**HOMILY REFLECTION GUIDE**

**WEEK 1 of 5**

**Preaching Series: Unbound — Freedom in Christ**

**The First Sunday of Lent: The Devil’s Lies and God’s Truth**

**February 21, 2021**

**The Five Keys of Unbound Ministry**

1. **Repentance and Faith** – acknowledging our sinfulness and need for Jesus’ forgiveness and help;

2. **Forgiveness** of ourselves and others;

3. **Renunciation** of any evil influence in our lives;

4. **Authority**—taking the Authority we have in Jesus to overcome evil and break its power in our lives;

5. **The Father’s Blessing** — receiving the love and affirmation God wants to give us as his beloved children.

**Main Points of Today’s Homily**

* The Bible and our Catholic Church teach us that the devil is real, that he is a fallen angel who turned against God and that we need to be cautious in our dealings with him because he is very cunning (see Scriptures and Catholic Church below).
* **But we don’t have to be afraid of the devil because our God is much more powerful; the devil is only a creature.** As long as we follow Jesus and try do God’s will in our lives, the devil cannot harm us. But what the devil can do to us is what he did to Jesus in today’s Gospel: he can tempt us.
* The main way the devil tempts us is by lying to us to keep us from knowing the truth about God, about ourselves as God’s beloved children, and about God’s will and purpose for us.
* We must imitate Jesus’ example in today’s Gospel to fight against Satan and his lies.
* Many people are bound by Satan through pride, fear or guilt, by an unwillingness or inability to forgive, by a painful experience from the past, by addictions, by sinful behavior, etc.
* Jesus’ plan is to set us free by teaching us the truth. One way to free ourselves is by utilizing the Five Keys of Unbound Ministry which is what we will do during this Lenten series (see the Five Keys on page 1 of this guide).
* If we apply these five biblical and traditional Catholic truths or five keys to our lives, the Lord will use them to help us live in the freedom, power and peace that God wants us to have as his beloved children.
* It is part of our daily life of faith to battle with the temptations and lies of the devil and fight against the evil in our world.

**Prayer at the End of the Homily**

(from Neal Lozano’s book “Unbound: A Practical Guide to Deliverance,” p. 55):

**I love You, Lord. Come bring your light and expel the darkness. Bring your truth and expose the lies. There are many things in me that keep me from giving and receiving love. Cleanse me by your blood. Set me free from those lies that keep me from knowing your love. I want to walk in the light on the path you have chosen for me.**

**Some of the Devil’s Lies**

*Have you fallen for any of these lies?*

* God does not exist.
* God is not trustworthy.
* God does not love me or forgive me.
* I don’t deserve God’s love or forgiveness.
* It’s hopeless; I can never change.
* I cannot overcome this problem, addiction, sin, crisis, etc. in my life.
* I am stupid, ugly, lazy, a failure, no good.

**Key Scriptures This Week**

**John 8:44**

[Jesus said:] When he [the devil] tells a lie, he speaks in character, because he is a liar and the father of lies.

**John 8:31-32**

If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

**Ephesians 6:10-17**

Finally, draw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. **For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens.** Therefore, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground.

**1Peter 5:8**

Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking

for [someone] to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that your fellow believers throughout the world undergo the same sufferings.

**Teaching from the Catechism of the Catholic Church about the devil:**

* Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy [ Cf. Gen 3:1-5; Wis 2:24]. Scripture and the Church's Tradition see in this being a fallen angel, called "Satan" or the "devil" [Cf Jn 8:44; Rev 12:9]. The Church teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God: "The devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing” [Lateran Council IV (1215): DS 800]. (#391)
* In this petition [“deliver us from evil” at the end of the Our Father], evil is not an abstraction, but refers to a person, Satan, the Evil One, the angel who opposes God. The devil (*dia-bolos*) is the one who "throws himself across" God's plan and his work of salvation accomplished in Christ. (#2851)
* When we ask to be delivered from the Evil One, we pray as well to be freed from all evils, present, past, and future, of which he is the author or instigator. (#2854)

**Questions to Think About**

1. Do you believe the devil is real? Why or why not?
2. What are some of the lies or temptations the devil has tempted you with in your life?
3. Do you feel bound and burdened by pride, fear or guilt, by an unwillingness or inability to forgive, by a painful experience from the past, by addictions, by sinful behavior, or other things?
4. Do you believe that God wants you to be free from these things and can give you that freedom?
5. Do you understand and agree that, as disciples of Jesus, it is part of our daily life of faith to battle with the devil and fight against evil just as Jesus did in today’s Gospel and throughout his life? Are you prepared to enter into that battle?
6. How can you make yourself stronger for this battle against Satan and evil?

**Recommended Resources**

* Book: **Unbound: A Practical Guide to Deliverance,** for more information about today’s homily, read Chapter 2.
* Neal and Janet Lozano’s website: www.heartofthefather.com/
* YouTube video: **Introduction to Unbound and the Power of the Gospel**—www.youtube.com/watch?v=9owV8QsOIn4

**Testimonies from Those Who Have Experienced Unbound Ministry**

* “I am leaving with an absolutely new level of freedom. I had something in my heart for almost thirty years. It made me fearful, uncertain, and jealous. Now I am free.”
* “I was under constant self-condemnation for past confessed sins, and I felt worthless. Now I am free to bask in Jesus' love for me.”
* “I feel happier and more loved by God today than I have for many years.”
* “I...felt a heavy load of sadness and pain just lift off my shoulders and heart. I experienced acceptance and peace and felt the love of Jesus.”

**For more testimonies go to:**

[www.heartofthefather.com/prayer/testimonies.](https://www.heartofthefather.com/prayer/testimonies)