

Spiritual Warfare: Understanding Strongholds

Matthew 12:

“Prayer is picking a fight with the Enemy. It's spiritual warfare. Intercession transports us from the sidelines to the front lines without going anywhere. And that is where the battle is won or lost. Prayer is the difference between us fighting for God and God fighting for us. But we can't just hit our knees. We also have to take a step, take a stand. And when we do, we never know what God will do next.” - Mark Batterson

Introduction

This week required an extremely unusual work of intercessory prayer

Friday God squeezed my heart for three hours of prayer: I was suppose to take another pastor hunting for my last hunt of the season. God wouldn't let me quit praying and I had to finally pick up the phone and cancel plans.

10:17a - called to cancel plans

10:19a - Katie called me; 10:29a Katie called me; 10:41a Katie texted me

10:56a - text message from a relapsing addict

11:00 - Call and pray with Scottie

11:27a - text saying: I am under spiritual attack all of a sudden. I can feel a weight on me in my spirit, pushes on my skull in my thoughts. I fell oppression...The lies are there...

11:29a- Call and pray with addict

Saturday 4am - text of music and impressed to leave to drive two hours

TT - There are things we learn about the warfare against the Christian. I might call this

I. Strongman Must Be Identified- v. 29 - *“he first bind the strong man...”*

Ephesians 6:12

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.

1 Peter 5:8

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”
Genesis 6:5

“Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.”
Exodus 34:7 KJV

II. Strongman Must Be Bound - v. 29 - “Lord, I am not worthy...”

“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 KJV

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Romans 12:1-2 KJV

“Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's.”

2 Corinthians 10:7 KJV

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

Matthew 28:18 KJV

III. Strongman's Good Must Be Spoiled- v. 29 - *“and then he will spoil his goods...”*

As long as you're holding on to the goods of the enemy you're not going to get victory

“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.”

Matthew 5:29-30 KJV

IV. Strongman Must Be Replaced - v. 44-45 - *“and then he will spoil his goods...”*

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Philippians 4:8 KJV

Closing:

This reminds me of a lagoon in French Polynesia. It is one of the largest lagoons of its kind in the world. It is of beautiful turquoise color because of its white sandy floor. The water level lowers and rises ever so slightly with the ebb and flow of the ocean tides. The lagoon is peaceful and calm, but the pass through which the tides rush is treacherous and filled with sharks that await an easy meal. One day a few tourists swam too close to the pass and began to be dragged toward danger. The peacefulness of the lagoon had led them to be careless and lazy in keeping themselves from the sharks.

Gradually they had floated on the soft current toward the pass.

Eventually they went too far and found themselves beyond the point where their own abilities could save them. Outside help was necessary, so a speedboat was sent to rescue them.

As the swimmers in this lagoon should have done, we need to put forth a consistent, positive effort every day in order to remain in safe waters. We need to develop good habits that can replace old, bad ones. Satan desires that we become lazy and complacent. Daily scripture study and prayer, service, repentance, and following the promptings of the Holy Ghost can keep us safely in the spiritual waters of the Lord. Many of us may already find ourselves in serious spiritual danger and in desperate need of rescue. Jesus Christ, like the operators of the speedboat, has power to save lost souls. Let us all, whether we feel we are in safe waters or not, swim to Him, our Savior and Redeemer. Then the “good spirit” will never leave but will always be with us

1. Identify a strong hold in your life
2. Three circles brokenness