



Who's got INTO your mind?

Exodus 3:1-15 | Psalm 105:1-6,23-26 | Romans 12:9-21 | Matthew 16:21-28

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan!

You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." Matthew 16:23

Slide 1 is Title Slide | *A Sunday school teacher asked her class, "Does anyone know what we mean by sins of omission?" A little girl raised her hand and said, "Aren't those the sins we should have committed, but didn't?"*

In one way or another I feel that many of us have been inadvertently committing such sins – sins of omission in our thought life. Because this type of sin is so easy to commit – so easy, we barely recognise it when it happens.

Slide 2 | *Here is one personal example. In June, as the weather started to get cold, the winds chillier, and the mornings darker – my commitment to my running schedule began to wane. I first noticed a little thought float in, "it's cold and rainy, wouldn't you prefer stay snuggled on the couch." The first few times the thoughts came, I was able to cast them aside, responding "Ah! But remember how you feel when you're out there!". But, the lazy thoughts kept coming. One day, listened to those lazy thoughts and decided not to go for my run. The next day, the lazy thoughts were louder, the next even louder – by day four, I could barely bother to find my running shoes, said to my son, "I don't know why ... I just don't feel like going running"*

But, it's not true that 'I didn't know' why my running mojo had gone missing.

A suggestive thought had flown into my mind ... I allowed that thought to linger, the longer it lingered the louder it became ... then, I decided to act on the thought ... and one action – or rather non-action - led to another, then another, then another. ... and before long it seemed impossible to get back out there and go for a run! That, I'd say, is a blatant sin of omission!

OK, so we could cast my recent exercise omission aside as plain laziness.

But today's argument between Jesus and Peter was no simple sin of omission.

Rather Jesus confronted Peter and told him he had inadvertently become his enemy's new recruit, he was now employed by Devil's Inc.

Even more scary is the thought that we too can be easily pulled into Satan's web. After all, Peter's recruitment occurred just hours after he made his dramatic and revelatory declaration that Jesus was the Messiah.

As soon as Jesus true identity became public, Jesus quickly warned the disciples not to tell anyone.

Why? Because Jesus knew the disciples had no idea about the kind of Messiah God had planned.

Let's pause for a moment, on what the title Messiah meant for the first century Jew.

Slide 3 | The entire nation had been waiting for thousands of years for God's anointed King, 'the Messiah' to come. The prophets had foretold what the Messiah would be like and what the Messiah would do (see Isaiah 42, 49, 52, 66). So, the title 'Messiah' stirred up significant pictures of power, authority and victorious reign. So, it is obvious why Jesus didn't want his disciples tell everyone he was the long-awaited Messiah. The disciples would have, no doubt, gone out to the crowds shouting, "Jesus is our warrior King! He has come at last, to lead us in overthrowing the Romans – grab your weapons, the war is about to begin."

That's why, as soon as Peter revealed to the group Jesus true identity, it was imperative Jesus correct and alter their picture of God's anticipated Messiah. He needed to reveal to them that instead of being a warrior like King David, he was to be a Suffering King.

Slide 4 | That is why he told his disciples plainly "**I must go to Jerusalem ... to suffer terrible things ... to be killed.**" (16:21). And even, though Jesus plainly told them that he would rise again on the third day – the disciples couldn't hear it.

Why? Because before Jesus words could even hit their ears, let alone move to their hearts – Peter yanked Jesus aside.

And proceeded to rebuke the Son of God. Was Peter out of his mind?

What on earth had got into him?

Let's climb into Peter's mind and see if we can discover 'what!' Or should I say 'who' - had got inside Peter's mind?

Just a few hours earlier, Jesus had commissioned Peter, advising him of his important future role in the building of his church. He had told him he held precious keys which would give him authority to permit things on earth and it would be done in heaven.

I'm sure Peter was feeling pretty confident with himself!

I think he was beginning to believe he was going to have a hugely important role in Jesus' earthly reign – there had already been a discussion amongst the disciples on who would sit alongside Jesus and rule on earth! (Mark 10:37) I think, at the very least, Peter believed there would be a throne with his name on it!

So, this talk of defeat, suffering and being killed?

“Heaven Forbid, Lord! This will never happen to you!”

But, Jesus had heard this kind of ‘opting out, easy road’ talk before.

Satan had tempted Jesus before, “If you will kneel before me, I will give you all the kingdoms of the world and their glory” (Matthew 4:8)

A tantalising thought ... glory with no pain, power with no struggle, authority without the shame of the cross.

But, Jesus’ rejected the temptation, **“Get behind me, Satan. You must worship the Lord your God and serve him only.”** (Matthew 4:10)

To serve God meant not allowing anything or anyone to stand in the way God’s plan being fulfilled – and that meant following God’s plan, God’s way.

That’s why, Jesus said **“Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”**

Let’s look closely at Jesus answer, for embedded within his response, is a four-step strategy I believe is imperative for each of us to keep in the forefront of our minds.

Slide 5 | Point 1 | Contrast the lie from the truth: Jesus spoke directly to Satan, identifying the source of his opposition

Jesus identified immediately that Peter was no longer speaking from what had been revealed in his heart. He had reverted to his rationale mindset, a ‘reasoning’ mind which was incapable of understanding the broader plan of God.

But notice how Jesus spoke directly to Satan, and in so doing, identified the source of his opposition.

It was Satan who was opposing God’s plan. It is Satan who is **“blinding the minds of unbelievers”** (see 2 Corinthians 4:4).

The world we live in is **“under the control of the evil one”** (1 John 5:19). The only the language the evil one speaks is lies. Therefore, when a thought or suggestion comes which is contrary to the truth revealed in God’s word, it must originate from the evil one.

Jesus also reveals that Satan’s *modem operandi* is pride and selfishness (see v 24 “you must turn from your selfish ways”). Pride is what led to Lucifer’s fall, and like cancer, this sin of selfishness easily penetrates the human heart.

But, Jesus did not only identify Satan as his opponent, he also contrast Satan’s lie with God’s truth.

Slide 6 | Point 2 | Confront the Liar’s strategy: Jesus refused to allow this stumbling block to stay in his way

Next, Jesus revealed Satan’s strategy: Satan sought to place a stumbling block in front of the Lord.

For Jesus, the dangerous trap was the suggestion it was not necessary to go to the cross, that his reign on earth could be accomplished another way.

Over the centuries of church history, we seem to have lost the horror and shame that crucifixion represented.

The cross was the ultimate instrument of public torture.

Although we wear bright, shiny crosses to remember Jesus' death. No Jew would have understood such a thing. To them the cross meant brutal, public, bloody, painful, agonizing, shameful death. If we want a modern counterpart, we should hang a picture of a gas chamber at Auschwitz in front of our sanctuary. Or put a noose there. The very thought sickens us. But that's what the cross meant for Jesus.

Like Jesus, we too must be prepared to confront Satan's lies, and recognise the stumbling blocks he puts in our way.

The stumbling blocks will always be lies or thoughts which we are tempting to believe, and hard to resist.

For example, constant reminders of our past mistakes, so that we forget that God has already forgiven us.

Or he'll use the media to brainwash us into thinking the way the world thinks, rather than how God thinks.

Or he'll distract us into focussing our attention on temporary things, rather than eternal things.

Yet, by following Jesus example, we refuse to allow the stumbling blocks to stand in our way.

Slide 7 | Point 3 | Commit yourself to the plan of God revealed in God's Word

How? We commit ourselves to God's plan as revealed in His Word.

Paul lays out very practically God's way of living righteously in today's reading.

I could restate the entire passage – but it is living out Jesus command "love one another as I have loved us." (John 13:34)

That will invariably mean we do not act like everyone else in the world. We don't take revenge when someone hurts us, we don't get offended when someone says something we don't like. We don't just give up because of the difficulties life throws at us.

Instead, we choose to walk the road of obedience. The road our Saviour chose to travel.

The way of the cross. Carrying whatever our personal cross may be.

Slide 8 | Application | Confess and Act on the truth

Finally, when thoughts begin to float in, if we identify them as lies, we contrast them with God's truth. Then, we cast them aside knowing they are lies which we should not be entertaining.

Then, we put on the armour that God has given us.

What is the armour God supplies to protect our thought life – the helmet of Salvation and the Belt of Truth! (Ephesians 6:10-18)

And don't forget, we hold the Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God in our hand. That's why Paul wrote,

“Although we are human, we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture those rebellious thoughts and teach them to be obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

Never, underestimate the power of the spoken confession.

When Satan lies to you, don't be afraid to answer, “Get lost, I choose to hold in my mind God's truth, and refuse to allow your stumbling block to trap me.”

*Our Lord and Saviour, today I put on the full armour of God, so that I am ready to take my stand against the devil's schemes. For my struggle is not against human enemies, but against the rulers, authorities, and powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, I put on the full armour of God, so that when the time of evil comes, I may be able to stand my ground, and after I have done everything, I will still be standing. I now stand firm, with the belt of truth buckled around my waist, the breastplate of righteousness in place, and my feet are fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, I take up the shield of faith, with which I can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. I take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. I make a commitment to pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, I hope to be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. **Amen.***

Reflection Questions:

1. Rewrite the four step process for battling stumbling thoughts:

a. CONTRAST: _____

b. CONTRONT: _____

c. COMMIT: _____

d. CONFESS: _____

2. What stumbling thoughts has Satan been placing in your mind?

3. What truth should you contrast with Satan's lie?

4. Rewrite God's truth as a confession:

DAY 6 Integrity!	5th September
<i>I know that the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me. Psalm 16.8</i>	Further study: Psalm 15 and 16
<p>“ <i>You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence.</i> ”</p>	<p>Read Psalm 15 as well. Who gets to draw near to God? Those who speak true words (verse 2), but in love (verse 3) and generosity (verse 5). Those who are transparent, honest, and faithful to their word, not always changing their minds (verses 4 and 5). If we deceive, vilify, and flatter, if we make empty promises and overblown claims, we cannot expect God’s presence in our lives. This standard not only challenges us but also reminds us we can go to God only through his grace. No one but Jesus ever lived with perfect integrity (Hebrews 4:15), but because he is our Saviour, we can go in to God (Hebrews 4:16)</p>
<p>Lord, the sins of my tongue are so many! Forgive me for talking too much (because of pride), for talking too little (because of fear), for not telling the truth (because of pride and fear), for words that are harsh and cutting, for hurting others’ reputations through gossip. Purify my words with your Word. Amen</p>	



Tim Keller’s “The Songs of Jesus”
A Year of Daily Devotionals in the Psalms has been used.

This is a devotional resource created for
Southlakes Anglican Church community.

www.southlakes.org.au



Week 6: I choose to wear the powerful armour of God!

DAY 1	Relocating your enemies	31st August
<i>O God, do not be silent! Do not be deaf. Do not be quiet, O God. Psalm 83.1</i>		Further study: Psalm 83:9-18

“
They will learn that you alone are called the Lord.
”

This is a psalm about enemies. How should we respond to them? The first verses say to God, “See how your enemies growl, how your foes rear their heads” (verse 2.) This perspective is crucial. All sin is fighting God, usurping his authority, taking his place. Even believers must acknowledge that in every wrongdoing they are making themselves God’s enemies. (“Against you, you only, have I sinned,” Psalm 51:4.) So if someone is wronging you, look at them primarily as someone who is at war with God. That will keep you from feeling alone against them. It will also comfort you to know that ultimately it is God’s business to deal with them.

Lord, teach me not to resent those who mistreat me but rather to pity them. They have taken you on, and you are the judge who will not overlook anything. I leave them, and myself, in your hands. **Amen.**

Application: Is there someone that you need to forgive? Ask God to empower you to forgive them.

DAY 2	The Nourishing World	1st September
<i>Oh the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked ... but delight in the law of the Lord. Ps 1.1</i>		Further study: Psalm 1&2
<i>“ For the Lord watches over the path of the godly. They are like trees planted on a riverbed. ”</i>	Psalm 1 is the gateway to the rest of the psalms. The “law” is all Scripture, to “meditate” is to think out its implications for all life, and to “delight” in it means not merely to comply but to love what God commands. Christians have their attitude toward God changed from one of duty to free, loving self-giving because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. So to know how to meditate on and delight in the Bible is the secret to a relationship with God and to life itself. Views contrary to God’s Word are no anchor in time of need. God’s Word gives us the resilience of a tree with a source of living water that will never dry up.	
Lord of the Word, don’t let me be seduced by the world—either naively going with the crowd or becoming a hardened cynic. Help me meditate on your Word to the point of delight. Give me stability and contentment regardless of the circumstances. How I need that! Amen.		

DAY 3	Pouring out our heart	2nd September
<i>O Lord, hear me as a pray; pay attention to my groaning. Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for I pray to you and no one else. Psalm 5.1</i>		Further study: Psalm 5&6
<i>“ Listen to my voice in the morning, Lord. Each morning as I bring my requests to you. ”</i>	Many of the psalms begin with desperate “laments”—cries for help from deep within. This is uncensored prayer, straight from the heart. Even when we have no words to express our anguish, we can lay our requests before God. He expects us to come to him for refuge from our grief, fear, and pain and not to dull those emotions with amusements and distractions that promise, but can never deliver, blessing. We are to have confidence that he is the God who told Moses that he would faithfully commit himself in love to us, in grace, despite our sins and flaws (Exodus 6:7).	
All-knowing Lord, you see what is in my heart. All-powerful Lord, I don’t have the power to accomplish what needs to be done, so I spread out my requests before you. All-wise Lord, I know you hear and will act—but I know also I must wait on your wise timing, and so I will. Amen.		

DAY 4	Give thanks	3rd September
<i>I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your marvellous things you have done. Psalm 9.1</i>		Further study: Psalm 9:11-12
<i>“ I will be filled with joy because of you. I will sing praises to your name. ”</i>	This psalm helps us toward the spiritual health of a thankful heart. We must discern God’s “wonderful deeds” in our lives, a phrase that can refer to dramatic miracles like the parting of the Red Sea. However, we must also learn to see the more subtle ways God comforts us just when we were ready to give up, or brings the right friend or book or line of thinking into our lives just when we needed it. Recognize and tell of God’s daily, wonderful deeds, and you will have a note of grateful joy as the background music to your life.	
O Lord, you never forsake the troubled and the afflicted. When I think of your innumerable mercies to me, small and large, I can only cry. . . . What thanks I owe you, and what love! Help me to see the ways you support and guide me every day, so that I will always find new reasons to thank you. Amen.		

DAY 5	Don’t despair	4th September
<i>I trust in the Lord for protection. Psalm 11.1</i>		Further study: Psalm 146
<i>“ Let me hear of your unfailing love each morning, for I am trusting in you! ”</i> Psalm 143:8	When life crumbles, the desire to run away and hide in despair is strong. David counters this impulse with three insights: theological—God is still on his throne and will execute justice in his wise time (verse 4); practical—crises are really tests, opportunities to evaluate what is true and solid and what is flimsy and should be discarded (verses 4–5); and spiritual—what we really need is the knowledge of God’s presence and face (verse 7). Only love makes you interested in gazing on someone’s face. Pray until God and his love become more real to you. Then you won’t run scared.	
Lord my mighty protector, people are saying, “It’s over; just give up.” But I won’t panic— or should I say, “Lord, help me to not panic”? I know you are on your throne— but my heart doesn’t feel that—so speak to my heart. Let me love you enough not to be scared. Amen.		



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