



Introduction To Spiritual Warfare

The basic theme of this message is to teach what Jesus taught, that which took men who were fishermen, tax collectors, etc., and changed them into reproductive Christians who reached their world with the Gospel in a demonstration of power.



There is a great war being waged in the world today. It is not a conflict between nations, tribes, or government leaders. It is not a rebellion or coup. It is an important invisible battle taking place in the spirit world. The Bible states that God's people are destroyed because of lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). One of the main areas in which believers are being defeated due to lack of knowledge is in spiritual warfare.

The early Church viewed their spiritual experience in terms of warfare. Military terminology is used throughout

the New Testament. Protection was seen in the armor of God. The Word of God was compared to a sword. Satan's attacks were called fiery darts. Faith was the "good fight" and believers were told to "war a good warfare." The early Church knew they were engaged in an intense spiritual struggle.

The same spiritual battle continues today but instead of fighting the enemy, believers are often building great church buildings, producing musical dramas, holding fellowship meetings, and fighting one another while this great spiritual battle wages around them. Satan has even intensified his attacks against a church that has withdrawn from the front lines of battle.

As the end of time approaches it is even more important for believers to understand spiritual warfare than in the early days of church history. The Apostle Paul warned:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

(II Timothy 3:1)



In order to be properly prepared for these perilous times, renewed emphasis must be placed on the strategies of spiritual warfare. The Christian life is war. The sooner we recognize and prepare for it, the sooner we will experience victory.

Luke 14:31 says, "What king, going to make war against

another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?" No king ever entered into a battle without a careful examination of his resources and development of battle strategies. In essence, that is what we are doing in this message. We are making a careful evaluation of the strategy, weapons, and power available to us to win the war against our enemy, satan.

In the military world, "strategies" are the science of forming and carrying out military operations. It is the method or plan which leads to the goal of victory. In this message you will learn to formulate and carry out spiritual military strategy which will bring victory in the spirit world.



THE CALL TO ARMS

A SUMMONS TO THE INVISIBLE WAR

There is a great battle being waged in the spiritual world.

It is a personal battle within between the flesh and the spirit. It is a social battle with the evil forces of the world.

It is a spiritual battle with evil supernatural powers.

In Old Testament times a trumpet was used to summons God's people to battle. Today, a spiritual summons is sounding throughout the nations of the world. It is a summons to the invisible war. It is a call to arms.

The Invisible War

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. (Ephesians 6:12)



INTRODUCTION

As you learned earlier there is a great war being waged in the world today. It is not a conflict between nations, tribes, or government leaders. It is not a rebellion or a coup. It is an invisible battle taking place in the spirit world.

This message introduces the invisible war in which every believer is engaged. It is a war where no one wears a uniform, but where everyone is a target. The historical and prophetic record of this war is contained in God's Word, the Bible.



THE NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL REALMS

To understand this invisible war, you must first understand the natural and spiritual worlds. Man exists in two worlds: The natural world and the spiritual world.

The natural world is that which can be seen, felt, touched, heard, or tasted. It is tangible and visible. The country, nation, city or village in which you live is part of the natural world. You are a resident in a natural kingdom

located on one of the visible continents of the world. You can see the people who are part of your environment. You can communicate with them. You can experience the sights, sounds, and smells around you.

But there is another world in which you live. That world is a spiritual world. You cannot see it with your physical eyes, but it is just as real as the natural world in which you live.

Paul speaks of this division of natural and spiritual:

There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (I Corinthians 15:40)

All men have a natural body which lives in the natural world. But man is also a spiritual being with an eternal soul and spirit. Man is body, soul, and spirit. Your spiritual being (soul and spirit) is part of a spiritual world just as your natural body is part of the natural world.



SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

Because spiritual warfare is just that...spiritual...it must be understood with a spiritual mind. In our natural, sinful state, we can not understand spiritual things:

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (I Corinthians 2:14)

It is necessary to use "spiritual discernment" to understand spiritual things.

Perhaps one of the best examples of natural and spiritual discernment is recorded in II Kings chapter 6. It records the story of a natural battle in which troops of the enemy nation of Syria had surrounded a small town called Dothan where the prophet Elisha was staying. When Elisha's servant, Gehazi, saw the great host of the enemy he became fearful. Elisha prayed that God would open Gehazi's spiritual eyes so he could see the angelic hosts surrounding and protecting them. On this occasion, God actually opened the natural eyes of Gehazi and allowed him to visibly see the superior forces of God aligned for battle.

The story of this battle at Dothan is similar to present spiritual conditions in the Church. There are some, like Elisha, who see clearly into the realm of the spirit. They know there is a conflict occurring, have identified the enemy, and recognize the greater forces of God that assure victory. There are others like Gehazi, who with a little encouragement, will be able to open their spiritual eyes and no longer be fearful of and defeated by the enemy. But sadly, there are many people who, like those in the city of Dothan, are spiritually sleeping. They do not even know that the enemy has surrounded them and is poised for attack.



TWO SPIRITUAL KINGDOMS

Within the natural and spiritual realms of which we are speaking there exists separate kingdoms which are ruled by natural and spiritual leaders.



NATURAL KINGDOMS:

All men live in a natural kingdom of this world. They live in a city or village which is part of a nation. That nation is a kingdom of the world. A natural kingdom is a territory or people over which an actual king or political leader is the sovereign ruler. The Bible speaks of these natural kingdoms as "kingdoms of the world". The kingdoms of the world have come under the power and influence of satan:

Again, the Devil taketh Him (Jesus) up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

And saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee, if you wilt fall down and worship me. (Matthew 4:8-9)

John 5:19 sadly reminds us that "the whole world is under the control of the evil one".

SPIRITUAL KINGDOMS:

In addition to the natural kingdoms of this world there are two spiritual kingdoms: The Kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom Of God. Every person alive is a resident of one of these two kingdoms.

The Kingdom of Satan consists of Satan, spiritual beings called demons, and all men who live in sin and rebellion to God's Word. These, plus the world and the flesh, are the spiritual forces of evil at work in the world today.

The Kingdom of God consists of God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, spiritual beings called angels, and all men who live in righteous obedience to God's Word. These are the spiritual forces of good.

The Kingdom of God is not a denominational church. Denominations are man-made organizations of groups of churches. They have been established for practical purposes of organization and administration.

Denominations are major church organizations like Baptist, Assembly of God, Methodist, Lutheran, etc. The Bible speaks of the true Church which is not a denomination or religious organization. The true Church is composed of all those who have become residents of the Kingdom of God.

At the present time in the natural world, the Kingdom of God exists individually within every man, woman, boy or girl who has made Jesus Lord of their lives. It exists communally in the true church and wherever people make this world the kind of world God wants it to be. In the future, there will be an actual visible manifestation of God's Kingdom.



THE INVISIBLE WAR

The invisible spiritual war is a battle which involves all men and women. Because the Kingdom of Satan is a spiritual kingdom...

...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.

(Ephesians 6:12)

Spiritual warfare is not a natural battle between flesh and blood. It is not a battle of man against man. It is not a visible battle. It is an invisible struggle in the spirit world. It is a battle within and around man. It is not a visible war because spirits are involved and we learn in Luke 24:39 that a spirit does not have flesh and bones.

Spiritual warfare is "multidimensional", which means it is fought in different dimensions. It is...

*1. A social battle between the believer and the world:
John 15:18-27*

*2. A personal battle between the flesh and the spirit:
Galatians 5:16-26*

3. A supernatural battle between the believer and evil supernatural powers: Ephesians 6:10-27

Every person alive is engaged in this battle, whether he realizes it or not. There is no neutral ground. Unbelievers are in bondage to evil and have been taken captive by the enemy forces. They are victims of the war.

Believers have been freed from the enemy through Jesus Christ and are victors, but they are still engaged in the war. The key verse for this message indicates that we (all believers) wrestle against evil spiritual forces.

"Wrestling" involves close personal contact. No one is exempt from this battle. No one can view it from a distance. You are in the midst of conflict whether you acknowledge it or not. If you believe it will get better, you are wrong. The Christian warfare never ceases.



WHERE THE BATTLE RAGES

This invisible war is being waged on earth:

*The thief (Satan) cometh (on earth) not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.
(John 10:10)*

Satan fights to maintain control of the kingdoms of the world. He does not want them to come under God's authority. The battle also rages within the hearts, minds, and souls of men and women. Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers and attacks believers in the areas of worship, the Word, their daily walk, and their work for God.



HOW THE BATTLE STARTED

The invisible war started in Heaven with an angel named Lucifer who was originally a beautiful angel created by God and was part of the Kingdom of God. Lucifer decided he wanted to take over God's Kingdom. You can read about his rebellion in Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:12-19. You will study about it in detail later in this course. A group of angels joined Lucifer (now called Satan) in this rebellion. Lucifer and the rebellious angels were cast out of Heaven by God. They formed their own kingdom on earth:

And there was war in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon (Satan); and the dragon fought and his angels. (Revelation 12:7)

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:9)

Lucifer became known as Satan and the angels which followed him in rebellion as demons. Demon spirits can enter, torment, control, and use humans who belong to Satan's Kingdom. They motivate evil acts which are done by men and women. Satan directs his demons in their evil activities. He combines these powerful forces with the world and the flesh to war against all mankind.



REASONS BEHIND THE CONFLICT

Man was originally created in the image of God and for

the glory of God (Genesis chapter 2). The invisible war against man started with the first temptation in the garden of Eden (Genesis chapter 3). Satan caused Adam and Eve to sin. This resulted in all men inheriting the basic sin nature and committing individual acts of sin due to this nature:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. (Romans 5:12)

It also resulted in the invisible war between man and the forces of evil:

And I will put enmity between thee (Satan) and the woman (mankind), and between thy seed (the forces of evil) and her seed (the forces of good represented by the Lord Jesus Christ)... (Genesis 3:15)

Because of sin, man was separated from God and condemned to death. But God loved man so much that He made a special plan to save him from sin:

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:16-17)

Through belief in Jesus, confession of and repentance from sin, men and women can be released from the power of the enemy. The death and resurrection of Jesus not

only resulted in salvation from sin. It also defeated the enemy, Satan:

...For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8)

But if Satan is defeated, why does the war still rage? Following any war there are always pockets of enemy resistance, rebellious troops that will not give up until forced to do so. Although Jesus defeated Satan, we are living in territory which is still occupied by enemy resistance forces. Understanding spiritual warfare strategies gives us the ability to deal with these evil powers.

Satan is trying to keep men captive in sin. Through deceptive methods he is enticing men and women to temporary lusts of sinful living. He aims for the affections of the soul and spirit which rightfully belong to God:

The thief (Satan) cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

Satan still wants to be the supreme ruler. He is waging an intense battle for the heart, mind, soul, and spirit of man. His strategies are directed at God, His plan, and His people. The battle will continue until the great final conflict which you will study about later.



THE MEANING OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Spiritual warfare is the analysis of and active participation in the invisible spiritual war. It includes study of the opposing forces of good and evil, the strategies of Satan, and spiritual strategies for overcoming the enemy. Spiritual warfare is more than a mere analysis of spiritual principles. It includes active participation in warfare by application of these strategies in life and ministry.

One of the most effective strategies of Satan is to keep believers ignorant of his devices. Paul said it is important to know Satan's strategies...

...Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. (II Corinthians 2:11)

We should learn all we can about satan's strategies of attack. We must also understand the Scriptural basis of victory over satan and the forces of evil. We are called to intelligent combat. Basic to the understanding of spiritual warfare is this key principle:

You must recognize that all battles of life, whether physical, spiritual, emotional mental, financial or with human personalities are only outward manifestations of a spiritual cause.

Although in the natural world problems may seem to occur through the circumstances of life, the basis of these natural battles is in the spirit world. Read the story of Job (Job chapters 1-2) which confirms this principle.

We have tried to correct the evils of this world through education, legislation, and improved environment. It has

not worked because the visible evils of the world are the results of an underlying spiritual cause. They cannot be corrected by natural means.



TO WHICH KINGDOM DO YOU BELONG?

In the natural world a king is the sovereign ruler of a kingdom. All the territory and people in the kingdom belong to him. He has the power of life and death over his subjects. The same is true in the spiritual world. You are either part of the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Satan. Either God or Satan has power over your life.

People enter the Kingdom of Satan through natural birth. The Bible teaches that all men are born in sin. This means that they have a basic sin nature or the "seed" of sin within. Their natural inclination is to do evil:

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Psalms 51:5)

Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. (Romans 5:12)

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

(Romans 3:23)

Because we are born with the basic sin nature, we have all at one time been part of the Kingdom of Satan. All who remain sinners remain part of the Kingdom of Satan.

The whole message of God's written Word, the Holy Bible, is the appeal to man to move from this evil Kingdom of Satan to the Kingdom of God. Men are born into the Kingdom of Satan through natural birth. They must be reborn into the Kingdom of God through spiritual birth. Entrance to the Kingdom of God is by new birth experience explained in John chapter 3.

There are only two divisions in the invisible war. Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me" (Luke 11:23). You cannot be neutral in this war. You are on one side or the other in this spiritual war. Even some believers, because of their fear of confrontation with the enemy, try to ignore the war and form a truce with the enemy. They think if they ignore satan, he will not bother them. This is one of satan's main strategies. He tries to render members of God's army immobile by his terror tactics.

But there is no neutrality in this war. You are either a victim or victor. The spiritual "call to arms" is going out...Are you on the side of good or of evil? Are you part of Satan's Kingdom or the Kingdom of God? To which kingdom do you belong? Are you a victim or a victor in the invisible war?