy, the devil, work? Fortunately, the Bible helps us answer that question. Here's a few things to think about.
  - A. First, appeasement never works.
    - 1) Evil is progressive. It's never satisfied with what it has. It always wants more.
    - 2) This is true throughout human history. {Appeasement as a strategy failed miserably in WWII}
    - 3) This is also true in our lives. Can't we recognize in our own lives that one little sin leads to another that's just a little bigger?
    - 4) When it comes to dealing with the devil, if you give him an inch he will take a mile!
  - B. Appearances are deceiving.
    - 1) The White Witch didn't look evil. In fact, Edmund says she was “a great lady. She also was covered in white fur up to her throat and held a long straight golden wand in her right hand and wore a golden crown on her head.”
    - 2) The Bible says that the devil “masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness.” -- 2 Corinthians 11:14-15.
    - 3) You can't always tell looking from the outside in.
  - C. Faith freezes by degrees.
    - 1) The White Witch doesn't walk up to Edmund out of the blue and ask him to betray his brother and sisters. No.
      - a) First, she gets him to overindulge in the Turkish Delight.
      - b) Then she gets him to commit to telling her when his siblings arrive.
      - c) Then Edmund agrees to bring them to her castle.
    - 2) She doesn't spin him around all at once. She doesn't get him to turn away all at once.

- 3) That's how the devil works to – he doesn't have to freeze your faith he just has to make it lukewarm.
  - a) Revelation 3:16 says, "So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out off my mouth."
  - b) The devil works on our lives a little at a time and not all at once.
- 4) Once we're comfortable with a little bit of sin, the next bigger bit becomes that much easier for us to imagine. And then he's got us just where he wants us.

VI. So, how can we find our way through Narnia? How can we combat the evil of an enemy that is adept and skillful at leading God's children astray? How can we guard ourselves against the wiles of the evil one?

A. First, hate sin.

- 1) A reporter once caught up to President Woodrow Wilson as he was leaving church. The reporter asked what the preacher spoke about. President Wilson replied, "Sin." The reporter asked, "What did he say about it?" To which President Wilson replied, "He's against it!"
- 2) How many of us send a clear message to the devil that we hate sin.
  - a) God hates sin. God cannot even stand to be in the presence of sin.
  - b) That's why Jesus came, to remove the stain of sin from us and enable us to enter God's presence.
- 3) Proverbs 23:1-3 says, "When you sit to dine with a ruler, note well what is before you, and put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony. Do not crave his delicacies, for that food is deceptive."
  - a) In other words, hate sin so much that you will take extreme measures to avoid it!
  - b) Don't let your sinfulness override your better judgment.
- 4) It also helps to remember that in God's eyes sin is sin.
  - a) Galatians 5:19 says, "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like."
  - b) In other words, God is not a respecter of sins.
    - a. There aren't big sins and little sins, terrible sins and almost okay sins.
    - b. There is only sin and God's hates it. And so should we.
- 5) Don't tolerate sin (even the littlest sin), when God has so much more in mind for you.

B. Love God.

- 1) Loving God and hating sin kind of go together.
  - a) When you remove one (sin) from your life you have to find something to replace it with (God).
  - b) It's called the principle of substitution.
- 2) "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." -- Matthew 22:37.
- 3) Meditate on the things that God loves.
  - a) Love what God loves. Desire what God desires. And despise what God despises.
  - b) We discover those things by spending time in His word.

C. Defend yourself.

- 1) Understand that this is spiritual warfare.

- a) This is a battle with consequences. Eternal consequences.
  - b) It's not a walk in the park.
  - c) Ephesians 6:12 says, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."
- 2) Our instructions are to prepare ourselves for battle: not just to survive the battle, but to win the battle.
  - 3) Ephesians 6:13-18 – <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist, with the **breastplate of righteousness** in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your **feet fitted with the readiness** that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup> 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 saints.
  - 4) When God says, "stand" he means when the battle is over; guess who's left standing!

VII. We might wish it otherwise, but we face a personal and vengeful enemy.

A. C.S. Lewis personified that enemy in his portrayal of the White Witch.

- 1) The Bible shows us this enemy at work in the life and actions of King Herod.
- 2) And we recognize in our own lives that some things can only be explained by acknowledging that there is an enemy (the devil) working to mess up God's plans.

B. But God never leaves his children without hope.

- 1) Love God.
- 2) Hate Sin.
- 3) Put on the whole armor of God and prepare for battle.
- 4) And you will stand!