

Foundations of Spiritual Warfare

It is possible to spend hours in a prayer meeting but not be praying aright. People are perishing because of ignorance. God does not bless our ignorance. Ignorance has consequences. This subject will affect you in family life, church life and business. I see business people arrogantly moving into regions and getting wiped out because they are ignorant of territorial spirits in various regions. Some are too proud to come into agreement with those whom God has given spiritual authority in that region or nation. **There are breakthroughs we are not walking in because of what we don't know.** C. S. Lewis: **"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them."** When people have been exposed to different extremes, they sometimes develop a reactionary theology. Therefore, it is important for me to lay down foundations from scripture so that we know what we believe and why, with regards to spiritual warfare. Luke 11:20 (NKJV) *"But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you."* NIV *"But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."* The central theme of New Testament theology is the reign of Christ and the establishment of God's Kingdom. This verse shows us that the displacement of darkness by way of warfare is a core activity in the establishment of this Kingdom. The Old and New Testament are connected in this way. God gave the promised land to the Children of Israel and then they had the responsibility to go and take the land. In the same way, Christ's death and resurrection disarmed the enemy and now we are called to enforce that victory and take back what belongs to us. We have been saved (justification), we are being saved (sanctification) and we will be saved (glorification). In this message I will share with you some foundations that ground believers in warfare. It is important to know these before one gets into the tactical aspects of warfare.

1. God is calling ALL of us to be resilient in warfare

Ephesians 6:13 Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Stand: Holding your position in the midst of a fight. One who vanquishes adversaries and holds their ground.

Resilience is about bouncing back quickly after a setback. You might lose some battles but the result of the war has already been settled.

a) This means it is a permanent position of watchfulness as we war.

b) Warfare is a sign of a believer

Mark 16:17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues.

This is not just for pastors

c) Warfare is a necessity because we have an enemy who hates us and our mission

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

"The Christian life is not a playground; it is a battleground." Charles Spurgeon

2. Warfare is central in the atonement and in New Testament Theology

You can't say "I believe in the cross" but I am not into spiritual warfare."

Sometimes we treat spiritual warfare like it is some crazy side act for us Charismaniacs.

Colossians 2:15 - "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

1 John 3:8 - "The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

Romans 16:20 - "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."

Hebrews 2:14 - "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil."

Christianity is the only religion that has dealt with this issue.

3. The Devil has already lost the War

Who is the devil? He was one of the higher order angels. The devil has fallen and experienced a back to back defeat. Sometimes we only talk about what happened at Calvary but it is important to go back in history and see that the devil was actually fired from heaven to the earth. So when he operates on earth he does so illegally, this is not his place of habitation. It is like a taking a fish out of the water and expecting it to survive, it will not because that is not its normal habitation. **When the devil reminds you of your past, you need to remind him of his future. Is it not wonderful to be in a war, where you know the end result?**

Isaiah 14:12-17 How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to the heavens, will raise my throne above the stars of God, I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit. Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: "Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a wilderness, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?"

Mark 1:34: "Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was."

Luke 8:28: "When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!'"

Matthew 25:41 - "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

John 12:31 - "Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out."

Revelation 12:9-10 - "The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and

the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down."

When you are in war as a Christian, you do not fight FOR victory, you fight FROM a place of victory.

There are two kinds of Christians, those who know that they are in warfare and those who do not know that they are in warfare. However, whether you know it or not, you are still in warfare. There is the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness and there is no de-militarised zone. You may recall from when you studied history that there was the Rhineland, where soldiers from opposite sides would play cricket and other games with each other, it was neutral ground. There is no neutral ground when it comes to warfare. If you are in a time of battle and you choose to ignore your enemy, you can be wiped out. If you pretend that there is no war, you can be shot. God wants us to know the enemy's strategy and to know the enemy's future.

4. The enemy can't devour anyone at will

1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV) Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

The devil needed permission to touch Job. I believe there was a link between Job's lifestyle and his hedge.

Job 1:6-11 (NIV): 6 One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. 7 The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the Lord, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it." 8 Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." 9 "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. 10 "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11 But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

Job 2:6 (NIV): "The Lord said to Satan, 'Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.'"

It appears as if some of the suffering we face in life is because God allows certain hedges to be removed that were there. Perhaps in some cases there is evil that comes upon us because there is no hedge in the first place. The fact that Satan recognised that a hedge was around Job implies that this hedge is not around everyone. Despite what Job went through there seemed to be limits; in this case his life could not be taken. **What builds up these hedges in our lives today? Prayer is a vital weapon.**

Luke 22:31-32 31 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

The only people who have a legal right to operate on this earth are those people who were created in the image of God. The earth was created for us not for the devil. We have been called to subdue the earth. Demonic spirits are illegal on the earth, so they roam around looking for people to devour.

They work in your life to the degree to which you give them the legal right to do so. We must fall out of agreement with the enemy.

Eph 4:25-30 25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are

still angry,²⁷ **and do not give the devil a foothold.**²⁸ Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Do the things that attract more of the Spirit in your life and stop doing the things that give the enemy a foothold.

5. You cannot separate deliverance from discipleship.

In Jesus' ministry He would heal and deliver and then say, "Come and follow me".

Luke 4:7- 8 Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours. And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.

Jesus was submitted to His Father and this gave Him victory over the enemy. You will experience deliverance from the enemy to the degree to which you submit yourself to God.

Submission to God is the starting point of warfare.

James 4:7 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Resist: To range in battle against, to oppose yourself.

Do you want to experience God's favour? You already have it, it is about walking in humility. **God gives us a lot of things and then He just tells us the conditions to receiving those things.** It is like having an inheritance and you are told that the only thing left to do is just to make sure you sign for it at a particular place. Have you got the inheritance? Yes, all you have to do is fulfil the applicable conditions. Do you have God's favour? Yes you do, you are a favoured one. The key to walking in divine favour is brokenness and humility. I have got news for you, the devil is afraid of you.

When you are not submitted to Christ, it gives the enemy a legal right to mess with your life. You cannot just quote the scriptures and say, "I am under the blood of Jesus", whilst on the other hand, you are partnering with the enemy because that will give him legal access to mess around with your life. The Bible says, resist the devil.

Warfare is more about your lifestyle than it is about memorizing a few incantations or secret formulae.

Reflection Questions

- 1. What does it mean to "pray aright" in the context of spiritual warfare, and how can ignorance hinder effective prayer?**
- 2. In what ways can spiritual warfare impact different areas of life, such as family, church, and business?**
- 3. How does C.S. Lewis's quote about the two errors regarding belief in devils challenge or affirm your understanding of spiritual warfare?**
- 4. Why is it crucial for believers to understand and recognize the presence of territorial spirits in different regions?**
- 5. How does the victory of Christ's death and resurrection influence the believer's role in spiritual warfare today?**
- 6. What is the significance of resilience in spiritual warfare, and how can believers cultivate it in their daily lives?**
- 7. How does understanding the historical defeat of Satan provide confidence in spiritual battles?**
- 8. What steps can you take to ensure that you do not give the devil a foothold in your life?**
- 9. Why is it important to integrate discipleship with deliverance in spiritual warfare, and how can one practically submit to God to resist the devil?**
- 10. In what ways can humility and brokenness be seen as key weapons in the believer's arsenal for spiritual warfare?**