

## Honest Conversations with Satan Part 1 of 2

Presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 11-12-2017  
at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.

# HONEST CONVERSATIONS *with Satan*

In our scripture, we find Jesus, newly baptized, being led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. Why does he go through this? Why doesn't he just begin his ministry? Here, Jesus encounters Satan and has to make hard choices. It would be easy to look at the situation and say, "How easy for Jesus to say no to Satan. It's Satan!" But, do we find ourselves having to make difficult choices? Do we also find ourselves being tempted by things we know are not going to lead to God's will for us?

### Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written,

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you," and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone."

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he

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said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

"You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

May God open your ears, your eyes and your heart to how Jesus' experience translates into your life.

"For there is no truth in him  
(Satan). When he lies, he speaks  
his native language, for he is a  
liar and the father of lies."

– *Jesus*

"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." - Jesus

A couple of weeks ago, the news picked up on the story of two women who were lost at sea for 5 months? Although the story has been questioned, the ladies answered to their account, and how they were able to survive for as long as they did.

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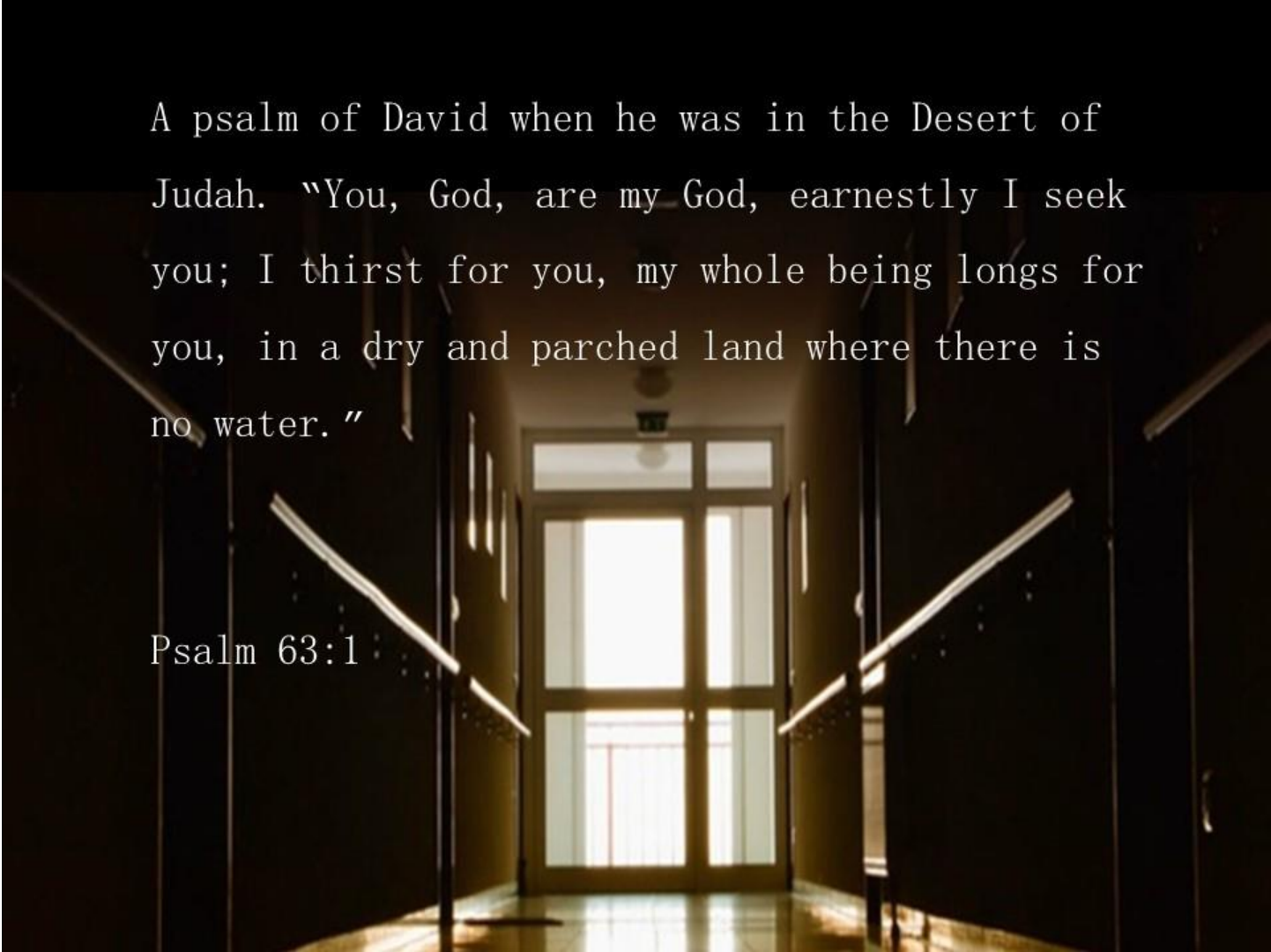
Have you ever heard of the line, “Water, water everywhere... (and not a drop to drink?) You see, even though they were surrounded by water, they couldn’t drink it.

Human kidneys can only make urine that is less salty than salt water. Therefore, to get rid of all the excess salt taken in by drinking seawater, you have to urinate more water than you drank. Eventually, you die of dehydration even as you become thirstier.

They survived because they had enough food onboard and a water purifier. If not for those things, the water lapping at the hull, might have called to them.

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Sometimes, when we are lost in the ocean or the desert of life. Taking the low hanging fruit seems attractive. Drinking the easily accessible water may feel like the thing to do at the time. It beckons. ... OK ... maybe it's not the water beckoning.

A photograph of a hallway with a large window at the end, overlaid with text. The hallway is dimly lit, with light streaming in from the window at the far end. The walls are dark, and the floor is polished. The text is overlaid in a white, serif font.

A psalm of David when he was in the Desert of Judah. "You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water."

Psalm 63:1

Recently, I was led by the spirit into the wilderness when I encountered a series of unfortunate events. In a two-week period of time, I was scammed by a neighbor ... tore up my knee; leaving no stability .... was deeply affected by the voices of loud critics .... poorly prepared my 12 year old daughter for the loss of her last grandparent, ... and watched my dad die in a flood of anxiety, fear and pain.


A tsunami had hit me.

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In the midst of this trial, I was contacted by my boss. Yes, God is my boss, but not far beneath God is my District Superintendent, Scott Carlson. As I sat beside my dad in those final hours, Scott said, "Take the time you need. Don't rush it. Be in the place you need to be before you come back." Scott told me this three years ago when I held my mother in her last moments. This time I listened to him. I let the Holy Spirit lead me into the wilderness. I didn't know what I would encounter there.

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Psalm 63:1

When my mom died, she left two weeks before Christmas. I buried myself in Cheetos and Netflix. These were safe things. They didn't make me think. That Christmas and the subsequent months were a numb blur. Scott told me to take some time. Time for what? Time to pray? I've been praying. Time to cry? I'd been crying! Time to get over it? Give me a break! You've lost someone close to you. You don't get over it. So, I decided to keep an open mind and step into the desert. Yes, I talked to God... but there was another entity in the conversation. Sometimes I talked with God alone, and sometimes it was Satan.

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Last week you heard about the dreams and goals of 2018. The weeks preceding this announcement were filled with God moments, so startling, that there was no mistaking that the Holy Spirit was in the room. We were about to launch a new thing.



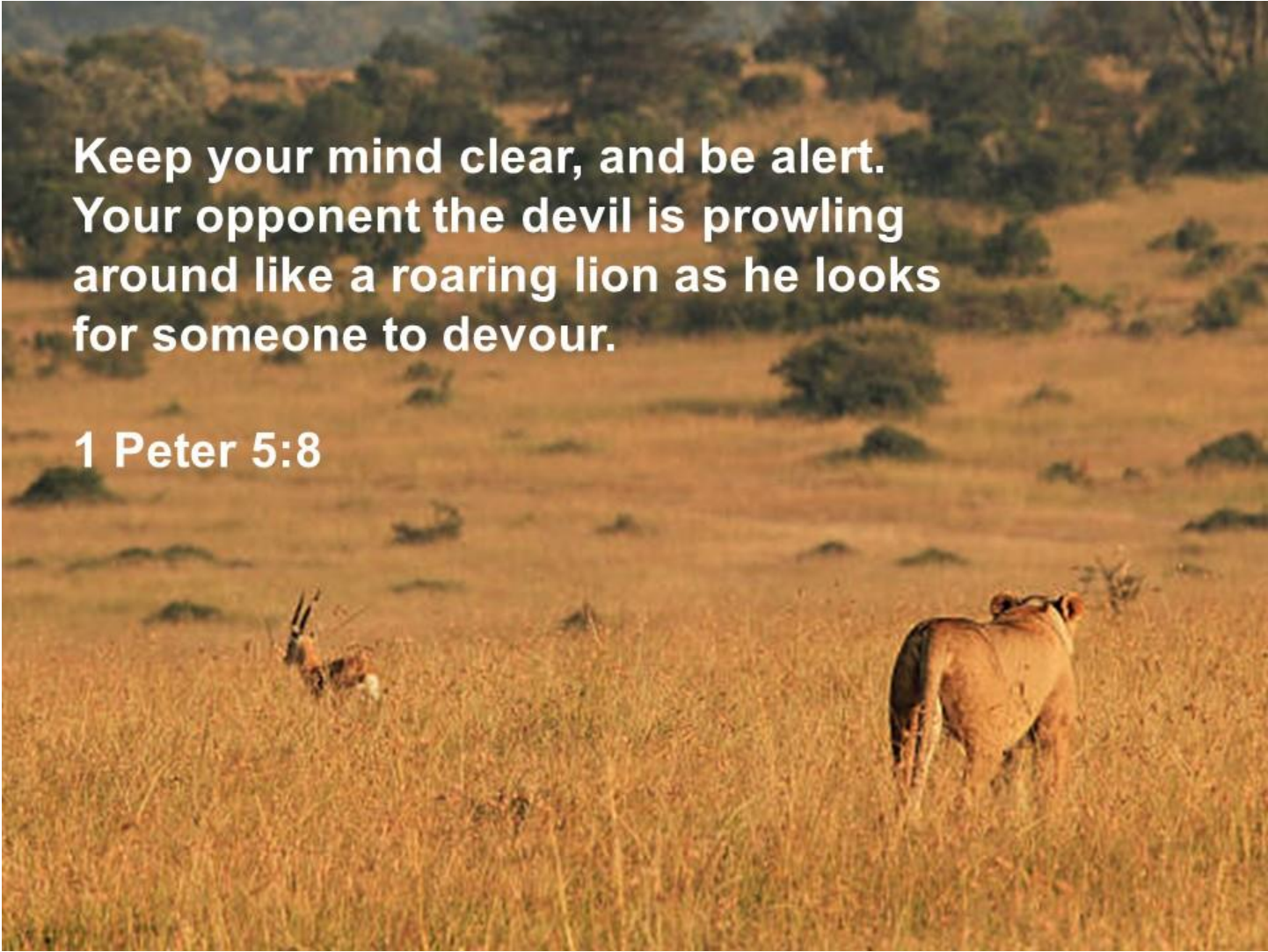
**Behold! I do a new thing!  
Can you not perceive it?  
- Isaiah 43:19**

Look back at our scripture for a moment. It starts out by saying that at once Jesus was led into the desert by the Holy Spirit. But what was Jesus doing just before that? We find at the end of chapter 3...

<sup>16</sup>As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. <sup>17</sup>And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

So, Jesus is imbued with God's power. He comes up out of the water ready to begin his public ministry. But then bang! All hell breaks loose. Literally! Right before he's about to do something astonishing!

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**Keep your mind clear, and be alert.  
Your opponent the devil is prowling  
around like a roaring lion as he looks  
for someone to devour.**

**1 Peter 5:8**

Did you know that when a lion is hunting a gazelle, it waits until she is just about to give birth before it strikes? Satan does not want God's success. He does not want the big thing to happen!

Now, some will say that they don't believe in Satan. Well, I do because Jesus did. I don't think he's a guy with a red suit and pitch fork. But, I do believe that he is anxious to deceive us, and wound us. I also believe that he feeds off of fear and anger and hatred... off negativity and off of the spiral we get ourselves into sometimes when things are dark.

I also believe that as he's feasting on these things, he's feeding us what we think we crave. Jesus was hungry. Satan sidled up to him and suggested he turn the stones to bread. Jesus was probably questioning his own divinity - enough that Satan suggested he test it out. Satan offered Jesus an easy way out - riches and kingdoms. Just think how much good he could do with all that money and power! After all, Satan was only trying to help.



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I think that more often than not, Satan whispers things that we want to hear into our ears, rather than things we need to hear. Satan takes our fears and doubts and expounds upon them. He is so accomplished at making things sound like the truth that Jesus called him the “Father of lies.”

I’m not going to get into the words exchanged between Satan and me – that’s a conversation for next week. Suffice it to say that we all work to discern the voices.

Next week I’ll tell you about the actual conversations, and how scripture instructs us to defend ourselves against these attacks.

One of the things that helped me in the desert, as Satan prowled around me, was watching God move through you. I saw a church coming together in Christ’s name, to be the church, to minister to its pastor and to be a force inspired by and driven by God! You are the body of Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit! You **are** the love of god.

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And... to the veterans today... I'll leave you with this – my last visit with Dad before he was taken to the hospital. The nurses told me he had been preparing all week. He was so excited because someone was coming to present him with his quilt of valor. He was so proud that day!

To all the veterans who have served so bravely – and those of you who have looked Satan in the face and are here in this house or worship today. You have my gratitude, my admiration and my respect. May God hold you close.

Amen.