



## Sermon Discussion Questions

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Series: Fake News

Week 6: Lies Have a Name?

1. ICE BREAKER: This week, we are talking about the enemy. Hollywood and popular culture sometimes has interesting ways of portraying satan, the devil, or demonic forces. As a group, share different movies, books, or other places that you have seen satan portrayed and how that was done. Silly? Scary? Ridiculous?
2. Read our Scripture for this week, John 8:42-47:

*<sup>42</sup>Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. <sup>43</sup>Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. <sup>44</sup>You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup>Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! <sup>46</sup>Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? <sup>47</sup>Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."*

Discuss this passage of Scripture. Remember, Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees here. What questions do you have about what Jesus is saying? Why do you think He is using such strong language?

3. Pastor Dale used the metaphor of germ theory, and of Louis Pasteur's discovery of how disease spreads, to remind us that there is an "invisible world that impacts the visible world." This is true of science and also of our faith.

Discuss whether you find the idea of a spiritual reality to be hard or easy to believe, and why. What have you been taught about the spiritual world, including the enemy and his interactions in our lives? What is the risk of either being too interested, or not interested enough in this?

4. Most people are familiar with Satan making his entry in the Garden of Eden, in Genesis 3, tempting Adam and Eve to commit the first sin. Many theologians consider this to be the tipping point, when the earth fully fell under the enemy's dominion. (See John 16:11 - the enemy referred to as the 'prince of this world'!)

Read Genesis 3:1-7. Describe the enemy's actions here. What was the lie he told about God? What lie did Adam and Eve believe? What was lost in this moment?

5. In this message, we learned that, "For Jesus, the devil is real." It's important to understand what Scripture teaches about the enemy, who is also referred to as Satan, the evil one, the tempter, the destroyer, the deceiver, and the thief.
  - The enemy was created by God, which is important because it's wrong to suggest the enemy is God's equal and opposite.
  - He is a created being with a beginning and an end.
  - The book of Job teaches us that, originally, he sat on God's divine council – which seems to have been this group of selected spiritual beings whose job was to collaborate with God's rule over the world. But he chose to rebel against this, and seize God's rule and the world's throne for himself.
  - He is the animating force behind all the world's atrocities, and Jesus has come to institute a takeover (a take-back-over) of the devil's work and set humanity free.

Are any of these concepts about our spiritual enemy new to you? If so, which ones? How do these facts inform your understanding of our spiritual enemy? What questions do you have?

6. The devil's end-goal is to bring death and destruction. Read John 8:44b, "He was a murderer from the beginning," and John 10:10a, "The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy."

We are often shocked by the death and destruction that occurs in our own lives, and many people blame God for it. However, Dallas Willard wrote, "Death was never a part of God's original plan. It wasn't his idea, and so he cannot rightfully be blamed for it."

React to the idea that God cannot be blamed for death. How does this make you feel? Why do people blame God for bad things that happen? Why do you think the devil is so set on bringing death and destruction?

7. The primary way the devil gets his work done is through lies. Read John 8:44c, "*When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*"

Think about the 'fake news' that we have been discussing throughout this series. Why do you think the devil chooses lying as one of the main ways to accomplish his work? What are the implications that you see in our world?

8. Pastor Dale said that the lies we believe are much more dangerous than the lies we tell. He quoted Dallas Willard who wrote, "Malformed ideas are a primary stronghold of evil in the human self and in society."

How are our ideas the primary stronghold of even ourselves? In our society? Share a time in your life, as long as you are comfortable, with a time that you believed a lie. What effect did that have on your life? On your relationship with God? With others? How did you break free of that lie?

9. PRACTICE: Take time as a group to journal and pray. Ask God, "What lies am I currently believing in my life?"

Share one of these lies with your group, and ask them to pray for the truth to be revealed to you by the Holy Spirit.