

## Get Lost Satan! Based on Mark 8:31-38 (The Message Bible)

I had Ken read “The Message” translation of the bible by Eugene Petterson this morning, primarily because of his interpretation of Satan in the dialogue between Jesus and Peter. In the version of the bible, we read most often, (The NSRV), Jesus says, **“Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”** In The Message interpretation we hear, **“Peter, get out of my way! Satan, get lost! You have no idea how God works.”**

I (and I expect all of us) can relate to “get lost.” Just go away, you are not welcomed here. You’re a bad apple, so scram. It is language we relate to. Sometimes alternate biblical interpretations can be helpful.

Just a short while ago Jesus had been in the desert, tempted by Satan. We remember that Jesus was offered the entire kingdom as far as he could see from the highest mountain, but Jesus denied him.

**Matthew 4:8 <sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, <sup>9</sup> and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’ ”**

When Jesus says, “Get behind me, Satan!” or in today’s reading, **“Satan get lost!”** as Ken read, Mark is referencing Jesus’ encounter with temptation. Satan offers the easy path to fame and glory through manipulation, coercion, corruption and dishonestly. Satan is the ego which pushes us toward self-gratification. It is representative of status and power. Jesus was offered all this if he would only bow down to Satan, but Jesus of course denied him.

In our gospel for today, Jesus sees Satan tempting Peter. As Jesus began to explain his ministry, he revealed what would be his betrayal and suffering. He revealed his ultimate death and resurrection. And this is a huge shock to Peter who, we can imagine, takes Jesus’ arm and says, “No, no, no, no way! You are the messiah. You will be glorified and made King of the Jews. This is the way it is supposed to work.”

Poor Peter. He, and the rest of the disciples did not understand how God works. There was a little Satan in Peter’s thinking. God is not about prestige and power. God would not raise Jesus above; God would show how servanthood was the way to the new prophesized kingdom.

“The Way” is about following a humble path of justice seeking. It is about sacrificing self for others. It is about self-denial for community good. In Jesus’ ministry it meant going all the way to the cross, defending the poor and oppressed, and opposing Rome and Tiberius. It was not about self-importance, fame, or in any way satisfying his ego.

We are all justice seekers, and we all try our best to be “like” Jesus. We believe in a ministry of service to others, and we all practice it. Our pastoral actions here and outside this COF keep us aligned with our vision and mission.

Our outreach ministry defines discipleship. We are not looking to be in the limelight. We park our ego to serve humbly. We believe in self-sacrifice – you all do that when you place someone’s needs before your own. We hold on to and hold up those who are suffering as best we can.

**“Follow me and I’ll show you how,”** says Mark’s Jesus. I believe we are following, and we are doing the work we have been called to do.

And when we do that, we are saying to Satan, **“get out, go away, you are not wanted here.”**

When PUC donated \$1264.85 from Food Bank Fridays to the local Food Bank, you all said, “**get lost Satan,**” We are going to support the hungry in our community. It doesn’t matter how they got here or what their status is. Jesus’ voice is here, and it says we look after our neighbours as we would hope they would look after us.

When the Bake Sale occurs next month, your board made a unanimous decision that all the proceeds would go to purchase a computer for the local elementary school. PUC wants to be a part of the mayor’s program to fund computers for kids. We want to see them educated not left behind. **Satan, go away, we don’t need you here.** You have no influence. Jesus has taught us about justice, and it is him that we follow. It is his ministry that we advocate in this place.

Some of us come to worship each Sabbath full of spirit and enthusiasm. Some come inquiring. Some come looking for answers. Some come doubting and some come grieving. Others are hoping to see a friend or find peace in a prayer. Some love to sing. Some like a hug. Everyone brings the gift of their presence. The offering plate is full of generosity, and it overflows with love. **Satan is nowhere to be found.**

Satan would have preferred that Okanagan Lake floated this building away in 2017, aptly known as the year of the flood. But that didn’t happen. And the Bargain Bin survived and now thrives. I think I am correct in saying that the Bin sees more visitors now than they ever has. The volunteers are a happy bunch and enjoy their time together. Folks get great deals on slightly used items and by the way Satan, the needy get what they want, gratis. **So get lost, we don’t need you here.**

Satan would love it if we had to close our church doors. But we **beat Satan again and said get lost, our doors are staying open.** We welcome everyone. We hope to befriend anyone who comes through our doors. The rich, the poor, the young the old, the healthy or lame, the questioning, those that celebrate and those that grieve, all are welcome. “As Bob would say, Welcome to PUC, we have a pew for you.” **Sorry again Satan, there is no room for you here, take a hike.**

I have to admit, like Esther, I was getting a little frustrated with our Audio-Visual equipment. Despite our best intentions we were going nowhere. I think Esther was tempted to give up. I know I was tempted to share a few expletives. I look back on that now and conclude that Satan was winning for a short while. We were dejected and upset. There was a gray cloud at the back corner of the sanctuary. But we have pushed back after deploying a good deal of patience and of course some faith that we would succeed. And we have, **good by Satan!**

It is so good to be here, to be a part of this COF. In this place exists a cohort of gifted disciples that want to do the best they can. We deploy faith in Jesus and the wisdom of a God of Holy Love to keep the Satans of the world at bay. And we are doing well. We pray that it will remain so.

Amen and thanks for listening this morning.