In the past 5 weeks we have been reminded that our journey, as a Christian, does not begin and end at the cross but begins and continues at the cross. This journey is required for each of us, while in this body of flesh. It is the same as it was for Adam once they were put out of the garden after the animal was slain and clothes made to cover them – he had to work the very ground from which he had been taken (a picture of the work we have to do in bringing out flesh under submission to the Spirit). This journey is a requirement in order to be found worthy at the JSC. It is the journey of the Salvation of our Soul. Our focus needs to be on point with that of our Savior. This is a war against

- the devil,
- world and
- our old sin nature.

We can easily be deceived along the way as Eve was in the garden. *Genesis 3:6* So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

Due to Adam’s sin, we were all born in the image of Adam, a fallen creation, with a fallen spirit, soul and body. But just as Adam and Eve were redeemed through a Divine Act, so have we each been redeemed through a Divine Act. And once our spirit is redeemed – just as Adam was to work the very ground from which he was taken, so are we to work out our own salvation in fear and trembling. So my goal today is to bring focus that we should strive not to be deceived in this journey.

There are five things for us to keep in mind as we begin our message today.

1. *Eph 6:12* For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of
wickedness in the heavenly places. Our warfare is against powerful spirit beings, the original rulers over this earth – Satan and his fallen angels.

2 - The warfare that rages is territorial. It has to do with the heavenly realm of God’s Kingdom and who will occupy it, thereby exercising rulership over the earth in the age to come.

3. The battle rages, not between Satan and his angels and Christians in a general sense, but between Satan and his angels and those Christians who are striving for a position with Christ as His coheir in the Kingdom to come.

4 - Being a Christian, even one who is striving for the inheritance, does not of itself give us safety against our enemy.

5- We have to avail ourselves of that provided by God for our protection and our offensive action - Eph 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

With these 5 things in mind, this morning we will look at the nature of our enemy’s warfare against us.

Let’s begin at the beginning - Ge 3:1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?'"

God’s own commentary on this incident – 1 Tim 2:14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

Now let’s remember Satan is positioned at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for a specific purpose – being the incumbent ruler over this province in God’s Kingdom. He knew that the only way he could retain that position is to bring about the disqualification of the one created to replace him.
God had already said, Genesis 2:18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." God statement here reveals that in order for this new creation – man – to rule over the earth, he would need to do it within the bonds of marriage. And so God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and He took part of his very body out of the man, and “built” a woman.

Genesis 2:23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

The man was incomplete apart from the woman, and neither of them would be able to fulfill God’s purpose for them apart from each other. In deceiving the woman and bringing about her disqualification, Satan effectively disqualified both.

The two who were “initially naked and not ashamed”, who at their creation had the pristine covering of glory (having been created in God’s image and likeness) – the glory being the undergarment necessary to receive the regal robes of rulership were now utterly naked - Genesis 3:10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

The Hebrew word for naked here is different from the word used in Gen. 2:25. This word means utterly naked…the glory covering had left him.

The point is this – This picture establishes a first mention principle showing that the primary weapon used by the enemy against those who would rule is deception. “Has God indeed said…?” Satan’s weapon against us will always be corruption of the Word of God.

We can of course note Satan’s attempt to prevent the Seed of the woman from coming forth through the corruption of the human race by the cohabitation of fallen angels with the daughters of men. This happened both before and after the flood.
When the 12 spies went into the land to spy it out, they saw the Nephilim and Rephaim there. Again we will remember their witness at Kadesh Barnea: **Numbers 13:32** *And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. 33 "There we saw the giants [Lit. Nephilim] (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."*

At first, as we look back on this incident, it may not appear that deception is being used here. But it really is. Deception, after all, is simply believing something contrary to that which God has already said.

‘Has God indeed said…?’

Here is what God had said concerning this first generation – **Exodus 6:6** *"Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 'I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 'And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD."”*

Instead of believing what God had said, like Caleb and Joshua -- **Numbers 13:30** *Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."* -- This first generation was deceived into thinking that God could not do what He had said, as spoken by the other ten spies – **Numbers 13:31** *But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we."*
Now the land of our calling, the heavenly realm of the Kingdom is not occupied with Nephilim and Rephaim but with the fallen angels themselves. And as we know they are powerful spirit beings who would make us appear like grasshoppers, who are in every way much stronger than we are.

The question is will we believe what God has said?

**Genesis 22:17** "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

And what does the scripture say?  
**Galatians 3:29** *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

To be like Caleb and Joshua we would have this mindset –

Again what does the scripture say?  
**Romans 4:13** *For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

There is yet another incident concerning Israel and a somewhat more subtle deception - **Numbers 31:16** "Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

Balaam, unable to curse the nation of Israel, sought to corrupt the nation through assimilation with the surrounding nations. The deception being that they came to believe that they could serve God and be just like everybody else, because it really didn’t matter. After all they were God’s chosen people.

This incident is referenced for us in Revelation as the Lord pronounces judgment upon His Church at the Judgment Seat. This particular statement is addressed to the church at Pergamos, but
contextually it is said to the entire church - **Revelation 2:14** "But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.

In essence we find a condemnation of the church because it has allowed itself to be seduced into assimilation with the world and its systems – the very world system that remains today under the control of the god of this world.

As a result, we find much of the church in bed, so to speak, with the enemy instead of remaining separate from this world. And this deception has happened because of the outworking of the leaven placed in the three measures of meal at the start of this dispensation, as see in Matthew 13.

The deception is that in order to win the world to Christ, we must become like the world.

1. But the world is not going to be won - **1Jo 2:17** And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.
2. Those who inhabit the world during this present age, since the cross, must first be released from its bondage by hearing and responding positively to the gospel of grace.
3. Those who respond positively must then be taught the reason for their redemption by hearing the gospel of the glory of Christ – the message of the Kingdom.

I may be too simplistic in my thinking, but when I go back to the type of our redemption – Israel removed from Egypt, God required them to be completely removed from Egypt, causing them to pass through the place of death, the Red Sea Passage to stand in newness of life on the eastern shore.

The fact that so many Christians still struggle with wanting to be involved in the affairs of this world is a measure of how successful the deception has been.
Ever since the days of Constantine the Great, when the church and state were merged into one (300 AD), Christians have been deceived into believing that they can be actively involved in worldly affairs with impunity. Remember the words of Christ to the church at Pergamos – “But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam,…”

Remember the words of Christ to Pilate on the day of His crucifixion - 
John 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

I don’t see how it could be made clearer! Christ’s Kingdom is not of this world/age, but the world/age to come. He says that if it were of this world His servants would fight for it now, but they were not to do so. And yet it seems that this is exactly what the church-at-large is determined to do.

For the nation of Israel, their assimilation into the things of this world was such a complete deception that the religious leaders made this extraordinary statement - John 19:15b... "We have no king but Caesar!"

And it’s easy to see that this might also be a reality within the church, today.

Within the New Testament epistles there are no fewer than 14 separate warnings to Christians not to be deceived.

Just as at the beginning in Genesis 3:1 the enemy of our soul continues to say, ‘Has God indeed said…’ and his purpose has not changed. It is to disqualify those who through redemption would fulfill God’s purpose for them. This attack continues to be against that which God has said concerning the 7th Day, the coming Kingdom. The attack over the centuries has been so complete that the word of the kingdom is almost totally corrupted, just as the parable of the leaven said it would be.
And just as at the beginning it is the woman, those who would be the Bride of Christ, whom he wants to deceive. For it remains as it did at the beginning – ‘It is not good for the man to be alone...’ From God’s perspective, without His bride Christ is incomplete and would be unable to rule.

Ephesians 5:30 *For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

The good news is, we may have victory over our enemy by availing ourselves of God’s provision to overcome this deception.

But let us note something – 1 Samuel 17:47 *"Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD’S, and He will give you into our hands."

The battle is the Lord’s, but He requires our faithful obedience with regards to our warfare - Ephesians 6:13 *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—*

We must not be deceived into thinking that God fights this fight apart from us. Although He obviously does not need us, He requires our faithful obedience to His word as He fights for us.

We must, in faith, actively and deliberately put on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, have the preparation of the gospel of
peace on our feet, take up the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit.

‘Therefore take up…’ is a command, not a suggestion. Neither is it figurative. No, it is a spiritual armor that is literally put on by faith, each piece requiring a specific action on our part.

Without it we will inevitably be deceived – please don’t think otherwise – if we didn’t need the armor of God to stand against the wiles of the devil, God would not have provided it. And with deception will inevitably come defeat.

However, if we will put on this armor and continue to wear it, we will (like the Apostle Paul) be able to make this confession – 2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Putting on the whole armor of God is the only way that we will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Only through the appropriation of this armor and taking up the sword of the Spirit can we have any hope of overcoming the enemy.

It is the whole armor of God – when we have it on we have God’s protection and there can be nothing greater than that.

I leave you today with this passage:

Philippians 2:1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no
reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. 12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. 14 Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

Let us not be deceived!