

Pastor Mark Mikels - January 26, 2020

"TWENTY-TWENTY VISION"

- The Spirit of Malicious Accusation -

(Rev. 12:10; Gen. 3:1-6; Job 1:8-11; Lk. 23:2; 2 Cor. 10:10; John 8:10-11; Rom. 14:4; 1 Cor. 4:3,5)

Intro ... Never have we American Christians needed **"20/20 Vision"** more than we do right now ... Never have we American Christians needed to **'Recognize and Test and Confront the Spirit of the Age'** more than we do right now.

There are **'spirits'** of all sorts that would shape our thinking and determine our behaving if we allow them to. Our country has slipped far from the faith and general life principles espoused by the Founding Fathers of this nation.

More than that we have slipped from the faith and general life principles espoused by the Founding Fathers of the Christian Faith - the Apostles themselves.

That **'slippage'** shows itself in every area of our national life - our **homes**, our **schools**, our **government** - even our **churches**.

Our stated task this New Year is to Identify and develop a **'Game Plan'** for dealing with the **'Spirits'** with which each of us needs to deal - the **'Spirits of this Present Age**.

These are the **'spirits'** that impact our lives personally - these are **'spirits of the age'** that would draw us away from the **'Spirit of God'** - Pneuma Himself.

Nothing could be more important!

So far, we have identified **'The Spirit of the Antichrist'** and **'The Spirit of Partisanship.'**

Those messages are available in audio and video and printed form at our Church Website.

Here now is ...

TODAY'S KEY FOCUS ...

"THE SPIRIT OF MALICIOUS ACCUSATION"

Accusation that goes **BEYOND** the **FACTS** ...
Accusation designed to bring **SERIOUS DAMAGE**.

This is the action of one who seeks to seriously damage another ...
It leads to what has been called in this country:
"The politics of personal destruction."

In our country, it's an all too prevalent kind of politics.

And how did we get to such a place?

Allow me to remind you of ...

OUR SERIES KEY SCRIPTURE: 1 John 5:19

"The whole world is under the control of the evil one."

He is behind Today's 'Spirit of the Age' ...
"The Spirit of Malicious Accusation"

He is so identified in the Book of Revelation:

*"The **ACCUSER** ... has been cast down" -
(Revelation 12:10)*

That verse leads us to ...

TODAY'S KEY REALITY ...

SATAN HIMSELF IS THE PRIME ACCUSER IN THE UNIVERSE

Those who get caught up in malicious accusation
are serving His **CAUSE**.

Four Looks at the "**Prime Accuser**" in Action -

1. HE ACCUSES GOD TO MAN - In the Garden of Eden

*'He is withholding the very **BEST** from you -*

*He is not to be **OBEYED**.'*

(Genesis 3:1-6)

This '*accusation*' worked with Eve (and Adam) and has worked innumerable times since. It goes way beyond the facts. It's designed to do serious damage to one's faith. It spawns questions like: "*How could God?*" and "*Why doesn't God?*" It's intended to remove God from His rightful place in our lives.

Accusing the Creator Himself - Accusing the ONE who sent His Own Son to bring forgiveness and new life to man - of being uncaring or neglectful is an incredibly malicious thing to do.

That kind of accusation - this '*Spirit of Malicious Accusation*' - has led many into confusion and disbelief over the years ...

We need to recognize whose hand is upon it.

We need to resolve never to breathe it in.

We need to trust in God's Marvelous Wisdom and Grace!

Here's a second "**Look**" at Satan's methods:

2. HE ACCUSES MAN TO GOD - The Patriarch Job

*'His obedience is **BASED** upon Self-Interest -*

*He is no **BETTER** than any other man.'*

(Job 1:8-11)

That was the basis of Satan's accusation - It was malicious - It sought to discredit Job in God's eyes.

Here's what God had said about Job:

"There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright - a man who fears God and shuns evil."

It's almost like Satan had said:

'Well ... I hate to be the one to break it to you but His obedience is based upon Self-Interest - He is no better than any other man.'

What a smug and malicious thing to say!

Satan was basically saying:

"I know him better than you do."

Satan loves to **accuse** and the best of God's people and maybe the most strategic of God's people are His prime target ... His first attempt is to discredit them in God's eyes.

So, Satan accuses **God to Man** and **Man to God** ...

The next two '**Looks**' at him in action involve him

Accusing '**Men to other Men**' ...

This is really where he can do his greatest damage.

This is where he really has the most to work with.

Check out this **first example**:

3. HE ACCUSED JESUS BEFORE PILATE

"We have found this man subverting our NATION. He opposes payment of TAXES to Caesar and claims to be ... a KING."

(Luke 23:2)

This, of course, was an accusation that not only went '*beyond the facts*' it even distorted the facts.

Jesus, on Palm Sunday, had certainly accepted the plaudits of the people as they hailed him as the Son of David - the rightful King of the Jews.

But he had also said that he came to give his life as a ransom.

He would lay down his life before he would ever sit on the throne.

And when it came to taxes, Jesus had actually taught that men ought to "*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.*"

His accusers lied ... they sought by their '*malicious accusations*' to destroy him.

Here's our **second example** of Satan maliciously accusing Men to other Men ...

4. HE ACCUSED THE APOSTLE PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

"For some say, 'His letters are weighty and forceful but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing'."

(2 Corinthians 10:10)

Here Paul is revealing that he knew that the '***Spirit of Malicious Accusation***' was alive and well in his own day.

He, himself, was the target of it. He was being accused of being a most unimpressive person. His public speaking, they said, was nothing more than meaningless drivel.

He, however, was an anointed Apostle of Jesus Christ.

He had already been used to reach the bulk of the Empire with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He had stories of man's persecution and of God's miraculous provision that would enthrall people for hours.

And yet, there were some right there in the Corinthian Church that maliciously demeaned him and sought to discredit him.

Perhaps they were even trying to '*float the idea*' that someone else had written his letters for him.

If Satan would seek to destroy ***Jesus*** through the use of malicious accusation and demean the ***Apostle Paul*** through the same means, it stands to reason that he places great trust in this method to bring about the destruction of God's Work in the World.

He has single-handedly generated this ***Spirit of the Age*** ... this '***Spirit of Malicious Accusation***.'

So now we come to ...

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...

How can we ***KEEP*** from ***BREATHING*** in this '*Spirit of Malicious Accusation*'?

No way do we want to become those who make '*malicious accusations*' of anyone ...

No way do we want to get '*caught up*' in this '***Spirit***' of personal destruction.

THREE BIBLICALLY SOUND STRATEGIES ...

In every situation where it would seem some '*wrong-doing*' has been discovered - where '*less than the best*' behavior has been exhibited:

*** FOCUS ON RESTORATION RATHER THAN CONDEMNATION**

'Jesus and the Adulterous Woman'

"Neither do I condemn you - Go and sin no more." - John 8:10-11

Those who brought this woman - those who already had stones in their hands - came not just '*legally*,' they came maliciously. Jesus refused to join in with their '**Spirit**' even if his actions would cause them to '*maliciously accuse him*.' He focused on restoration rather than condemnation ... He was successful - He is our example.

*** AVOID INSERTING YOURSELF**

"Who are you to judge someone else's SERVANT?"

To his OWN master he stands or falls." - Romans 14:4

If you are not the master - If you are not the one designated to make the judgment, then avoid doing so ... Don't take up the crusade to bring about fairness/justice if it is not your place to do so.

*** RESIST MAKING ACCUSATIONS PERIOD**

"Judge NOTHING before the appointed time, wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the MOTIVES of men's hearts." - 1 Corinthians 4:5

"I do not even judge MYSELF ..." - 1 Corinthians 4:3

Sometimes the most '*malicious accusations*' are the ones we make about ourselves to ourselves. God is our Judge - Obey and Trust him.

And now allow me to send you home with this ...

Final Thot ...

A '*Spirit of Malicious Accusation*' **PLAYS** right into Satan's Hands ...
It damages both the one being **ACCUSED** and
the one doing the **ACCUSING**.