

Pastor Daryl Diddle

Sermon Series: *Peace, No. 6*

**Satan Crushed**

April 7, 2023 (Good Friday)

**Romans 16:17-20 (NIV)**

*I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. <sup>18</sup> For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. <sup>19</sup> Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. <sup>20</sup> The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*

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Next to Easter Sunday (Resurrection Day itself) this day, Good Friday, presents us with the most profound moment in all of history.

Ever since Eden, our world has known chaos and division. We see it all over the globe today between tribes and peoples and nations.

We see it in our country here, between races and classes and political ideologies.

We see it to one degree or another in all of our families.

We see it in every group to some degree or another, wherever two or more are gathered.

It's a part of us: chaos and division.

People have tried to repair it through all sorts of human effort and agency, yet as good-hearted as those efforts may be, apart from addressing the spiritual reality behind it all, there is no repair possible *in our world*—because the *cause*, the *source* of it, is from *beyond* our world.

Eve and Adam believed the deceiver Satan clear back in the garden. That's what started it all.

It was no accident. Chaos and division are what Satan fully intended to create. He could not stand the fact that God would produce something so pure and true and good, something that would then worship Him for the God that He is.

So, Satan set out to ruin it, and ever since his lies were believed, chaos and division have run rampant through our race and throughout our world.

We see evidence of his success many times every day.

God responded, though—immediately.

In Genesis 3, God promised Satan that because he'd done what he did, he would be destroyed.

But how? How to do it? How to stop the chaos and division that Satan started? How to end it once and for all? How to crush Satan and restore God's creation's goodness?

That immediately became God's chief purpose, and He knew that since the ruin came from beyond our world, redemption would have to as well.

Just as God told Abraham, and just as Abraham then told his son, Isaac, God Himself would provide a sacrifice: one perfect enough to pay the price—to cover the cost—of the world's sin.

He did not do that immediately, however, and we wonder why. And frankly, we're left to wonder, as we frequently are, about God's timing. We're left to assume that the time was simply not right.

But in the meantime, God made a way for us to survive—for humankind to live—and to live with Him.

It was the whole process of tabernacle and temple sacrifice—burnt offerings and the blood of birds and bulls and goats—presented day after day by the priests of Judaism. Boy, what a mess. We don't appreciate their work enough, you know? We don't understand how their dedication and labor, as brutal as it was, kept the world going and God's plans of redemption alive.

But they did, and as the world marched on, the right time finally came.

Oh, I know, those Chief Priests thought it was all their idea. They thought that in crucifying Jesus, they were ridding the world of a heretic, a madman. They thought they were doing God a service—a favor—by keeping themselves in charge.

And the Roman governor, Pilate: he was too political to care about true right and wrong.

The crowds, when given opportunity to show mercy, offered their mercy to Barabbas, since they, nationalists that they were, prized the strength of rebellion over the strength of love.

The soldiers, as soldiers sometimes do, blame orders for the evil they commit, as if they bore no moral responsibility themselves to stand for right.

Those who passed by: at best they watched, as we might watch a movie today, interested in the story, but still ultimately disconnected. Because after the show is over, we just go on with our lives.

And at worst, those who passed by made fun of Him as He hung there—much like our social media allows us to do today. It's tantalizingly tempting, isn't it, to insult people from a distance?

And so, they did.

Even His disciples, even those closest to Him, stood back and observed.

And there Jesus died.

The One who had done miracle upon miracle.

The One who was celebrated as Israel's hope just days before.

The One who was thought to be savior and who'd entered Jerusalem as a king.

He died there in shame on the cross.

And Satan celebrated.

Jesus had said it Himself: "Satan comes only to steal, kill and destroy" (John 10:10).

And Satan surely felt that he'd accomplished that.

But it was just a matter of hours before he would realize how wrong he was.

You see, on this day two thousand years ago, the battle of *good versus evil* was fought, not on a field, but on a cross. And *good won that battle*—though it didn't seem that way at the moment.

On this day two thousand years ago, life and life to the full, precisely what Jesus said He would bring, became a possibility for every single person on earth.

Because on this day two thousand years ago, though Satan didn't even realize it, he had been *crushed* by the God of peace.

The God of peace *did* provide a sacrifice.

The *God* of peace provided His *Son*, the *Prince* of Peace, to die for us while we were yet sinners.

And in doing that, the God of peace brought an end to the division and chaos that Satan began.

The God of peace made unity and peace among us possible.

Now, is it fully operative? Is it complete yet?

No, it isn't. We see it here and there in the Church, in the body of Christ. The world sees it as we act as salt and light to those around us.

But it's not complete yet. That will come when Jesus returns.

Until then, we pray for others, and we need people to pray for us.

That's why we find words like these from Paul to the believers at Rome, words urging Christ's people, His Church, to resist Satan and those he still, for now, sends to bring chaos and lies and division.

But that's also why we find words like Paul's here—reminding us that on the cross, though Jesus died for the moment, Satan died for eternity.

On this Friday centuries ago, God crushed Satan in complete victory.

That's why it's Good. That's why it's Good.

That's the power of the cross. Death is crushed to death, and life is ours to live.