

Spiritual Warfare

By Merv Sundbo

While much could be said about the physical conflicts that exist in the world today, the purpose of this article is to focus on a spiritual battle that is much more subtle and elusive than any physical enemy. There is a battle and the battle is for the minds of mankind. Once something has control of our minds, it has control of us. Some of the scriptures that speak of the renewed mind are found in Rom: 12: 2, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”(NKJV), Eph. 4: 23, “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (KJV) and Rom. 8: 6, “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (KJV). The renewed mind will have the attributes of the mind of Christ. The renewed mind will think as Christ thinks, speak as He speaks and do as he does. 2Tim. 1: 7 declares, “God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (KJV). The sound mind is focused on God and not cluttered with the cares of this world or confused with the doctrines and teachings of men.

We cannot fight spiritual wickedness in the flesh, for the flesh is weak and will surely fail. We must come against spiritual wickedness with spiritual weapons and in the name and strength of the Holy Spirit. In Eph. 6: 12 we read, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (KJV). This is not an easy battle. Notice Paul’s choice of words in his description of this warfare in Eph. 6: 10 –18. They all have connotations and overtones of intense battles. He speaks of wrestling against, of standing against, of withstanding, of preparation, of quenching, of praying and of persevering. These scriptures teach us that in this warfare it is absolutely necessary to wear the armour that God has provided in order to resist the attacks of the enemy. This armour includes: the belt of truth (truth sets free), the breastplate of righteousness (in the way of righteousness is life), the gospel of peace (blessed are the peacemakers), the shield of faith (protection against the fiery darts of the enemy), the helmet of salvation (God’s salvation is complete and is forever), and the sword of the Spirit (the word of God). “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two – edged sword, piercing

even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4: 12, NKJV). It is with this defensive (armour) and offensive (sword) weaponry that we wage spiritual battles against “spiritual wickedness in high (heavenly) places.”

It is interesting to note that when David went against Goliath, he did not put his confidence in Saul’s armour because he realized that physical military equipment was not the protection required to win this battle. So, having put it on, he immediately took it off, took his shepherd’s staff, his sling and five smooth stones. Even at this time in history, this is pretty rudimentary equipment with which to do battle. “Then David said to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin (with natural weapons). But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand.... 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’” (1Sam. 17: 45, 46a, & 47, NKJV). To say the least, Goliath underestimated his opponent. He saw only a diminutive youth coming against him to do battle, with no significant armour or weapons of traditional warfare. This was an insult to a man of stature and of military might. This was what Goliath was blind to: (1) David had been chosen of God and anointed as the next king of Israel, “Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward...” (1Sam. 16: 13, KJV). (2) David’s faith in God had been strengthened by his ability to fend off the lion and bear that came to prey on the sheep. “The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine” (1Sam. 17: 37, NKJV). (3) Goliath made the mistake of cursing David in the name of his gods, when the God of Israel had said, “Do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm” (1Chron. 16: 22, NKJV). We can go back into Genesis 12 and see where the Lord spoke to Abram with these words, “I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (v. 3, NKJV).

(4) Even though Goliath was clothed in some pretty impressive military armour, he still had a vulnerable spot. That spot was his forehead and that is where the stone from David's sling found its mark.

I relate this account of David and Goliath because it is a good example of how God turned defeat into victory for a whole nation because one young man put his confidence in God rather than in the strength of natural forces. In Zech. 4: 6 we read, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord of hosts." We see men placing their confidence in might and power today just as they did in the days of Goliath and the Philistines, but "the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong ..." (Ecc. 9: 11, NKJV). God will have a David company who will not be deterred by the size of the enemy or by what they see with natural eyes or what they hear with natural ears. God will have a Caleb and Joshua company who will not cringe at insurmountable odds. The songwriter penned these lines in the song, "God Is Still On The Throne:"

"God is still on the throne, and He will remember His own,

Though trials oppress us and burdens distress us,
He never will leave us alone.

His promise is true; He will not forget you,
God is still on the throne."

The scriptures provide us with many words of encouragement and thus build our confidence in the God who we serve and who is able for every circumstance. Is. 54: 17 says, "No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me," says the Lord" (NKJV). Obviously, our confidence cannot be in the arm of flesh. It is by the Spirit that we can be more than conquerors; it is by the Spirit that we can be victorious; it is by the Spirit that we can overcome seemingly impossible obstacles and the trials and temptations that block our pathway and intrude into our lives. How can there be a victory without an enemy; an overcomer without a trial; virtue without temptation; a graduation without a testing? I John 4: 4 says, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (NKJV). The songwriter declares, "God is bigger than all my problems, bigger than all my fears, bigger than any mountain that I can or cannot see, bigger than my confusion, bigger than all the giants of fear and unbelief, bigger than all the shadows that fall across my path." God is just bigger. In other words, He is the God of the impossible. He has

promised the faithful and obedient a tremendous inheritance. It is nothing short of maturity in Christ; it is nothing short of entering into a glorious kingdom, which shall cover the whole earth. There are some testings along the way for without them there would be no spiritual growth or maturity. God is even now establishing the permanent, which is in stark contrast to the transitory and temporal of this world and this present age.

Yes, we are in warfare, but we have not been left defenseless against the enemy. God is saying to us as He said to Moses, "What is that in thine hand" (Ex. 4: 2, KJV)? What tools have I given you to work with? What weapons can be deployed in order to be victorious against the evil forces and spiritual wickedness that come to challenge us in our daily lives? James 4: 7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Our responsibility is to resist. How do we resist? Here are some methods with which to oppose the enemy:

1. Spiritual gifts - Do not neglect the gift(s) that has been imparted to you. To neglect something is to place little importance or value on it. Paul exhorts Timothy in 1Tim. 4: 14, 15 & 16, "Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership (presbytery). Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (NKJV). Exercising our gifts under the motivation and control of the Holy Spirit is a powerful weapon of our warfare.

2. Praise and thanksgiving – we live in a world that is frequently devoid of thankfulness, but we are to have an attitude of praise and thanksgiving. 1Thess. 5: 18 says, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (KJV). Only one of the ten lepers returned to Jesus to thank Him for being made clean. Jesus said, "Where are the other nine?" Through praise and thanksgiving we gain access to the presence of God as we see in Psalm 100: 4, "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name" (KJV). Another scripture says that He inhabits the praises of His people. These scriptures reveal that God is pleased with our praise and thanksgiving. In Psalm 34: 1-4, we are encouraged to "... bless the Lord at all times; His praise will continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt

His name together. I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears” (KJV).

3. Speaking in tongues— if we have been filled with the Holy Spirit, we can

speak in the heavenly language that only God understands. “For he who speaks in an (unknown) tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the Spirit he speaks mysteries” (1Cor. 14: 2, NKJV). In the exercise of this gift, we edify ourselves and therefore it should be used frequently, for it lifts us above the realm of doubts and fears into the realm of the Spirit. “He who speaks in an (unknown) tongue edifies himself ...” (1Cor. 14: 4, NKJV).

4. Song – we can all sing those wonderful old hymns or those who have a ministry in song can sing a new song, energized by the Holy Spirit. It is a way of communicating with God and therefore lifts us into heavenly places. Psalm 100: 1 & 2 exhorts us to “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing” (KJV). The strongholds of the enemy are broken down and captives are set free as we sing unto the Lord who brings liberty. The songwriter speaks words of truth in the following lines:

“There are battles to be won by praising God,
And the victory is ours in Jesus name,
Though the enemy assail, our God will never fail,

And the victory is ours in Jesus name.”

5. Reading and meditating – “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119: 11, KJV). There are scriptures that will minister to our every circumstance. When Christ was tempted by the devil, His response was to quote scripture. “It is written.” We can do the same during our times of testing, trial and temptation. For example, in Psalm 56: 3 & 4 we read, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God will I praise His word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me” (KJV). The word of God is creative; worlds were formed by the creative word of God. The word of God is powerful; He sent His word to heal and it is through faith in that word that we can overcome all the works and ways of the enemy.

6. Prayer – begin the day in communion with God. Everyday is the day that God has made. We should rejoice and be glad in it. Prayer builds our faith because it is through prayer that we see the hand of God move on our behalf and on behalf of others. Prayer changes things. The scriptures encourage us to “Pray without ceasing” (1Thess. 5:

17). It is our attitude and constant communication with our heavenly Father that is important in waging this spiritual warfare. Prayer is essential in the life of every Christian. By the exercise of prayer we are spiritually nourished and built up in the most holy faith. James 5: 16 says, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” The earnest prayer of faith will accomplish much both naturally and spiritually.

7. Thinking positive thoughts— Phil. 4: 8, “Finally brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble (honest), whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there be any virtue (moral excellence – that which comes from God) and if there be anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things” (NKJV). The carnal mind is far from these things but the spiritual mind dwells on the true, the honest, the just, the pure, the lovely and whatever is of a good report. These scriptures describe where our thoughts should dwell. “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ ...” (2Cor. 10:4 & 5, NKJV).

8. Regular church attendance – we all need the fellowship of the body of Christ. Here is where there is support and encouragement. Here is where needs are met by the flow of the Holy Spirit in our midst. The songwriter captures the power of the moving of the Spirit in the lines: “It’s the anointing sent down from heaven. It’s the anointing that breaks the yoke.” Our God is the God of deliverance. In Heb. 10: 23 – 25 the importance of the assembling of the body of Christ is emphasized. Let us hold fast the confession (profession) of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (NKJV).

In Isaiah 59: 19 there is this promise: “When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him” (KJV). A standard is a barrier or that which represents authority. Let us use the means available and the strength of the Holy Spirit to resist the powers of darkness, and in so doing, they will flee from us.

He is Here

By Andy Snoke

They called him the miracle worker. For truly none had seen the multitude of miracles that were a part of the every day life of this one called Jesus. The Books of Moses, recorded the miracles of long ago, and had been studied for centuries in the Jewish community. But it was much different to read about a long ago miracle, than to witness miracles occurring frequently on an almost daily basis.

Surely, this must be a man sent from God. The local community witnessed the calming of storms (Matt 8:23-27), the feeding of 5,000 (Matt 14:14-21), the walking on water (Matt 14:22-32), leprosy healed (Matt 8:1-4), the Roman Centurions servant healed simply by saying a word, (Matt 8:5-13), the deliverance from various demon possession (Matt 8:28-34), sight given to the blind (Mark 8:22-26), and at least three miracles of raising the dead to life (Jarius's daughter Matt 9:18-26, Lazarus John 11:1-44, and the Widow's son at Nain Luke 7:11-17). These were only a few of the miracles during the public ministry of this one called the Christ.

The miracles were an irrefutable truth that this Jesus had to be sent from God. After Jesus raised from the dead the Widows son, the scriptures say: "And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" Luke 7:15-16.

Nicodemus, who shared in nobility by being a ruler of the Jews, and was also a strict Pharisee, was a witness to many of the miracles that came from the Son of God. This must have been confusing to Nicodemus, for after a lifetime of study, he was still unprepared to understand or know the Son of the Living God.

John 3: 1-6 tells us: "There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said

to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Jesus was always like that. He seemed to use few words to explain "Truth". It does not take a library of books, or countless lectures from the Pharisee's of the age (past or present) to explain truth. It simply takes an encounter with the Son of God, and the opening of our spiritual eyes by the Holy Spirit.

Even with His own disciples, Jesus made it clear that the "truth" that they possessed came only from "understanding" being gifted to them by His Holy Presence.

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?"

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Matt 16:15-17.

So it goes, that under the cover of darkness, Nicodemus for the first time in his life begins to come to the understanding that he must be "born again". His spiritual eyes were opened.

Jesus explained to the crowd gathered that Sabbath day in Jerusalem in the Synagogue, the "mission" of His First coming: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to

the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears (Luke 4:16-21, KJV).

His First coming was prophesied long ago to fulfill specific truths according to Isaiah 61:1-3.

1. The Spirit anointed Jesus to teach. (No one can minister real “truth” without His anointing).

2. To preach the gospel to the poor. (We thank God that all through the ages, the gospel is preached to the poor and the rich alike).

3. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted. (The Lord is tender to all that are of a broken spirit).

4. To preach deliverance to the captives. (The Lord has come to give deliverance to all forms of

captivity. Spiritual, physical, addictions, all).

5. The recovering of sight to the blind. (Spiritually and physically).

6. To set at liberty them that are bruised.

7. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (That is today).

The miracle worker lives today. He, whose Deity was confirmed by His miracles, has not changed. He still works miracles. Both physical and spiritual. His first “visitation” has a purpose in mind according to the scriptures we have just read.

If you are in need of Him for a touch, or deliverance, or the saving of your soul, He is here. If you need your spiritual eyes opened, He is here. If you need delivered from your captivity, He is here. He has not changed.

The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. Psalm 145:17 He is here.

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For a listing of dates and contact
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