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Heavenly Father, thank You that You love us. Thank You that You have forgiven us. Thank You that You take great joy in spending this time with us. Please speak to our hearts now as we try to learn from You and about You. Please pierce through the lies surrounding our heart, pierce through with Your truth. Help us to see and understand and learn and receive what it is You have to say. In the name of Your Son Jesus, Amen. Wow, okay. As I was pacing around the church this week trying to figure out what I was going to preach on, one of the girls from the school here was in the hallway singing songs from the Lion King. And when she noticed that I was behind her, she'd go, "Hup!" Like girls do when they think they're singing alone and realize that they're not. And just kind of in my head I was like, "The Lion King, huh? Wouldn't that be funny if that's what my sermon was about?" And then I said, "Well, what is the story of the Lion King? What is the plot?" And I was like, "Well, it's about this young lion who thinks he killed his father, and so he runs away from home and refuses to go back and take his place as the head of the pride because he is hung up on this thing in his past." And then I said, "You know, that's actually what the youth lesson was on this week." And that was a pretty important lesson for them. I said, "I think I'm going to use that for my sermon because it's something everyone really needs to hear." And there's been some events that have transpired throughout the rest of this week that have really confirmed that this is something we need to hear. Part of what I'm going to be talking about is comes from, I bought myself a new devotional. It's called "Sparkling Gems" from the Greek, written by a man named Rick Renner. And so if you have been looking for a new devotional, I encourage you. It's huge, it's like the size of a dictionary. So it's not very portable if you like to go to the coffee house or whatever, but it's really good. And he goes through, he takes a verse each day and he says, "Here's the Greek word for what they're saying there, and here's what that Greek word really means." And he picks it apart. And so we're going to be talking about one of the verses that I just read about this week, which is 1 Peter 5.8. "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Now, that word "adversary," when it says "your adversary the devil," adversary in the Greek is "antideikos," and that word is the word that is used for a prosecuting attorney. That's what the Greeks would have called their lawyers. And lawyer jokes aside, this is where we get a really important picture of how the devil attacks us. You see, the devil is going to accuse and blame and shout at you until you feel guilty, until you convict yourself. In fact, in Revelation 12 verse 10, he's called the accuser of the brethren. He's going to accuse you. Sometimes his accusations are lies. But if you're told a lie loud enough and long enough, eventually you're going to start believing it. We saw this in the Holocaust. Hitler put together this campaign where he kept telling the people of Germany over and over about how terrible the Jews were. And it got to the point where when Jews started disappearing, people just didn't ask questions. They looked at it as a blessing. Some of you also may have experienced this as you were growing up. In your childhood, you might have had parents or teachers who told you that you were stupid or fat or worthless or fill in the blank. And these things were lies, but once it's been spoken to you, then the devil, all he's got to do is just sit there and keep repeating it. If your parents said, "I wish you were never born," they'll just keep saying, "I wish you were never born. I wish you were never born. I wish you were never born. I wish you were never born." He just says it over and over and over into your head until that one day, when you say to yourself, "I wish I was never born," and then the devil goes, "Victory. Got him." Or worthless, worthless, worthless, worthless, stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid. Chance and cheers those lies into your heart until you begin to accept them and until you become the devil's cheerleader for him. And you start saying it to yourself and speaking it to yourself. Sometimes the things he says to us are true. We are all human. We have all sinned and made mistakes. And when he comes at us and attacks us with these things that are true, it hurts a lot quicker. It doesn't take nearly as long to get us to believe one of the lies that's spoken to us. He says, "Look at what you did. I can't believe you made that mistake. How will you ever succeed? You will never amount to anything because that's the kind of person you are." He just says that those kinds of lies over, those kinds of truths over and over and over. But the thing is that those truths aren't covered with the blood of Jesus. They are not covered with the grace of God. This is his attack against believers. If you notice, this verse, 1 Peter 5, it was written to Christians. You're saying you're adversary of the devil. He's talking to Christians here when he's telling them that this is how the devil is going to attack you. So what do we do? Well, "Be sober, be vigilant" is the first part of that verse. You cannot just say a prayer in the morning and think you're just going to coast through all day and that one little prayer is going to suddenly defend you for the rest of the day. You're going to have to be on your guard 24/7 because the devil is on the attack 24/7. And so these words, "Be sober, be vigilant" tells us that you cannot just take this line down. You have to be on your guard and be ready for a constant attack. When the devil lies to you, you need to counter those lies with the truth. You were in God's mind and heart before he ever laid the foundations of the universe. He knew about your sin before it ever got started, but because of his love for you, he went ahead with the whole plan anyway. This is the truth. He loves you like a perfect father. And you have worth because he paid the greatest price to purchase you. So when the devil says, "Worthless," you say, "No, I'm not worthless." Because I was purchased with the blood of Jesus and that makes me more precious than anything in the universe. And when he says, "You can't do anything," you say, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." You need to get studying the word and learning these truths so that when he comes at you with lies, you can counter those lies with the truth. When the devil comes at you with truth, ugly truths about yourself, you have to counter those with grace. Yes, you've made that mistake. Yes, you've messed up. But that sin, if you repented and confessed like the Bible says you should, that sin is completely washed away by the blood of Jesus. And it's not like you've been forgiven, but now you're the social outcast. No, when God looks at you, you are covered with the righteousness of Christ. He looks at you with the same love, the same look in his eyes that he looks at his own son. He doesn't look at some guilty guy who just managed to get off the hook. He looks at his perfect beautiful son when he looks at you and shows you all the love that goes to his son. So if you've got a sin that you haven't repented of or something, repent of it, confess, and then understand that that blood has washed it away, there is no outline left over. There is no smudgy faint remains. It is completely gone and in its place has been put, the glory of Jesus. So don't let the mistakes of your past weigh you down. Don't let the devil use those washed away mistakes in order to weigh you down and bring you down. And stop being the devil's cheerleader. When you find yourself speaking his nasty ugly truths to yourself, stop it and start saying God's beautiful gracious truth. Stop saying, "Oh, I just can't do this. I'm just too old. I'm too tired. I'm too poor. I'm too dumb. I'm too bad. I'm too whatever." Stop speaking that junk to yourself and start saying, "God chose me. God loves me like a son. He loves me like he loves Jesus. I've been washed clean and I've been set in a high place of honor with Jesus. And I'm going to do great things with the power of the Holy Spirit in me. And it's not because of anything I've done that I've earned this and it's not because of anything that I will do that I will ever lose this. It's because he loves me." That's the kind of truth you need to speak to yourself. Stop speaking the negative stuff. Start speaking the truth of the gospel to yourself. And the same goes for others. When you hear other people, when you hear other brothers and sisters in Christ, using that negative language to themselves, stop them. Replace it. Say, "No, stop saying that. Here's what's true about you." Start speaking the truth. Because there's a lot of people who have been listening to the devil's negative cheerleaders their whole life. They haven't gotten a lot of really good cheers. They haven't been told the truth. It hasn't been spoken over them. There's a cartoon that I read on the internet sometimes. It says, this guy, he draws the cartoon and he draws it about himself. He says, "This is what I look like when I see 10,000 positive comments about me on the internet." He's all smiling and happy. He says, "This is what I look like when there's 10,000 positive comments about me on the internet and one negative comment." Oh no, my life is over. That's kind of how it is with us. We could hear 10,000 wonderful beautiful blessings and then that one dissenting voice. That's the one that we listen to the loudest. We've got to stop doing that stuff. Because that nonsense is from the devil. We don't need to listen to what he has to say. When you're friends, when you catch them speaking those lies to themselves, just stop it and just immediately speak the truth to them. If what they're saying is one of those truths that's not covered with grace, say, "That may be true, but in Christ," and then cover whatever that truth was in grace of Christ. And if it's a lie said, that's not true because you're in Jesus. And when you hear un-saved people speaking this stuff to themselves, then this is your opportunity to give them hope. This is your opportunity to share the good news of Jesus. When an unsaved person says, "I'm worthless," then you can say, "There's a God who loves you, who gave his Son, and he thinks you're that valuable and that special." You may be worthless to other people in this world, but to God, the God of love, who created you, you are his precious child and he wants to know you. That is a fantastic opportunity. Counter the truth, the unsaved people's negative cheers with the cheers of God. Cheer them into the kingdom. Colossians 3, 16 says, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, spiritual psalms, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." And this is what I was just saying. We need to be constantly encouraging and building up one another in the truth of the Gospel. That was going to be the end of my sermon when I wrote it, and then right at the last minute, I realized I forgot something. There's one more thing. Not every attack that comes against you is about making you depressed and feel bad about yourself. Some of the attacks that the devil comes against you with are to make you ineffectual. He wants you thinking you can't. Now that you are in the kingdom, he wants you to be a disciple, he wants you to make disciples, he wants you to spread the Gospel out into this world, and there's nothing stopping you from doing that except your own negative cheerleader in your head. You say to yourself, "Oh, I would do this ministry, but I can't because..." I'm no good at talking to people about Jesus. I could never live in another culture. I can't relate to those people. All this negative stuff is more lies from the devil. You can do all things through Christ who gives you strength. Jesus promises that when it's time for us to tell people about Him, that the Holy Spirit will put the words in our mouth. You can do it. You just have to accept that God loves you and He is going to use you if you will stop dragging your feet and just believe that He keeps His promises. You can tell people about Jesus. And I know it kind of freaks me out and probably freaks you out that I can't rehearse my speech ahead of time. Because God says that He'll give us the words we need to speak when it's time to speak them. And if you're like me, I like to have the whole conversation planned out ahead of time. I want to know everything I'm going to say. I'm going to think about every argument they're going to give me and how I'm going to counter it and stuff like that. Jesus says, "Just be real and listen to my Holy Spirit, and you're going to say exactly what I want you to say. You're going to be fine." The devil wants you to be ineffectual. And so not only does he try and get you depressed and sad about who you are and what you've done, he wants you thinking that you can't. But the Gospel says you can. Period. Plain and simple. I can do all things through Christ. And so I want you to think about that as you go throughout this week. Not only do I want you stopping those negative cheers to yourself and replacing them with the truth, but I want you also thinking about what are the things that I keep telling myself I can't do. And I want you to start countering those with the truth also. Because that's his destiny for us. It's going to be your greatest joy when you finally take the place he has prepared for you. When you start walking down the path that he's planned for you, you're going to find your ultimate fulfillment and purpose in life. And you are just scaring yourself out of walking down this beautiful, wonderful path he has for you. So let's stop lying to ourselves. Let's stop denying the truth of the Gospel. Let's step out in faith. Amen? Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you love us, that you infill us with your Holy Spirit, and that through that Spirit we can do all things. That every good work that you have planned and prepared for us, that we are capable of doing those things through your strength and your power. Help us to remember your truth. Help us to listen to the truth of your Gospel. To accept it and believe it and apply it to our lives. Help us to identify the devil's negative cheering and help us to strike it down. Counter it with the truth of your Word. Teach us how to replace our stinking thinking with your good, loving, heavenly words. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.