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The Voice of Strangers

#1127-A

Series: Making the Spiritual Switch

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Father, we just come once again, with grateful hearts, to say thank You. Throughout this week, Your hand has been upon so many different things in our lives, and we have seen You in so many of the little things where You have met our needs and ministered to us in ways that are beyond comprehension. Some things, Father, we just take for granted and never stop to say thank You! This morning, we want to do that. We want to stop and thank You for meeting our needs. Thank You for providing the things that the world may not understand, but we understand, are total gifts of grace. Thank You, Father, for giving us strength in the hard times. Thank You for giving us joy in the midst of all of it. Thank You for watching over those we love.

We do lift up these that we've mentioned to You, this morning, Father—Randor and Larry as they return, Alf and Mary as they journey, for the process of laying his mother to rest. And thank You, Father, for being in the midst of Larry and Randor as they have traveled, and be with them on their return. And we pray for Chuck, Father, that You would have Your healing hand upon him and we pray that they would be able to return soon.

And then, Father, we ask You, that in spite of the one teaching, You would somehow, through your miraculous power working through the Holy Spirit, taking Your Word, do something in our midst this morning, supernatural; so that we would leave here with an understanding we did not have before. And that, it will not simply be knowledge, but we will turn it into wisdom.

This we pray, believing, in Jesus' Name.

Amen.

The Daily Tribune

WARRING NATIONS NEAR HISTORIC TREATY

(AP) Sources close to the President indicate that the possibilities of an amazing coalition that will bring peace at last to the troubled Israeli.

Palestinian leaders set to sign historic treaty on steps of White House...

You see the headlines, don't you? "Historic Peace Treaty Brings Peace to the Mid-East at Last." The interesting thing is, that almost everybody seems to whoop and holler and say, "Isn't this great?" People on both sides of the political fence say, "This is a breakthrough in our quest for world peace." In fact, the entire world is standing by, ready to applaud. But I wonder if we look at what's happening in the light of spiritual truth, we might not have a different perspective.

Now, let me warn you in advance, this is not a lesson with political intent. It may have some overtones, but you make those applications on your own. We are dealing with spiritual truth here, and we want to make the "spiritual switch" if you will. And I want you to understand, and I want to remind you this morning, that basically, physical war and enmity between nations, and all that that entails, was allowed by God and given by God as a physical illustration of a spiritual truth. There is something really going on in this room and in this world today called spiritual warfare, and we need to be careful to understand the similarities. The truth is, for years now the leaders of the free world, and supposedly nations that believe to name the name of Christ, sit down across the table from the representatives of nations whose goals are to destroy every trace of the name of God, and we are trying to negotiate a peace.

Let me remind you, treaties are based on two things. First, the basic assumption that each party believes the other is telling the truth. Uh oh, we are in trouble already, aren't we? Secondly, on the belief that both parties really want peace. Now, if we have learned anything from the Old Testament at all, we should have learned that peace isn't won by appeasing your enemies. And God had one basic truth He repeated over and over to Israel which was, "Don't sign treaties with the enemy, and don't pretend they

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are your friends.” And have you noticed that whenever Israel has abided by that truth, even up to this time, she has been—even though she’s insignificant in size and force—a world power. But even including this age when she has lost that vision, she has lost her authority.

But let me remind you, this lesson isn’t about world power, it’s about another war. It’s about a war that is going in the spirit realm today, for control of your soul and mine. And there are two fiercely divided enemies. Both of them want total control, so compromise is not an issue. There are no compromises; there are no similarities in their objectives. They are at total variance, one with the other.

Now, I want to remind you this morning, if you get that principle in your mind and begin to apply it, it can change the way you approach everything in your life. One of those parties has determined to try to win a negotiated peace. The prince of that kingdom, who is also known as the Prince of Darkness in Scripture, has adopted a tactic called “peaceful coexistence.” What it says is, you can have the best of both worlds; you can have God’s best and Satan’s best at the same time. Lay down your armor. Live in harmony. It’s a lie.

Much of Christendom has listened to this story, bought the program, and is sitting down at life’s bargaining table with Satan and saying, “Well, times have changed and God may have meant that way back then, but God couldn’t mean that today. Look at the difference in our world.” We have coined such phrases as “alternate lifestyles” and “progressive behavior,” new buzz words for compromises that, in essence, violate very basic words in Scripture that really, have never changed—*sin, Savior, lost, saved, heaven, hell*. And the saddest thing is, as we listen to those voices at the peace table, we forget their avowed goal is not really a truce, but victory. And if we aren’t careful, beloved, we will forget who the enemy is. And whenever you do that, it’s all over.

With that somewhat ominous introduction, we turn to John, chapter 10. We are trying to make the “spiritual switch.” We are looking at what Jesus said about sheep and shepherds and trying to make application to this thing we call, spiritual warfare.

THE THREE-FOLD GOALS OF A THIEF

We learned in an earlier lesson about the Door to the Sheep.

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Jesus said, *He was the Door; by Him if any man enter in, he shall be saved.* We learned last week that Jesus is the Shepherd, the Good One, that is, the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep. So, two of the characters in the story have been defined. And this morning, I want to introduce a third character that Jesus introduces in John 10, who is totally at odds and totally at enmity with those first two. “The Shepherd,” Jesus said, “has come that you might have life, and that you might have it *abundantly.*” That you might have a quality of life that just wells up within you and takes control of your life and gives you victory.

But there is one who has an interest in the sheep for a different reason. He is very actively engaged in pursuing the sheep, but not to save them. His goals have nothing in common with the shepherd’s. Nothing. They have no common ground. They are mortal and immortal enemies. And this is how Jesus describes them:

The thief cometh not, [for the same reasons as the shepherd]
but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I AM (is) come
that they might have life, and they might have it more
abundantly. (John 10:10)

Doesn’t sound like they have much in common, does it? It doesn’t sound like they have any basis for sitting down and negotiating a peace. Beloved, the goal isn’t peace; the goal is victory.

So, character number three is known as the “The Thief”. According to verse one, He attempts to enter the sheepfold without coming through the door. And Jesus describes his motives. He hasn’t come to give life; he’s come to take it. He hasn’t come to build, but come to destroy. He is a thief and a robber. A thief is subtle. He steals in and takes what you’ve got and you may not know he’s been there until it’s all over. A robber, on the other hand, will come upon you with force if necessary, and he will hurt or even kill you to get what he wants. And in chapter ten, this “thief” according to verse one, can wear either mask. He can be a thief or a robber.

GRAND THEFT OF THE SPIRIT

There are three things this “thief” does. The first is to steal. That’s what a thief does, isn’t it? He steals. To steal, by definition, is to take that which belongs to another. So, this thief is after something that belongs to God. Now, if you don’t get anything else

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out of this lesson—I hate to say that, because it gives you a real easy out, but I want to remind you, and this is something I think most Christians forget—the war is not between the thief and the sheep. The war is between the thief and the shepherd. The sheep are just the tools the thief uses to get at the shepherd.

We really need to remember that when spiritual warfare is involved. Satan isn't out to get what's yours because you're so important. Sorry to burst your bubble. You may be the object of intense spiritual warfare, beloved, but it isn't you the enemy is after. He's using you to get at God. His one goal is to thwart the plan of God.

So, the first thing he is out to do is steal. The word translated “steal” in this passage does have two meanings as we mentioned. It is used to describe theft by craftiness or stealth, and theft by force or power. So, it can be a “thief” or a “robber.” I'll give you how that word is used in Scripture.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust corrupt and where thieves break through and steal [that is, even with force, if necessary]. (Matthew 6:19-20)

Thou shall not steal. [Thou shalt not take anything that doesn't belong to you—literal meaning.] (Matthew 19:18)

Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal Him away, [lest they take his body without anyone knowing.] (Matthew 27:64)

Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? [Do you take anything that doesn't belong to you?] (Romans 2:21)

Let him that stole, steal no more. (Ephesians 4:28)

Isn't it interesting, it doesn't say, let him that stole, slow down the stealing? It doesn't say try to steal less until you get better at it. Stop it! The word steal, is one with harsh overtones. If you notice in Matthew 6, it's one who breaks into a strongbox or a safe and takes something that's valuable. In Matthew 27, it's craftiness; it's the Pharisees thinking that someone might be stealing the body of Jesus and taking it away. And in these other passages, it is talking about any type of theft; taking that which is not your own. So, the Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep, but the thief steals, kills, and destroys. Now, what does he steal?

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He steals three things and I think the most important one is the first one—*he steals the seed of the Word of God*. I don't know how many of you can relate. You may come to Sunday School this morning, go to church, go home, listen to a tape, turn on Christian radio, look at Christian television, read a Christian book and get seven messages by noon tomorrow. And you may leave this class or leave the worship service, this morning, and say, "God has really convicted me about this area of my life. I need to do something about it." And next week, you'll shake your head and say, "What was it I was supposed to do something about? I can't remember. But boy, have I been fed this week." Well, maybe you have been over-fed. Maybe you have poured so much fresh seed on top of the other seed you never got a chance to let the seed grow; or maybe the enemy entered in by some other way. And in Matthew 13, Jesus used the illustration of the sower and the seed, trying to explain to His disciples what spiritual warfare was all about, and the key role that Satan played. I bet you remember this passage. It says this:

When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, [now that word understanding, doesn't mean that necessarily, you don't have intellectual knowledge; it means you haven't been able to take that knowledge and make it personal] then cometh the wicked one, and [he steals, he robs] catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.

(Matthew 13:19)

He's a "seed-snatcher." You know how it works. The Shepherd will speak to you about something and you're a sheep. And before you have a chance to follow Him, the thief makes a movement over here and diverts you. It may be a good move and what he is saying may be true. It's just enough diversion to take your eyes off the Shepherd. Sheep, incidentally, have very short attention spans. Hello. They forget and they turn their curly heads to look at the thief, and when they turn back, they have forgotten where they were going. And by the time they find the shepherd again, it's all over. And that's still the way it works.

We may have the intent to follow the Shepherd based on the Word of God that He has given us in our quiet time, or in some other way. Our eyes are on the Good Shepherd and suddenly, we are aware of our need to follow Him regardless of the cost. It's as though some stranger has come up on our blind side and done something to attract us from God's best. It may look so good, that

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we think God has done it. But when we come to our senses, we have wandered like a sheep, just far enough off the path. What happened? A thief robbed us of doing the will of God.

Now, he can't steal your salvation, but he can take your eyes off the Shepherd long enough for you to get lost, to lose your way. He can steal the Word just as it is beginning to take root, before it bears fruit. Don't negotiate with him. Don't determine that you can have his way and God's at the same time. It's part of being a sheep.

There are two other things Satan steals from the Christian; we will not look at them this morning. One is, he seeks to steal our joy. And, secondly, he seeks to steal our rewards; to keep us from operating in the Spirit where the rewards will be given. But, in all three cases, he has a singular goal, he just wants us to miss God's best. He's a thief. And like any other known enemies, he will disguise himself as a peace-loving friend who is simply misunderstood.

Murder in the First Degree

Now, the thief, according to Jesus in this passage, is also a murderer. He comes to steal, and he comes to kill. Now, he can't take our lives, spiritually. We will see about that in a week or two. The word "kill," literally means to snuff out. It's to snuff out a quality Jesus described in this passage as *life abundant*. It's that quality of life that Satan wants to snuff out. We begin to experience the Christian life and all of its fullness; the joy is there, the peace is there, the power is there.

Satan knows how to sneak in, either through gradual presumption or sudden circumstantial diversion, and he tries to snuff out that quality of life and before we know it, we're dead. Not spiritually dead, not eternally dead, but practically dead. We are living corpses; we're going through the motions; we're coming to church; we're teaching bible studies; we're leading Sunday School classes. We are doing all the things we did before, but the power is gone. It's a charade. We are pretending to be alive, but life is gone.

Satan does that. He is a killer. He masquerades as a friend who just wants to calm us down and keep us from going off the deep end. In reality, he is a murderer. And if we let our spirit negotiate with his spirit, we might as well re-label ourselves "The Living Dead." He knows how dumb sheep are. He knows we can't

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remember from one day to the next what the abundant life is all about, so he has designed a platform to snuff it out.

The Original “H-Bomb”

Then there is a third thing according to this passage. The thief comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy. He is a bombardier. He is a destroyer. The word destroy means to *wreck* or to *tear down* or to *ruin*. What does he want to destroy? Your testimony. He is a master at it. And every year, literally thousands upon thousands of people, and in particular, Christian leaders, are put out of the race by some act of destruction at the hand of Satan. He steals into your life, kills your joy and your peace; and once you are on the canvas for the count of nine, he tempts you in some way to dishonor God and destroy your testimony, seemingly for good. He has many ways to do it; his goal is singular. It is to take whatever light you have to shine in this world and steal the light bulb. He will take something ridiculous, that you think you would never fall for, and before long you find out you have been robbed and killed, and you don't have enough strength left to withstand it, and down you go. And your testimony is gone. And in one day, you can lose a reputation it took years to build up. Negotiate with him? Not on your life. Jesus said, “Don't you dare. Two things you do, and neither one of them is to negotiate.”

THE TWO-FOLD NEEDS OF THE SHEEP

He's going to show us that you don't make peace with a thief, a murderer, and a bombardier. You don't sit down at the table and offer concessions. You don't listen to his lies and assume he means what he says. Thieves don't tell you they are going to rob you. Murderers can't be trusted. And people out to destroy you shouldn't be invited in to be your friends. They will lie, hide, cover up, and make promises they can't keep to keep you off guard. Don't listen! Now, what are we supposed to do? Jesus tell us.

Need #1- Unplugged Hearing Aids

The first clue He gives us has to do with hearing aids. Now you may not have known they had hearing aids in the first century, but they did. Every soul has within itself the power to turn down the volume when being spoken to in the spirit realm. You say, “Well, I don't know about that.” Well, you do it when Jesus is speaking, don't you? We all know how to do that. We've mastered that, “Huh, Lord, I didn't quite hear that? Go where? To Africa? Can't

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hear you, Lord. Did you say, ‘after a car?’” You see, we Christians know how to turn down the Holy Spirit’s still, small voice until we can’t hear. There are other voices that whisper to us, other voices that shout to us, until somehow, we think it’s our responsibility to listen. That’s a lie. And what Jesus went on further to say is, “Don’t even listen when the enemy starts talking.” He’ll sound plausible; he’ll make even a lie sound reasonable.

A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for [they will not listen] they know not the voice of strangers.

(John 10:5)

Jesus says there are two kinds of sheep and two kinds of voices. The sheep that belong to the Good Shepherd know His voice, and when He calls, there is no mistaking who it is. When a stranger calls, even sheep flinch. They move away. They flee. They back up. They don’t listen to the voice of a stranger. Why? He is not their shepherd. He is not out to help, he’s out to harm. He has not come to give life, but to steal, to kill, and destroy.

Now, I want to finish this lesson this morning, by dealing with this issue, and I think if you deal with this one issue, it can, at least in part, have an effect on everything you do for the rest of your Christian life. I think one of the greatest problems all of us face as Christians—and if you’ve done any counseling at all, you are well aware—people come to you and say, “Well, I made this choice or I made this decision, but God told me to do it,” or, “I felt led to _____.” And yet, often at the other end, there is grief or confusion, or some form of sin, which leads to despondency and despair and a disillusioned believer who begins to think God led them wrong. My friend, God can’t lead you wrong. God cannot even tempt you to do wrong according to James 1:13.

Jesus said, “*The sheep know not the voice of strangers.*” The voice is not familiar; and as dumb as sheep are, they are supposed to have enough sense to know when it’s the shepherd and when it’s a thief. Now, I’m going to ask you a question, this morning, head on—do you know the difference? Or do you make decisions based on some feeling or some “inner voice” that seems to be telling you what to do, but it’s contrary to the Word of God? Do you have a tape recorder that plays in your head when no one else is listening, which drums into your mind messages of anger or resentment or hurt or discouragement or lust? And do you listen? Do you think you are listening to yourself? That’s what people tell me all the time.

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I can't find that in Scripture, beloved. I don't think we listen to ourselves. I don't think there is any way. I think you hear one of two voices in the spirit realm—the voice of the Holy Spirit, which never, never, never contradicts the Word of God, and every other voice comes from one place—the Stranger, Satan, himself. Have you ever thought how much difference it would have made if Eve had not listened to the voice of the Stranger? She had a clear Word from God. So, do we. God said, “Eve, are you hungry? You can go into Luby's over there and you can have anything you want. Oh, yeah, Eve, there's one thing. Don't touch that.” Clear word, no doubt. You don't have to make any extra decisions at all, just do what you want, *but* not that. Clear word from God. Suddenly, there appeared out of nowhere, a voice, and the voice said, “Did God say that? What's God up to? He doesn't have your best interest at heart.” She had the known Word of God and the Stranger entered her life and she questioned the integrity of God and the absolutes of His Word.

She had two choices: a) she could meditate on what God had said, which was, “Don't eat that,” or b) she could listen to the voice of a stranger. She chose the latter. It was intriguing and challenging, it exercised her mind. She said, “I need to be broad-minded, right?” No. Wrong. You need to be narrow-minded where the Word of God is concerned. What Eve needed was a checklist, I think, of how to listen to voices. When we hear voices in our head we need to determine if it's the voice of the Shepherd or the voice of the Stranger.

I'm going to give you seven questions, this morning, for you to consider every single time you hear a voice, or you have a prompting to help you decide where it came from.

1- Does it contradict, at any point, the known Word of God? (Proverbs 30:5, Matthew 4:4) You see, Eve should have stopped the very minute Satan contradicted the Word of God, that was it; but she didn't. Don't ever let anybody tell you, “But God told me to lie about that.” No, He didn't. God said, “*Thou shalt not lie.*” Don't say, “God told me to take that money.” No, He didn't. You may have heard a voice, but beloved, it was *not* God. He is incapable of telling you anything that violates an absolute from His Word. You are listening to the voice of a stranger. If you do any counseling at all, I think you come very easily to that understanding, particularly when things like unequal yoking are concerned. People come up to you and they'll say, “I just entered into this business deal as a

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partner with an unbeliever,” or “I’m dating this person who’s not a believer” or “I’m marrying this person who’s not a believer.” And you say, “You what?” And they say to you, “But, I’ve prayed about it and God told me to.” But, beloved, you are calling God a liar when you say that God is telling you to do something that in His immutable Word, He has told you not to do.

2- Does that voice malign the nature or character of God in any way? (Exodus 15:11) You see, that should have stopped Eve right there. If you hear a voice that says, “God is unfair,” forget it. If someone whispers to you in your spirit, “God lied,” don’t you listen. If someone says, “But God doesn’t love me,” you’re listening to the voice of a stranger. God doesn’t love you? He died for you! He commanded His love toward you in that while you were yet “stinkers,” it says, Christ died for you (Romans 5:8). Doesn’t love you? Greater love hath no man than this... (John 15:13). Don’t you understand, you are listening to the voice of a stranger. Unplug it, stop it, turn it off!

3- Does that voice bring about confusion or confidence? (I Corinthians 14:3) God is not the author of confusion. He clarifies issues; He doesn’t confuse them. He leads out of the maze, not into it. If the voices you hear bring about confusion, stop listening. You are listening to the voice of a stranger.

4- Does that voice in any way tempt you to sin? (James 1:13) That’s self-explanatory. But, if your being tempted to think thoughts that could lead to adultery, or think thoughts that could lead to stealing, or think thoughts that would lead you into anger, which in essence, is spiritual murder—in any of those cases, you’re not listening to God’s voice. Stop it!

5- Is the voice inconsistent? (Hebrews 13:8) God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He doesn’t change. And if that voice is saying to you, “I know, I read that in the Bible, but times have changed. Let me tell you, beloved, times have changed but people haven’t, and God hasn’t, and His Word hasn’t, and never will.

6- Is one word of those thoughts impure? (Psalms 12:6) God is holy. There is nothing impure in Him. So, any thought that races through your mind that creates a desire to lust or anything that is unholy, did not come from God. Stop it! Call it off! Don’t listen!

7- Does this voice invoke fear? (II Timothy 1:7) God has not given us spirit of fear, but of power, and of love and of a sound mind. So, fear can only come from one place. And if someone

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inside of your head is filling your mind with thoughts of panic and leads you to be distraught, that voice is not of God. Turn it down. Stop it.

So, the first thing sheep need to do is turn their hearing aids down, when it's not the voice of the Shepherd.

Need #2- Put on Spiritual Track Shoes

“A stranger will they not follow, but they will [sit down and talk to him and try to work it out? No. It doesn't say that. It says they will] flee from him. (John 10:5)

In I Corinthians 6:18, you are told to flee fornication. In I Corinthians 10:14, you are told to flee idolatry. In I Timothy 6:11, we're told to flee the things that lead to discontentment. In II Timothy 2:22, we're told to flee youthful lust. What does it mean to flee? It means get on your Honda and hightail it out of town. You look up Honda in your concordance and see if you can't find it. It says the sheep aren't to rub their heads against the thief to see if he really loves them. If it isn't the shepherd's voice, they are to run the other way.

Flee, and how fast you run will reveal how strong you are. You see, fleeing from the thief isn't weakness; it's strength. If you have to stop and listen, and then let the enemy's voice tickle your imagination, you're weak. God says, “Put on your spiritual track shoes and get out of Dodge. Move.” That's what it says. It means the split second you hear that voice whisper in your ear, something that is not of God, you begin meditating immediately on the Word of God. You don't wait a few minutes after the enemy has had time to fill your mind with doubt and your heart with fear. The second you know it's the voice of the Stranger, you run into the arms of God—the second! And that's where we miss it.

God doesn't need you to be a hero. Have you ever thought about that? God doesn't need any heroes. He's the only hero we need. Sheep don't pick up rifles and go after thieves. That's not their thing. Sheep run to the Shepherd. The Shepherd can take care of the thieves; and the Shepherd can take care of the sheep. He gave His life for them. So, the minute we crawl up into Him, we resist the devil, and the thief runs. But, if we entertain him and give him an audience and listen to his arguments, we are writing out our spiritual death warrant.

So, the victory, beloved, is won in the mind. Which voice you

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listen to determines who you will follow. It's that simple. And Jesus took sheep and shepherds and painted a picture on the backdrop of the Word of God so we would never, ever again forget it. Which voice we listen to will make the determination. The thief, on the one hand, has come to steal, to kill, and to destroy. It's that clear. And he will never stop whispering to the sheep. Never! Never negotiate with him. He's a liar. Jesus said he was a liar from the beginning and he's the father of lies (John 8:44). And so much of what we call this "compromised Christianity" in our day, is nothing more than the same old lies painted up with new terminology. It's the same stuff. Either you listen to the voice of God, or you listen to the voice of the Stranger. Make your choice.

Now granted, we're sheep. And sheep are dumb. But God isn't asking us to become geniuses. He knows we're sheep. All He's asking us to do is learn to recognize the Shepherd's voice. When you hear it, follow it. When you hear any other voice, run as fast as you can the other way. If it's not the Shepherd, it's the voice of the Stranger, "and a stranger we must not follow," said Jesus. We must flee from him.

Let the world sign its treaties and spend its time listening to its enemies. That's okay; we can't control the world. But, as of this day, may we, as believers, realize the Stranger is our enemy, and whenever he speaks, we need to turn down our hearing aids, put on our track shoes, and run to the arms of the Shepherd.

Beloved, the Shepherd loves us. The Shepherd loves us so much, He gladly gives His life for the sheep. For Him to love us that much, how could we listen to any other voice?

THE VOICE OF STRANGERS

Oh, the voice of the stranger;
Oh, the lies he tells.
Oh, the questions he will ask;
And, oh, the filth he sells.

He questions the Word of the Shepherd;
He imitates his voice.
He tries to bend God's absolutes,
(As though there were a choice).

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He steals into the sheepfold,
And though he is a thief,
We turn our heads and listen,
And always it brings grief.

Oh, beloved fellow sheep,
We know what's in store.
So why not flee the stranger?
And heed his voice no more!

Let's pray.

Our Father and our God,

Help us to see afresh, this morning, that the enemy is the enemy and he will ever be so. But the Good Shepherd is willing to do the fighting for us. It's not our job as sheep to pick up rifles and go after the enemy. It is our job to keep our eyes on the Shepherd and listen to His voice, and not listen to any voice that contradicts His.

Some of us, Father, have made choices and decisions that have virtually caused us great grief and ruin because as sheep, we listened to the wrong voice. Some of us thought, Father, we were doing things You were telling us to do, when in reality, because what we were being told was contrary to truth, we were accruing to You the voice of the enemy.

Forgive us, Father, for the compromises we tend to make with the enemy. Help us to realize afresh, this morning, Father, that we don't need to do that. We must not. He is the enemy and ever shall be. And the world may compromise, but by Your grace, may we have more and more discernment in the days to come, so that we will not give in to a lie. The thief is coming to steal, to kill and to destroy. Praise God, You have come to give us life and give it more abundantly.

We give our hearts afresh to You, this morning, and ask You for the grace to listen carefully and heed not the voice of strangers.

In Jesus' Name, we ask it.

Amen.

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A Challenge to Further Study

1- We are told that the enemy's goals are to steal, kill, and destroy. Look those words up in a concordance and try to trace the root meanings of each word. Now remember that God's goals are spiritual. Make the spiritual switch. What three things is Satan trying to do to the believer? What tactics does he most often use for each?

2- What two things does Jesus tell us we must do to avoid following the stranger's voice? Translating those two things into the spirit world, what do they tell us?

A Challenge to Further Application

1- The purpose of this study has been to understand how the sheep/shepherd relationship was designed by God to teach us how to handle spiritual warfare. What, if any, lessons have you learned?

2- What kinds of tactics has Satan used consistently in your life to draw your attention away from the Good Shepherd's voice? Can you recognize those tactics in time to resist the devil?

3- Consider the seven tests of the stranger's voice found on pages 12 and 13. Go back to the last time Satan tricked you or led you astray or led you to make a wrong decision. Which of those tests did you fail to heed?

4- Now find verses of Scripture that will help you to not be fooled by the stranger's voice in that way again. Memorize those passages. Ask God to call them to your mind the very moment you hear the stranger's voice again. Meditate on the corresponding truth of God. Ask God to give you increasing victory in the days to come.

A Challenge to Scripture Memory

Memorize John 10:5

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(10.15.20.dvd)