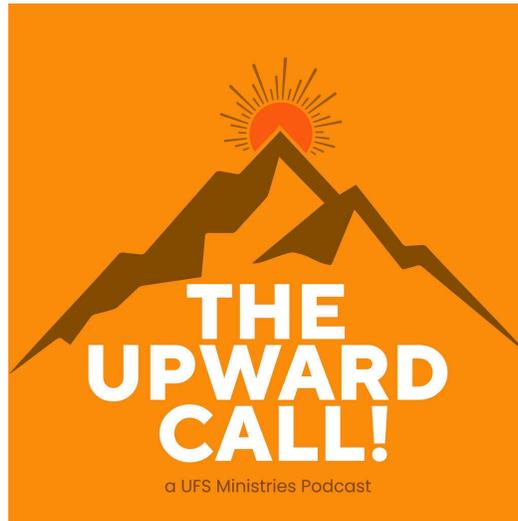




Unto Full Stature Ministries



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Series 6. Some Deeper Principles

E1. Spiritual Warfare

The Church is not just an ambassador **for** the Kingdom of God, the Church **is** the Kingdom of God in the earth; where the Church is, there is the Kingdom; where the Church is not, there is not the kingdom of God but the dark domain of the devil. The Church consists of the children of God, in whom the power and influence of the enemy has been broken; and they are now the means by which Satan's works will be unraveled, broken apart, one by one and held in restraint until the appearing of Christ; at which point the devil and all his dominions will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Rev. 20.10 *"10The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."*

1 Jn. 5.19 – “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”

1 Jn.3.8 -- “He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this **purpose** the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

Jn. 12.31 – “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”

These scriptures describe the current conditions of the world and the Church in relationship to the devil:

Firstly, though the mass of society deny it, the world is actually the domain of Satan. He gained control and authority over the earth at the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. This point is really emphasized when Satan tempted Jesus in Mt. 4.8-9,

“Again, the devil took Him (Jesus) up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”

Jesus did not confront Satan on his proclaimed rule over the kingdoms of the world, only upon his demand for worship, ¹⁰ “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” Thus in 2 Cor. 4.4 Satan is called “*the god of this world.*” As such, he has blinded the minds to those of the world with sin, rebellion to God, and of spiritual blindness, and has deceived and brought under his influence the current world systems (governments, education, media, etc.) Though these worldly organizations exist in the minds of man with “good intentions,” they are none-the-less at their core driven by man’s quest for power, authority, and control and to function independently of God and His Kingdom, or in attempting to seek His laws such as love, selflessness, humility, and justice. Satanic influence is blatantly seen in the extreme liberalism of many governments, businesses, political organizations, mass media, entertainment industries, etc., all of which ultimately promotes a Godless society.

Secondly, the entrance of the Kingdom of God into this dark environment of Satan’s domain came with the birth of Jesus Christ. In Him was the *light* and *life* of the world. His objective was to redeem man from this darkness and “*that He might destroy the works of the devil*” _ all his plans of wickedness, his influence and control over the hearts of the people, of his ambition to reign supreme, even to sit in the seat of God. The works of the devil are seen here to have a sense of consistency and control, a kind of solid frontal assault on mankind; and to “destroy” those works means that Christ, by His coming, exposes the devil’s works thoroughly and is the means to undo the bonds by which they are held together; simply, that Satan’s kingdom will literally “fall apart.”

Thirdly, even as Christ is the only true source of *light* and *life* to this world, He is also the only source for Satan's downfall; and, being the "only source" means that Jesus Christ individually and alone will not destroy the works of the devil, but He is the means, the source, by which this work will be sustained, and the devil will be restrained in the earth. Upon His birth Jesus was the only point of the light of the Kingdom of God upon the whole of this earth, but following His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of authority in Heaven, He is now the head of His Church, a fuller, more comprehensive and corporate manifestation of the Kingdom of God in the earth. It might be well to dwell upon Eph. 1.19-23 to have a true sense of this corporate calling:

*"**19**and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power **20**which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, **21**far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. **22**And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, **23**which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."*

The Church is not just an ambassador **for** the Kingdom of God, the Church **is** the Kingdom of God in the earth; where the Church is, there is the Kingdom; where the Church is not, there is not the kingdom of God but the dark domain of the devil. The Church consists of the children of God, in whom the power and influence of the enemy has been broken; and they are now the means by which Satan's works will be unraveled, broken apart, one by one and held in restraint until the appearing of Christ; at which point the devil and all his dominions will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Rev. 20.10 *"**10**The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."*

Current Spiritual Warfare

Biblically, Satan is described as powerful, intelligent, and subtle and as a deceiver and tempter, with attributes of pride, arrogance and is the chief opposer of God and our Christ. He is portrayed as a liar and murderer; he is the head of all fallen angels, demons. Of particular concern to the Church is that the devil, his demonic cohorts, and the human vessels useful to him in the world may even deceptively appear as an angel of light but is in reality an agent of evil. As it is written,

*2 Cor. 11.13-15 **13**For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. **14**And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. **15**Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

And so the picture of spiritual warfare becomes clearer as the character and purpose of God's arch enemy is revealed. To do battle against his influence even with one sinful or unrighteous point in a believer's own life, or in the life of another, is spiritual warfare, for it is

also the exact point of the unraveling of the devil's kingdom. I believe this spiritual warfare might be summarized more fully by considering the weightier matters of Satan and his kingdom, this being a realm of **darkness, sin, and death**.

Spiritual Darkness Versus Light

Darkness is the absence of **light**. In the Bible *light* is symbolic of God's presence; where His absence is *darkness*; light is symbolic of truth which is spiritual reality; it is opposite of lies, fables, and deceitful and misleading stories. Light is symbolic of goodness, an inherent goodness of the character of God and true believers; whereas darkness is empathy to others while magnifying one's "self;" and if darkness symbolizes spiritual blindness to the one true God and Lord Jesus Christ, then light reveals their true identity. To be an agent of light is doing spiritual warfare, exposing the darkness and revealing the light whether it be in one's own life or in another, whether at home, in the market place, in school, or at the workplace, it is spiritual warfare.

Darkness is not just to be tolerated while focusing only on the light of Christ. Darkness is to be opposed, consumed by the light. Where there is no faith, darkness blocks the light of God. The way of the wicked is in darkness; their way is obscured, and they cannot see the pitfalls and demise of their walk. Jesus began His ministry by saying in Jn. 8.12, "*Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'*" But then He further states in Mt. 5.14-16,

"14'You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

So do you see that the Church represents the corporate Christ as the only source of light to the world. To manifest and make known the light of God is to overcome the kingdom of darkness, as it is written in Jn. 1.5, "*And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*" I was once out for an early morning walk and noticed that the stars, like the prophets of old, gave a small measure of light to the earth, and the moon, like the Old Testament, gave more light creating shadows of darkness; but when the sun rose, as the Son of God, all darkness was consumed by its light. Marvelous is that light.

Sin Versus Righteousness

Sin is the opposite of **righteousness**. It is a major force of the enemy. A true believer does not have to be schooled on sin, or be given a list of commandments, for he knows full well the nature of sin and wickedness in the world today; his or her own conscience convicts them of its wickedness and the indwelling Spirit of Christ rises up against it. He abhors sin. But **righteousness** is conducting one's self in a morally right and just manner; it comes with

aligning our lives with God's own character and standards_ the highest epitome of this is explained in Gal. 2.20, it is "*no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me,*" a short but potent word of God.

Righteousness has its source in the heart where a transformation happens by first having a right relationship with our Lord; this meaning, and is something I hold firm to, that as one humbly and submissively draws near to God in Christ, He then draws near to you imparting into your soul a measure of His nature. As in the natural, one cannot draw close to a nuclear reactor without being effected by its radiation; one cannot draw near to God, and He to you without having a measure of God imparted into our soul. To fight for and pursue righteousness over sin wherever and whenever sin rises its ugly head, is spiritual warfare; whether it be in one's own members, in another, or in society, one must take a stand for righteousness. As it is written in 2 Cor. 10.4,

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds." To be discussed more thoroughly below.

The thought that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit must be active in our minds at all times; that the weapons of our warfare consists of **prayer**, the **word of God**, and **faith**, all of which activate God's grace to deliver from sin, to quench or extinguish all the fiery darts of the enemy (Eph. 6.16), and to demolish the strongholds of the evil empire. In regards to the word of God in particular, it is written, 1 Thes. 2.13 "*but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe,*" meaning meditating upon and receiving the word of God effectively works in our souls transforming us.

And what are the strongholds of the enemy? To name a few are: prejudice, unbelief, fleshly desires, worldly affections, desires for wealth and worldly power, vices and addictions of all sorts, idolatry, and impurity. According to 2 Cor. 10.5,

"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,"

This word encourages us to confront the plans of a wicked world; of various false philosophies; and of the distorted reasonings of the enemies of the Gospel; confronting arguments of how good human nature is; and of the pride of the human heart. These things oppose the knowledge of God and exalts itself in vain self-confidence. Societies of the world entertain vain and unfounded opinions respecting their own excellence and feel they do not need the provisions of the Gospel and are unwilling to submit to God. This is the precise place of our warfare.

Death Versus Life

Death is opposite to **life**. Since the hour that Adam ate of the forbidden fruit until this day, all living things must die. All things must die of the flesh as when the soul leaves the body, and

tragically man has also died of the spirit when he became alienated from God. As it is written,

Eph. 2.1-2 *“1And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2in which you used to walk when you conformed to the ways of this world and of the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit who is now at work in the sons of disobedience.”* And,

Eph. 4.18-19 *“18They are darkened in their understanding and alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardness of their hearts. 19Having lost all sense of shame, they have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity, with a craving for more.”*

Thus, two deaths must be overcome, the physical and the spiritual. For every believer that has ever lived there is the promise and surety of the resurrection of these bodies into new and eternal bodies. This victory is won in Christ; He has overcome sin and death. However, the matter of “spiritual” death and life eternal is the realm of spiritual warfare by the church today. All the world lies in the grasp of sin and death. Having discussed sin, we’ll now focus on death and life.

Through all my writings I have repeatedly emphasized the absolute necessity of being “born again.” All too often this idea is taken lightly, falsely assuming it to be something it is not. It is singularly the most powerful miracle to ever happen in one’s life. Using Jesus’ own words to Nicodemus in John 3,

“3Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” And,

“5Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

The new birth is the regeneration, the bringing to life the fallen spirit, the reuniting of the spirit of man with God. It is being born of the seed of Christ. God becomes our spiritual Father. God’s own life, everlasting life, enters into the believer. This is from death to life now in relationship with God, and a guarantee from death to life of these mortal bodies at the resurrection. This is a most critical warfare of believers (the Church) with the archenemy of our God, for it is at this point of battle that souls are actually gained to the Kingdom of God and lost from the camp of the enemy. Consider Col. 1.13,

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”

The *power of darkness* is, of course, that power that was exerted over us in that dark kingdom, to which we formerly belonged, the kingdom of Satan. This means that we have been transferred from that dark kingdom to the Kingdom of God. We therefore are now subject to new spiritual laws, and we now belong to a different community_ the Church. This change is made possible solely by “regeneration,” in the “new birth,” by which we immediately

pass from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, from the realm of sin and death, of ignorance and fear, to one of holiness and righteousness and happiness. **No change in a man or woman's life is so important as this! It bares eternal consequences.**

This is the frontline of the war where the greatest battles occur. Satan throws all his arsenal against this. Satan is thrilled with all the atheists and agnostics, and all the false religions and witch doctors of the world, perhaps even giving his power to endorse them; for they pose absolutely no threat to him or his kingdom. Nor does he fret over religious Christianity, otherwise known as nominal Christianity, where confessions of faith are recited, ceremonial baptisms and other rituals performed, and church attendance is made with best intentions. None of these pose a threat to him or his kingdom.

The greatest threat to the devil and the kingdom of darkness lies in him losing souls to the new birth in Christ. These are the ones once held in darkness but now indwelt by the Holy Spirit. These are the ones who become the true soldiers of God, ever faithful to Christ. These hold the power in faith to overcome Satan,

2 Cor. 10.4 *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,"*

These born again, Spirit-filled believers do not use their natural talents and worldly wisdom to overcome the wiles of the devil, nor rely on eloquence of speech or human power, but use the word of God effectively, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and their lives bearing witness as a testimony to the efficacy of Christ. There is a divine calling upon their lives to bring light into the world of darkness, to bring not only the word of reconciliation to God, but the word of regeneration by which others may also become children of God and heirs of His kingdom.

For every soul saved is not just a lost soul to Satan but one who has been added as his adversary, one who is relentless to see his destruction. This is spiritual warfare. Satan's strongholds will begin to crumble. The root word for "stronghold" is a fortress. In people's lives there are fortresses in the heart, well-guarded walled defenses that flatly opposes the truth and light of Christ while holding close the lies of the devil. It is in these fortresses sinners entrench themselves against reproof and conviction of sin and all that opposes itself to the reality of Christ. Recall the first city encountered by Joshua in his conquest of the Promised Land; it was the fortress city of Jericho, seemingly sealed up by great walls. God instructed Joshua to march around the city one time for six days, and on the seventh day to march around Jericho seven times, have the priest blow their trumpets and have all the people to give a great shout. And then it is written in Jos. 6.20,

"So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city."

And so it was by faith, not the power of the flesh, that Joshua circled the city the final time, trumpet blared, and the shouts were heard and "mightily" under God the walls of Jericho fell outward to the ground. The word of God was mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. The walls of Jericho fell by the power of God, but then God used the Israelite army to then storm

the city and destroy their enemy. Faith in Christ causes the walls of these spiritual fortresses to crumble, opening the way for light and life to enter in.

There is the purpose for the Church. When Jesus said in Mt. 16. "I will build My church," I am sure He did not have numbers in mind, but rather a people subject to His will and purpose, a people empowered to act upon His behalf. It has been written that the purpose of the Church is to glorify God, build up to maturity its members, and to evangelize the world. Left alone, these acts are as vague as the phrase "spiritual warfare." But now you have a fuller understanding of spiritual warfare and its essential importance in fulfilling our Lord's plan and purpose for the Church.

Questions for Discussion

1. When considering all the governments of the world, its cultures, societies, and masses of people, explain the role and authority of Satan in the world today.
2. Is the Kingdom of God anywhere in the world today? Explain its extent.
3. Spiritual warfare happens when the church, the members of its body, rises up and defeat Satan in one or more of his three realms of control: darkness, sin, and death. Discuss the nature of this warfare :
 - a. As one brings "light" into the realm of darkness
 - b. As sin is overcome in "righteousness"
 - c. As death is consumed in "life." What are the two deaths that believers must eventually overcome. Why is the "new birth" the single most victory of Satan.
4. Explain how you might become involved in this spiritual warfare.