

**Essay from the bold pastor
#251 - Pokemon Go -**

Pokemon Go is causing quite the whirlwind. Drivers playing the game have run over pedestrians, into trees, and even into a police car in one instance. It is shocking to hear of all the places players have gone in search of a Pokemon: a teenage girl has climbed a tree, got stuck, and was rescued. Twenty-something men have fallen off a cliff. Players have invaded private homes in the middle of the night, sometimes even getting shot or killed. Three boys have set up a wireless beacon disguising as a Poke stop, luring a player to come near it only to attack and steal from the player. One player even trespassed into a nuclear power plant. Players in Bosnia have entered dangerous minefields in formerly warzones.

There have been many crazy stories in Japan too: an alarm went off at the Kyoto Imperial Palace due to a trespassing player. Others players have gotten into prohibited parts of the Kumamoto Castle and Izumi Shrine. And day after day, parking violations occur in many areas near the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and the Setagaya Park. From hearing all this, I can't help but remember the following words of Jesus, speaking of Satan:

“When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order. Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first.” Luke 11:24-26,ESV

These words portray the wanderings of Satan and its attacking of people that causes them to “catch” the evil spirit like we catch Pokemon. As if we are horses being shown a hanging carrot, Satan causes us to go astray by tricking us to follow our desires. This causes us to sin, and in the worst of cases, lead us to death.

On the other hand, these words of Jesus actually have a deeper alternative meaning. The haunted person with the evil spirit represents a hurt person, and while it seems commendable that a person can try to rise out of trouble with pure effort, it is often the case that we can fall into even deeper despair despite our works, especially if we forget to hold our heart in the right place by acknowledging the greatness of God rather than boasting that we are in full control. If we can't trust Jesus and change ourselves from the depths of our souls, we are bound to repeat the same mistakes. We want to receive blessings from God, not more burden. That requires us to repent and follow. Only God can help us dodge Satan's attacks and come out of our deepest troubles.

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