

The Snake Crusher
“Part 3: The Lies We Believe”
John 8:31 - 47

Delivered at Central Baptist Church on December 16, 2018, by Steve Edelman

INTRODUCTION: Good morning everyone. We are so glad you are here with us today.

What is the most convincing lie you have ever told? Do tell??? **What is the most convincing lie you have ever believed? A lie so smooth that it slips under your radar.** The kind of lie that when it finds its way into your thinking, it dupes you in the end. It leaves you blind to the truth. I am not talking about Santa Clause and the Tooth Fairy. The kind of lie that tears at the fabric of what you believe about God and yourself. I am talking about a deep falsehood that weaves into your life over a period of time. It destroys what is good. It grabs hold of you. It binds you up. It drains the truth away. The truth that we need.

STORY: When I was at camp, we played this team game in which we had to transport water from the middle of the field into your teams' large barrel. However, the barrel was full of holes. So, we had half the team moving the water and the other half plugging the holes. As the game went on, we discovered how difficult it was to keep all of the water in. We would use as many fingers as possible. Some people started to take off their shoes and socks so that they could use their toes. Some discovered that they could use their knee. At one point, I started to use my cheek. The more holes that were covered, the more the water started to rise and fill the bucket. **These holes are like lies. As you are going to see, we need to cover them with truth or our sense of God and ourselves will leak out.**

The lies we could be: “I don’t need help... when you do.” Or, “No one will ever find out if I dabble just a little in sin. No one will get hurt.” That is just the way I am. Or that God is not good. Or God is not trustworthy. You know, that beautiful lie. The lie that hooks you. Grabs you. Controls you. They Poke holes in the very person God wants you to be. Evil is destructive. **When we believe a lie, it turns into an action or lack of action that ties us to evil.** What lies are you believing?

These lies are the primary method of Satan to defeat and destroy us. He wants us to feel alone, angry, broken, and distant. He wants us to lose our connection with God and others. His primary method is lies.

We are in the middle of a series called, **The Snake Crusher** and today, we are going to be talking about **Part 3 – The Lies We Believe** and the gift of God’s son that came about 2,000 years to give us freedom from these lies. **The title Snake Crusher involves two things: the snake and the one who defeated the snake.**

In Christ, we experience freedom from binding misbeliefs when we recognize:

1. THE LIES ABOUT GOD

Look with me at verse 44b which says, *“He... does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”*

First, who is Satan? Remember, what Pastor Barton said at the beginning of this series, he is not the guy in a red outfit with the pointy tail running around at Halloween who is just having a good time. That is not what the Bible says about the devil. **He is the father of lies. There is no truth in him. He is the author of confusion.** Lies are what come out of Satan. Trickery is his trademark. He disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). **He appears attractive, but he is seeking to devour. John is telling us that when he lies, he speaks according to his own nature. His being is evil.** He is the father of lies.

a) We need to see that Satan’s main tactic is deception.

First, what do we mean by lies? The word lie means, “A false statement made with deliberate intent to deceive; an intentional untruth; a falsehood. Something intended or serving to convey a false impression; imposture.”

As you are going to see, lying is Satan’s primary strategy. We see signs or billboards of dishonest behaviour right from the start of the account of humanity. To bring humanity down, Satan uses two main overarching strategies to bring about confusion. His first tactic is to distort our sense of who God is.

(TACTIC #1 Satan distorts our sense of who God is)

In Genesis 3, Satan in the form of a snake tells us lies about God. He derails Adam and Eve, he starts by gossiping and twisting ideas about who God is. The snake says, "You can be like gods." "Hey Kids, go play in traffic... you can be a car too." In other words, God is not to be trusted! God is not good! God is holding something back from you. Reach out and take it for yourself. **Be the god of our own life.**

Again, the overarching lie is - God is not who He says he is. When you believe it, what happens? You take control. You take whatever you want. You just be you. Thousands of years later, we see an entire history of what happens when humanity becomes their own gods. The human god continues to create a colossal painful mess.

David Takle says, **"Satan is a clever liar because his lies sound so much like the truth. He wants to change your thought processes in order to deceive you and destroy you. He is not only the father of lies, but he lies about the biggest subject—God. If Satan can get you thinking wrong about God—if he can deceive you into thinking God is something He isn't—he has you in everything else. He becomes the master of your life when you allow his deceptions to infiltrate your thoughts."**

One of the ways we form misbeliefs about God is by using ourselves a reference point. We may start to believe that God is just like us. When we use ourselves as a reference point for who God is, we make a god who is fallen, sinful, or angry because that is how we are. The truth about God leaks out when we don't use the right reference point. What is good is called evil. We start to doubt Him. We start to question? Does he know best? Does He really love me? The Bible gives us that proper reference point.

When we believe a lie - it shapes us, it manipulates us, and it determines what we do. It brainwashes our thinking which leads to dysfunctional behaviours. Believing these falsehoods are the reasons why we get all twisted up and misdirected. We all walk around with them as they distort our view of the world. These lies are invasive, blinding, and common.

In Paul tells the Corinthian church in 2 Corinthians 4:4 that Satan uses this tactic of deception to blind the mind of the unbeliever. **So, he not only speaks what is false, he hides what is true.**

As we have been talking about, Satan's main tactic is to distort our sense of who God is. **This is why Satan is called the Father of Lies.**

Next Satan's lies lead to death because he is a murderer.

b) We need to see that Satan's lies lead to murder.

Look with me at verse 44b in which Jesus says, *"He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him."*

Sinful behavior and evil deeds are not of the Father in heaven; they are of the father in hell. Jesus calls Satan for who he is... a murderer.

Satan is a murderer.

- 1) **He was behind the first murder:** Cain's killing his brother Abel (Ge. 4:8).
- 2) **He was behind the sin of Adam and Eve,** which brought death to the whole human race.
- 3) **He was behind the death of Jesus.**

Ultimately, the devil seeks to destroy the life-giving things of God: all love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Satan's system of destruction is deception. He says **murder is:** anger, bitterness, enmity, an uncontrolled spirit, desiring a person's ruin, slandering, maligning, speaking ill about a person and destroying a person's image, envying and killing a person's happiness. **The problem is that when we walk around with hundreds of these faulty premises we become at odds with God, ourselves, and each other.** This is what the father of lies does.

Let me use an example to illustrate this idea of our own self-destruction. For example, the CEO's of the entire tobacco industry strategically deceived its customers, so they would continue to buy products. In 1994, A CEO named James Johnston said, "Cigarette smoking is no more 'addictive' than coffee, tea, or Twinkies." **He assured their customers that cigarettes were neither unhealthy nor addictive.** The reality, of course, is quite different. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that **480,000 Americans die every year from cigarettes.** **Result:** In 1998, the four largest tobacco companies reached a settlement with 46 states to pay \$206 billion over 25 years to

help cover the medical costs of smoking-related illnesses.” **Satan is just like the CEO of a tobacco company who hides the truth and blinds us from the reality that smoking kills.**

1 Peter 5:8 says, *“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”* This is a warning for us. To keep with the language of the series, the snake is loose, and he wants to devour you slowly with lies. **His lies tie us to evil. They enslave us.** Or seduce us into participating in our own self-destruction.

As we have been talking about, Satan is the father of lies. One of the main tactics of Satan is to distort who God is and ultimately lead us to bondage and ruin.

Secondly, in Christ, we experience breakthrough from our bondage when we recognize:

2. THE LIES ABOUT OURSELVES

Look with me at John 8:39-42 which says, ³⁹*“They answered him, “Abraham is our father. Jesus responds by saying, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, ⁴⁰ but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. ⁴¹ You are doing the works your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.” ⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.”*

In this text, we see that the Jews believe they are God’s people because they came from Abraham’s family. The Jews yell out, “Abraham is our Father” our father was a good man, a man who did great things. **Therefore, have we not done enough good through the years for us to claim God as our Father?**

Jesus responds by saying, “Jews, you are nothing like Abraham! You are believing a lie. Abraham was a man who diligently sought-after God. He was a man of truth. You cannot claim the goodness of Abraham or anyone for yourself. **In other words, you have been deceived by Satan. Why? Just because someone in your family loves God, that does not mean you will love God. Or if you go to a church it doesn’t make you love Jesus and follow Him. Or if you are a pastor, it doesn’t mean your kids will automatically become Christians.**

How do you know? If someone is a child of faith, there is evidence that the Spirit of God is at work in their life. **They will do what Abraham did (believed, grabbed hold of the promises of God and diligently seek God, continuing in the truth)** (See note—Jn. 8:31.)

a) We will know the true children of God by their:

I. Love for Jesus (42)

“If God were your Father, you would love me...” Jesus is saying we will know your father by your love for Him.

II. Understanding of God’s will (43)

“Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.” Your will starts to become God’s will!

III. Godly desires (44)

“Your will is to do your father’s desire.” Your desires start to become God’s desires.

IV. Ability to believe the truth (46 & 47)

You believe what Jesus is saying. You can hear what God is telling you.

In contrast,

b) We will know the false children of God because they:

- Do not love Him (42)
- Do not recognize His words (43)
- Do not desire Godly character (44)
- Do not value truth (45-46)

The troubling part is that the offspring of the father of lies produces the same lying spiritual DNA. **A false child of God is at ease and comfortable lying.** It’s an indication of their true nature or being. They mislead, they deceive, they twist the truth because they are selfish. Lying is of the devil. It exposes a person to be a child of the devil. An indication that a person is not of God because of their continuous lying. Jesus is asking a big question to the Jews. **The question we need to ask is who**

really has your heart and mind? The Father who speaks truth or the father that speaks lies? You will know by what is coming out of you! Lies or truth.

In summary, how do you know the difference between the children of God and the children of the devil? Again, your love for Christ, your ability to hear from God's word, your desires become God's desires, and your belief in what is true.

Jesus is telling us that He is the reference point for what is true and what is false. He cuts right through the nonsense. If you are someone who does or does not know God Satan wants to deceive you from the things of God. He may have you believe you can be a Christian by default. Or by simply going to church. Or by doing good will service once a week. Satan attacks us by getting us to believe things about ourselves that are not true. This group of people were confused about who they were!

Remember, Satan uses two main overarching strategies to bring about confusion. The second tactic is to distort our sense of who we are.

(TACTIC #2 - Satan distorts our sense of who we are)

Why? What you believe about yourself affects how you behave and what you do. He attacks your identity. He tears at the fabric of who you are! Satan whispers things like: You are worthless. God doesn't love you. No one loves you. You are not really a Christian. God can't use you. God made a mistake. You will never be good enough. You need that secret vice that has you burdened and bound. Believing these lies is why people take their own life! This is the venom of the father of lies. At work, deep in our hearts. **Carrying the weight of those lies is too much.**

Story: Marriage Under Cover

Audrey Meisner writes in the book *Marriage Under Cover* and says, "It all began so gradually. Once the crack opened and the "hook" was in, sin drew me slowly but surely off the true path and onto a false trail of lies and self-deception. In my secret world, I was so busy staring at the billboard that screamed pleasure and freedom that I ignored the warning signs and never saw the deadly traps in my way until it was too late. Eventually and inevitably, the unimaginable happened. Almost before I knew what I was doing, I committed the sin of adultery. I thought I knew my enemy until suddenly I was overtaken, brought down, and beaten to the core." Self-deception really messes with the mind. During all this time, my love for my husband Bob and my commitment to our marriage never wavered. Disaster was rapidly approaching. Could I turn back? Could I get to the shore and find my way back to the true path. I was caught in the current! The water was getting deeper and the undertow kept pulling me down. It was hard to keep my head above water. Unless I could escape soon, I would drown.

When the affair was exposed Audrey received probing questions that she said tore at her heart like a thousand knives. She describes the fall-out of her situation this way: "I felt naked, shamed and beaten down. Only the barest spark of life still burned in me. Slowly, I opened my eyes to evaluate the damage only to discover that I could not see clearly. I needed something or someone to restore my will to live. So did my husband Bob. We were like two people drowning in a lake, both needing rescue and neither able to help the other. In our pain, terror, and despair, our hearts cried for our help." What all started as a playful yes ended with deep wounds. It not only wounded Audrey, but also her husband and three kids.

Another reason he attacks your sense of who you are is:

What you believe about yourself affects your relationships with others. Believing these lies is how affairs start that tear families apart. Believing these lies is how addictions start and get a hold of people. It hinders your ability to love others. When

What you believe about yourself affects your relationship with God. This is ultimately what the enemy is after.

William Backus says, "Misbeliefs are the direct cause of emotional turmoil, maladaptive behavior and most so-called "mental illness." Misbeliefs are the cause of the destructive behavior people persist in engaging in even when they are fully aware that it is harmful to them (such as overeating, smoking, lying, drunkenness, stealing, or adultery)."

As we have seen, when we believe the lies about ourselves it leads to destructive patterns that keep us in the grip of brokenness.

In Christ, we experience breakthrough from our bondage when we recognize:

3. HOW TO OVERCOME THE LIES

Look with me, starting at verse 31, So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, *“If you abide (hold on to) in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

a) We must hold the truth to fight the lies

The Greek word for abide means to hold on to, remain, dwell on the Word of God.

This is where the Christmas story comes in. A Son who is born to us—and we name him Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace (Is 9:6). He brings the truth that will set you free, so we can live it out!

We must hold the truth that the Christmas child gives us to fight the lies. Christmas was so much more than a nice story that we tell once a year about a baby in a manger. **William Backus says, “The Bible says it is the truth that sets man free. Jesus Christ is the living Truth. When we inject the truth into our every thought, taking a therapeutic broom and sweeping away the lies and misbeliefs which have enslaved us, we find our lives radically changed for the better.”** Where do you need to inject truth?

In order to fight the lies, we need to be able to identify what is going on underneath it all and apply truth. **When we begin our walk with Christ, we will have misconceptions about God and ourselves. When we hold up the light into the dark parts of our life, so we start to see the hidden knots of dysfunction.** Again, the lies are rooted in a misbelief about God. Or in a misbelief about yourself? When we identify the lie, we need to remind ourselves what is really true and hold truth up to it.

Take for example, **the lie, “I’m not good enough”**. It’s rooted in a misbelief or distortion about who we are. **Everyone understands this statement. In our head it may sound like this:** Am I worth loving? Will someone continue to love me? Will my children turn out fine? Am I thin enough? Am I strong enough? Can I provide? Can I be faithful? Can I stay faithful? The list goes on and on. We use these strange methods of measuring ourselves that we believe will make us feel good enough, but ultimately make us even more unhappy. **Here’s the reality – none of us are good enough in and of ourselves. One way out of the “I am not good enough mindset” is to start speaking truth to yourself in those moments.**

Here is an example of how you can battle the lies. **The truth is that God says you are valuable. That you have a purpose.** As you hold truth and wash over your mind the lies start to be released. You must keep reminding yourself about what God says about you because it’s leaking out. He says, “You are my creation. I breathed into your nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). I created you in my own image (Genesis 1:27). I knit you together in your mother’s womb (Psalms 139:13). I know the number of hairs on your head, and before a word is on your tongue, I know it (Matthew 10:30; Psalms 139:4). You are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalms 139:14). I have crowned you with glory and honor as the pinnacle and final act of the six days of creation (Psalms 8:5; Genesis 1:26). I know the plans I have for you! You are a child of God. You are a child of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Who is to say... any different??? The lying snake?!?! God will have the final word!

Are you abiding in the word of God? Believing the lies will always leave you feeling alone and hopeless. Abiding in the word of God will always fill you up and give you what you need. Hope. Joy. Peace. The strength to go on.

The Bible tells us that we need to take every thought captive. Someone said, **“Thoughts can become actions; actions can become habits.** And it all starts with a thought. God wants us to trust His Word more than we trust our feelings, more than we trust how things appear. God’s Word is truer than anything I may think. It is truer than anything I feel. It is truer than how things appear. The Bible says that, Psalms said, “Your Word...is a light to my path.” (Psalms 119:105)

If we want to undo the lies in our thinking, we need to preach to ourselves and the lies that make their way in. We need to hold the sword of truth close, so we are ready to fight back. Every day. Every moment an attack comes... so we are not defenseless. This is how you overcome the thoughts that are contrary to what God says about you. This is how you overcome the thoughts that come to your mind that are contrary to what God says about Himself. This is how we stop believing the lies and start believing the truth.

We could stop there, with the basic training on how to defeat the lies of Satan. However, the snake is vicious and strategic. He doesn’t stop. If you defeat one lie, he comes at you with another and

another! We may be saying, "God, how much more can we take?" He says, hold on to truth. "God, I am wounded here... I have been bitten!" He says, "Come to me. **Because you can't do it on your will power... you have to do it in my power!**"

Next, know the truth because victory is coming so you can continue to fight.

Next, we must know the child of truth who destroys the lies for good.

b) We must know the child of truth who destroys the lies for good

Look with me, starting at verse 31 and Jesus says, "**you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**" The word know means to have experienced Jesus in a way that you are changed.

When you know Jesus, you recognize that He is the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace will defeat the father of lies forever. The Bible tells us that the Father of Truth sends his son the Christmas Child to die to break this cycle of deceit. And He shall reign forever. He will end this chaos of believing and misbelieving. When you know Him, you will experience a day in which the child of truth will destroy the lies for good. The disappointment will be no more! In our failures, in our brokenness we need to be reminded that the father of lies will be crushed. He will be defeated forever! The lies will be no more! As we fight to the finish, we can say, "**He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.**" (Philippians 1:6) And, "**There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**" (Romans 8:1)

The Christmas Child came to transform who we are. When we really love Him and give our life to Him, Jesus fills the gaps in our thinking and life.

David Takle says, "**That means learning how to be totally transparent before God without any sense of shame or disgust for being an unfinished work of Christ. We must learn to be totally honest in the presence of God about our unhealed wounds, our emotional triggers, our flaws, our bad habits, and our sinful urges. Because only then will we be able to receive what God has for us in those places; only then will we be open to the work He wants to do in us**"

Do you need the power of Jesus to bring about change in your life? Can you engage with God this morning? **Around every corner, we will face doubts about ourselves and God. The power of Jesus will fill in gaps that the lies create forever with His grace.** The Christmas Child did this by taking all the lies of the world upon himself. He died for every sin. For every lie that is believed and acted upon. For you and for me. So, we can hold on the truth that says, "**There will be a day with no more tears, no more pain, and no more fears. There will be a day when the burdens of this place, will be no more, we'll see Jesus face to face. But until that day, we'll hold on to you always.**" On that day, the snake will be crushed, and eternal rest will begin.

This is this why believers can sing "we are no longer slaves."

Do you know Jesus? No, do you really know Him? Not just things about Him. Do you love him? Do you hold His truth close? Have you given your life to Him? If the Spirit of God is speaking to you this morning and you want to know Jesus, please come talk to one of the pastors.

The truth is, if you know Jesus, He died for the disaster that we are and forgave us for the mess we made.

Can you be honest with God? What lies are you believing? What is holding you captive? Ask God to help you stop and hear His truth. He wants to give you freedom today.