

Sermon to the Saints of God which are at Topeka – Sunday, April 12, 2015

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. – 2Cor. 2:11

Ignorance is a particularly dangerous thing in the moral and eternal realm. It's never a good thing, but is particularly bad in the realm of warfare that we are engaged in. Brother Charles preached a wonderful sermon on the armor of God and the putting on thereof. I think the timing is good, therefore, and so what I would like to talk about some today is the nature and attributes of Satan, and some practical remedies that are available to us and that we are obliged to in dealing with Satan's plenteous tactics, strategies, snares and devices. I hope that there is something of edification and useful application for the hearer.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. – Eph. 6:12

Satan's devices are many – his subtlety is unmatched by any created thing, he never rests, he is always on the lookout for some poor soul to devour, he is our enemy, our great adversary, he is utterly wicked without relenting: he tempts us, he constantly accuses us, before God, to our brothers and sisters and to ourselves. He is so much more intelligent, strong, cunning and able than we are. But we must resist, we must wrestle, therefore we must not be ignorant of his attributes and devices. His many names suggest his character and therefore how sober and vigilant we should be – that we be not ignorant of his devices.

Satan - Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. – Job. 1:6-7 (He is cunning and artful – way more intelligent than you are and he knows the scripture like the back of his hand)

The enemy – The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. - Matt. 13:39 (there is no reforming the devil – flee from him)

Adversary – Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 1Pet. 5:8 (this is a great adversary, not like some nerdy opponent in a chess match – what would you do if you opened the door to go outside and you ran smack into a roaring lion? What if that lion were in your living room? He often is)

The great dragon – ***And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. - Rev. 12:9*** (from the Greek *drakon* – serpent of huge size)

The serpent – ***Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. - Gen. 3:1*** (serpents are subtle and dangerous)

Beelzebub – ***But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. - Matt. 12:24*** (Philistine God, The Lord of the flies)

The prince of the devils – ***But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. - Matt. 12:24*** (leader or ruler over all evil forces)

Belial – ***And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? - 2Cor 6:15*** (something utterly worthless or wicked)

The father of lies – ***Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. - Jn. 8:44*** (think Cain & Abel, Eve in the garden)

The prince of this world – ***Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. - Jn. 14:30*** (again, great power)

The prince of the power of the air (the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience) – ***Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: - Eph. 2:2***

The tempter – ***And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. - Matt. 4:3*** (you don't tempt someone to do right – or something that is good for you – or something that, on the face of it, isn't desirable)

The god of this world – ***In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. - 2Cor. 4:4***

The Wicked one ('one' is interpolated) – ***When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.. - Matt. 13:19***

Accuser of our brethren - ***And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. - Rev. 12:10***
(accusing us before God, to each other and to ourselves)

What follows is drawn largely from one section of Thomas Brooks' work, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices* – I emailed everyone a link to the online PDF of the whole work that is readily available – you can even just read it on your phone. I highly recommend reading it soon, if you have not read it, either at all or in a while. It's good stuff, and a very focused and carefully outlined study. But rather than focusing for the present on the many individual devices that Satan uses to draw a man to sin, I would like to focus on some of the overarching propositions and practical helps that Brooks puts forth. I think you will be very interested in seeing and knowing the particular strategies that Satan uses, that we be not ignorant of them, and you can go through that, point by point, in the text of his writing. For now, though, I should like to, after having brought to mind some of Satan's attributes suggested by his names, bring forth some general principles and helps that can be practically engaged and employed daily.

Propositions:

I. Although Satan has his devices to draw souls to sin, yet we must be careful that we do not lay all our temptations upon Satan, that we do not wrong the devil, and father that upon him that is to be fathered upon our own base hearts. I think that oftentimes men charge that upon the devil that which is to be charged upon their own hearts. *'And the Lord said unto the woman, What is this that you have done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat'* (Gen. 3:13). Sin and shifting of sin, came into the world together. This is no small baseness of our hearts, that they will blame that naughtiness upon Satan. Man has an evil root within him; that were there no devil to tempt him, nor no wicked men in the world to entice him, yet that root of bitterness, that cursed sinful nature which is in him, would draw him to sin, though he knows beforehand that:

the wages of sin is (eternal) death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. - Rom. 6:23.

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. - Matt. 15:19.

The whole frame of man is out of frame. The understanding is dark, the will cross, the memory slippery, the affections crooked, the conscience corrupted, the tongue poisoned, and the heart

wholly evil, only evil, and continually evil. Should God chain up Satan, and give him no liberty to tempt or entice people to vanity or folly, yet they could not but sin against him, by reason of that cursed nature that is in them, that will still be provoking them to those sins that will provoke and stir up the anger of God against them (Jude 15, 16). Satan has only a persuading sleight, not an enforcing might. He may tempt us—but without ourselves he cannot conquer us; he may entice us—but without ourselves he cannot hurt us. Our hearts carry the greatest guilt in every sin. Satan can never undo a man without himself; but a man may easily undo himself without Satan. Satan can only present the golden cup—but he has no power to force us to drink the poison that is in the cup; he can only present to us the glory of the world, he cannot force us to fall down and worship him, to enjoy the world; he can only spread his snares, he has no power to force us to walk in the midst of his snares. Therefore do the devil so much right, as not to excuse yourselves, by your accusing him, and laying the load upon him, that you should lay upon your own hearts.

II. Satan has a great hand and stroke in most sins. It was Satan who tempted our first parents to rebellion. It was Satan who provoked David to number the people. It was Satan who put Peter upon rebuking Christ; therefore says Christ, 'Get behind me, Satan'. It was Satan who put Cain upon murdering of righteous Abel, therefore it is that he is called 'a murderer from the beginning'. It was Satan who put treason into the heart of Judas against Christ, 'And supper being ended, the devil having put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him'. It was Satan who put Ananias upon lying; Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?'

III. Satan must have a double permission before he can do anything against us. He must have permission from God, and permission from ourselves, before he can do anything against our happiness. He must have his permission from God, as you may see in the example of Job. Though the devil had malice enough to destroy him, yet he had not so much as power to touch him, until God gave him permission. They could not so much as enter into the swine without permission from Christ (Luke 8:32). Satan would gladly have combated with Peter—but this he could not do without leave:

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. - Luke 22:31

What a comfort should this be to the saints—that their greatest, subtlest, and most vigilant enemy cannot hurt nor harm them, without permission from him who is their sweetest Savior, their dearest husband, and their choicest friend. And as Satan must have permission from God, so he must have permission from us. When he tempts, we must assent; when he makes offers, we must hearken; when he commands, we must obey, or else all his labor and temptations will be frustrated, and the evil that he tempts us to shall be put down only to his account. That is a remarkable passage in Acts 5:3, 'Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?' He does not talk through the matter with Satan; he does not say, Satan, 'Why

have you filled Ananias's heart to make him lie to the Holy Spirit?' but he talks through the case with Ananias; Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?' Why have you given him an advantage to fill your heart with infidelity, hypocrisy, and obstinate audacity, to lie to the Holy Spirit? As if he had said, Satan could never have done this in you, which will now forever undo you, unless you had given him permission. If, when a temptation comes, a man cries out, and says, "Ah, Lord! here is a temptation that would force me, that would deflower my soul, and I have no strength to withstand it! Oh! help! help! for your honor's sake, for your Son's sake, for your promise's sake!" - it is a sign that Satan has not gained your consent—but committed a rape upon your souls, which he shall dearly pay for.

IV. No weapons but spiritual weapons will be useful and serviceable to the soul in fighting and combating with the devil. This the apostle shows: 'Therefore take unto you,' says he, 'the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand' (Eph. 6:13). So the same apostle tells you, '*That the weapons of your warfare are not carnal—but mighty through God, to the casting down of strongholds*' (2 Cor. 10:4). You have not to do with a weak—but with a mighty enemy, and therefore you had need to look to it, that your weapons are mighty—which they cannot be, unless they are spiritual. Carnal weapons have no power in them towards the making of a conquest upon Satan. It was not David's sling nor stone that gave him the honor and advantage of setting his feet upon Goliath—but his faith in the name of the Lord Almighty:

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. - 1 Sam. 17:45

He who fights against Satan, in the strength of his own resolutions, constitution or education, will certainly fly and fall before him. Satan will be too hard for such a soul, and lead him captive at his pleasure. The only way to stand, conquer, and triumph, is still to plead, '*It is written,*' as Christ did (Matt. 4:1-11). There is no sword but the two edged sword of the Spirit, that will be found to be metal of proof when a soul comes to engage against Satan; therefore, when you are tempted to impurity, plead, '*It is written, be holy, as I am holy*' (1 Peter 1:16). If Satan tempts you to think that because your sun for the present is set in a cloud, that therefore it will rise no more, and that the face of God will shine upon you no more; that your best days are now at an end, and that you must spend all your time in sorrow and sighing; plead, It is written:

'He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, and cast all our sins into the depth of the sea' - Micah 7:19

V. We may read much of Satan's nature and disposition by the diverse names and epithets that are given him in the Scripture: They are tempters, for their suggestion; lions, for their devouring; dragons, for their cruelty; and serpents, for their subtlety. As his names are, so is

he; as face answers to face, so do Satan's names answer to his nature. He has the worst names and the worst nature of all created creatures.

VI. God will shortly tread down Satan under the saints' feet. Christ, our champion, has already won the field, and will shortly set our feet upon the necks of our spiritual enemies. Satan is a foiled adversary. Christ has led him captive, and triumphed over him upon the cross. Christ has already overcome him, and put weapons into your hands, that you may overcome him also, and set your feet upon his neck. Though Satan be a roaring lion, yet Christ, who is the lion of the tribe of Judah, will make Satan fly and fall before you. Let Satan do his worst, yet you shall have the honor and the happiness to triumph over him. Cheer up, you precious sons of Zion, for the certainty and sweetness of victory will abundantly recompense you for all the pains you have taken in making resistance against Satan's temptations. The broken horns of Satan shall be trumpets of our triumph and the coronets of our joy:

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. - Romans 16:20.

The Greek word signifies to break or crash a thing to pieces. Being applied to the feet—it means that crushing which is by stamping upon a thing.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. – Eph. 6:11-13

If Satan has such a world of devices and stratagems to ensnare and undo the souls of men; then, instead of wondering that so few are saved, Brooks suggests that we sit down and wonder that any are saved, that any escape the snares of this cunning fowler, who spreads his nets and snares and casts forth his baits in all places, in all cases and companies. He is called the prince of this world – his time is short, he never rests, and his devices are plenteous and nearly invisible. Here are 10 special helps against Satan's devices found in Brooks writing:

1) Walk by rule of the Word of God - He who walks by rule, walks most safely; he who walks by rule, walks most honorably; he who walks by rule, walks most sweetly. When men throw off the Word, then God throws them off, and then Satan takes them by the hand, and leads them into snares at his pleasure. Christ gives us the perfect example here:

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning

thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. – Matt. 4:1-11

2) Take heed of vexing and grieving of the Holy Spirit of God. The Divine Spirit is very tender; if you grieve him, he will certainly grieve and vex your precious souls. It is the Spirit who is best able to discover Satan's snares against us; it is only he who can point out all his plots, and discover all his methods, and enable men to escape those pits that Satan has dug for their precious souls. But if we set that sweet and blessed Spirit mourning or grieving, who alone can secure you from Satan's depths—now what help will we have? Man is a weak creature, and no way able to discover Satan's snares, nor to avoid them—unless the Spirit of the Lord gives skill and power. Therefore, whoever is grieved, be sure the Spirit is not grieved by your enormities, nor by your refusing the cordials and comforts that he sets before you, nor by slighting and despising his gracious words and actions in others, nor by calling sincerity hypocrisy, and faith fancy, nor by fathering those things upon the Spirit, that are the offspring and fruits of your own hearts. The Spirit of the Lord is your counselor, your comforter, your upholder, your strengthener. It is the Spirit alone, who makes a man too great for Satan to conquer:

***'Greater is he who is in you, than he who is in the world.'* – 1Jn. 4:4**

3) Labor for more heavenly wisdom. Brooks reminds us to remind ourselves that we are much in the dark, you have but a little wisdom compared to what others have, and compared to that you might have had (and therefore are in vital need of more wisdom). There are many educated souls—but there are but a few wise souls. There is oftentimes a great deal of knowledge, without much wisdom to improve that knowledge. It is not the most knowing Christian—but the most wise Christian, who sees, avoids, and escapes Satan's snares:

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath. - Prov. 15:24

We are in need of a great deal of heavenly wisdom, to see where and how Satan lays his baits and snares; and wisdom to find out proper remedies against his devices, and wisdom to apply those remedies seasonably, inwardly, and effectually in our own hearts, that in doing so we may avoid the snares which that evil one has laid for your precious souls.

4) Make immediate resistance against Satan's first motions. It is safe to resist, it is dangerous to dispute. Eve disputes, and falls in paradise (Gen. 3); Job resists, and conquers upon the ash-heap. If you play with Satan's bait, you will quickly be taken with Satan's hook! The promise of conquest is given to resisting, not to disputing: *'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you'* (James 4:7). If you are better at resisting than at disputing, your temptations would be fewer, and your strength to stand would be greater than it now is. What does it mean to resist? If the

sin were a deep pit, how close should you stand to it, that you might peer down into it, without actually falling? Or might it not be more prudent to recognize the pit, and get yourself, your children, and all others around you away from that pit, warning of it to all who pass that way?

5) Labor to be filled with the Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord is a Spirit of light and power; and what can a soul do without light and power against spiritual wickedness in high places? It is not enough that you have the Spirit—but you must be filled with the Spirit, or else Satan, that evil spirit, will be too hard for you, and his plots will prosper against you. The Holy Spirit, through Paul, says: '*Be filled with the Spirit*' - Eph. 5:18; that is, labor for abundance of the Spirit. He who thinks he has enough of the Holy Spirit, will quickly find himself vanquished by the evil spirit. Satan has his snares to take us in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness, in strength and weakness, when you are alone and when you are in company, when you come on to spiritual duties and when you come off from spiritual duties, and if you are not filled with the Spirit, Satan will be too hard and too crafty for you, and will easily and frequently take you in his snares, and make a prey of you in spite of your souls. Therefore labor more to have our hearts filled with the Spirit than to have our heads filled with great notions, our homes with great chattel, or our wallets with great gain. So shall you escape the snares of this fowler, and triumph over all his plots.

Martin Luther: A holy gluttony is to lay on, to feed hard, and to fetch hearty draughts, until they be even drunk with the abundance of the Spirit. Oh that there were more such holy gluttony in the world!

6) Keep humble. A humble heart would rather lie in the dust than rise by wickedness, and rather part with all than the peace of a good conscience. Humility keeps the soul free from many darts of Satan's casting, and snares of his spreading; as the low shrubs are free from many violent gusts and blasts of wind, which shake and rend the taller trees. The devil has least power to fasten a temptation on him who is most humble. He who has a gracious measure of humility, is neither affected with Satan's offers nor terrified with his threatenings. God has said, that 'he will teach the humble,' and that 'he will dwell with the humble,' and that 'he will fill and satisfy the humble'. If the teachings of God, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, the pouring in of God to the heart of the humble, will not keep the soul from falling into Satan's snares, there is nothing that will. And therefore as you would be happy in resisting Satan, and blessed in triumphing over Satan and all his snares—keep humble! Again, keep humble. And don't forget, the proud man will call himself humble in his pride and will deny his pride in his pride.

7) Keep a strong, close, and constant watch:

Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. – 1Thes. 5:6

A sleepy soul is already an ensnared soul. That soul that will not watch against temptations, will certainly fall before the power of temptations. Satan works most strongly on the

imagination, when the soul is drowsy. The soul's slothfulness is Satan's opportunity to fall upon the soul and to destroy the soul. The best way to be safe and secure from all Satan's assaults is to watch and pray, and pray and watch. Remember how Christ chastened his sluggish disciples.

And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. – Matt. 26:40-41

Satan always keeps a crafty and malicious watch, 'seeking whom he may devour.' 1 Peter 5:8. So watch what's going on around you. Watch what's going on with your children. Be careful not to project some sense of how you hope things are going with them over what is really going on with them, and thereby become lulled to sleep by the veneer we see because we desire to see it. How cruel that would be to keep proper, constant words and deeds from them because of our lofty vanities. Satan is very envious of our condition, that we should enjoy that paradise out of which he is cast, and out of which he shall be forever kept! We must effectually mind these following scriptures, wherein this duty of watchfulness is forcefully put forth.

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. – Mk. 13:33-37

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. - 1 Cor. 16:13

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. - Col. 4:2

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. - 1 Peter 4:7

If Satan keeps a crafty, skilled watch, should we not keep a vigilant, sober spiritual watch? Our whole life is beset with temptations. Satan watches all opportunities to break our peace, to wound our consciences, to lessen our comforts, to impair our graces, to slur our evidences, and to dampen our assurances. We therefore have a great need to be always upon our watchtower, lest we be surprised by this subtle serpent: seeing the enemy before he is right upon us. Watchfulness includes a waking, a rousing up of the soul. It is a continual, careful observing of our hearts and ways, in all the turnings of our lives—that we still keep close to God and his Word. Satan never rests, whether or not his conquering meets with success. Watchfulness is nothing else but the soul running up and down, to and fro, busy everywhere. Watchfulness is the heart busied and employed with diligent observation of what comes from within us, and of what comes from without us and into us. Great subtlety requires great watching, and while we keep a strict watch, we are safe. A watchful soul is a soul upon the wing, a soul out of range of

gun-shot, a soul upon a rock, a soul in a castle, a soul above the clouds, a soul held fast in God's everlasting arms! Be careful of blind spots. Our enemies are so subtle, that they will bite us, and strike us where they may most mischief us, and therefore it does very much concern us, to stand always upon our guard.

8) Keep up your communion with God. Your strength to stand and withstand Satan's fiery darts is from your communion with God. A soul high in communion with God may be tempted—but will not easily be conquered. Such a soul will fight it out to the death. Communion with God furnishes the soul with the greatest and the choicest internal arguments to withstand Satan's temptations - think Matthew 4:1-11. Communion with Christ is very inflaming, elevating and strengthening. While Samson kept up his communion with God, no enemy could stand before him—he goes on conquering and to conquer. But when he was fallen in his communion with God, he quickly falls before the plots of his enemies. Job keeps up his communion with God, and conquers Satan upon the ash-heap; Adam loses his communion with God, and is conquered by Satan in paradise. Communion with God is a shield upon land, as well as an anchor at sea; it is a sword to defend you, as well as a staff to support you; therefore keep up your communion.

9) Do not engage Satan in your own strength—but be every day drawing new virtue and strength from the Lord Jesus. A soul that engages against any old or new temptation without new strength, new influences from on high—will fall before the power of the temptation. You may see this in Peter; he rested upon some old received strength: *'Though all men should deny you, yet I will not!'* - Matt. 26:35 —and therefore he falls sadly before a new temptation. He curses and swears, and denies him thrice. When the snare is spread, look up to Jesus Christ and say: 'Dear Lord! here is a new snare laid to catch my soul, and grace formerly received, without fresh supplies from your blessed bosom, will not deliver me from this snare. Give me new strength, new power, new influences, new measures of grace, that so I may escape the snares!' Remember this, that your strength to stand and overcome must not be expected from graces received in the past—but from the fresh and renewed influences of heaven. You must lean more upon Christ than upon your duties; you must lean more upon Christ than upon your spiritual tastes and discoveries: you must lean more upon Christ than upon your graces, or else Satan will lead you into captivity. Without Christ, we can do nothing – so we must call out unto him and lean not to our own understanding, strength or experience, but ask for new virtue and strength.

10) Be much in prayer. Prayer is a shelter to the soul, a sacrifice to God and a scourge to the devil. There is nothing that renders Satan's plots fruitless like prayer; therefore says Christ: *'Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation'* - Matt. 26:41. You must watch and pray, and pray and watch, if you would not enter into temptation. David had many snares laid for him, and this puts him upon prayer.

But mine eyes are unto thee, O GOD the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute. Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape. - Psalm 141:8-10

Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings. The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah. I said unto the LORD, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD. - Psalm 140:4-6

Saul and many others had laid snares for David, and this puts him upon prayer, and so the snares are broken and he is delivered. Take words to yourselves, and tell God that Satan has spread his snares in all places and in all companies! Tell God that he digs deep, and that he has plot upon plot, and device upon device—and all to undo you! Tell God that you have neither skill nor power to escape his snares! Tell God that it is a work too high and too hard for any created creature to work your deliverance, unless he puts you under his own everlasting arms! Tell God how his honor is engaged to stand by you, and to bring you off a victor, that you be not ruined by Satan's plots! Tell God how the wicked would triumph, if you should fall into Satan's snares! Tell God of the love of Christ, of the blood of Christ, and of the intercession of Christ for you, that a way may be found for your escape! Tell God that if he will make it his honor to save you from falling into Satan's snares, you will make it your glory to speak of his goodness and to live out his kindness. Without sincere prayer, what way is there to escape Satan's snares? And sincere prayer unto God is the most direct communication of our absolute reliance upon God – it glorifies his name that his saints call out unto him, and his deliverances will be great and will also glorify his name:

Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. – Jer. 33:3

I love you. Amen.