

DELIVERANCE FROM DEMONIC OPPRESSION

Deliverance



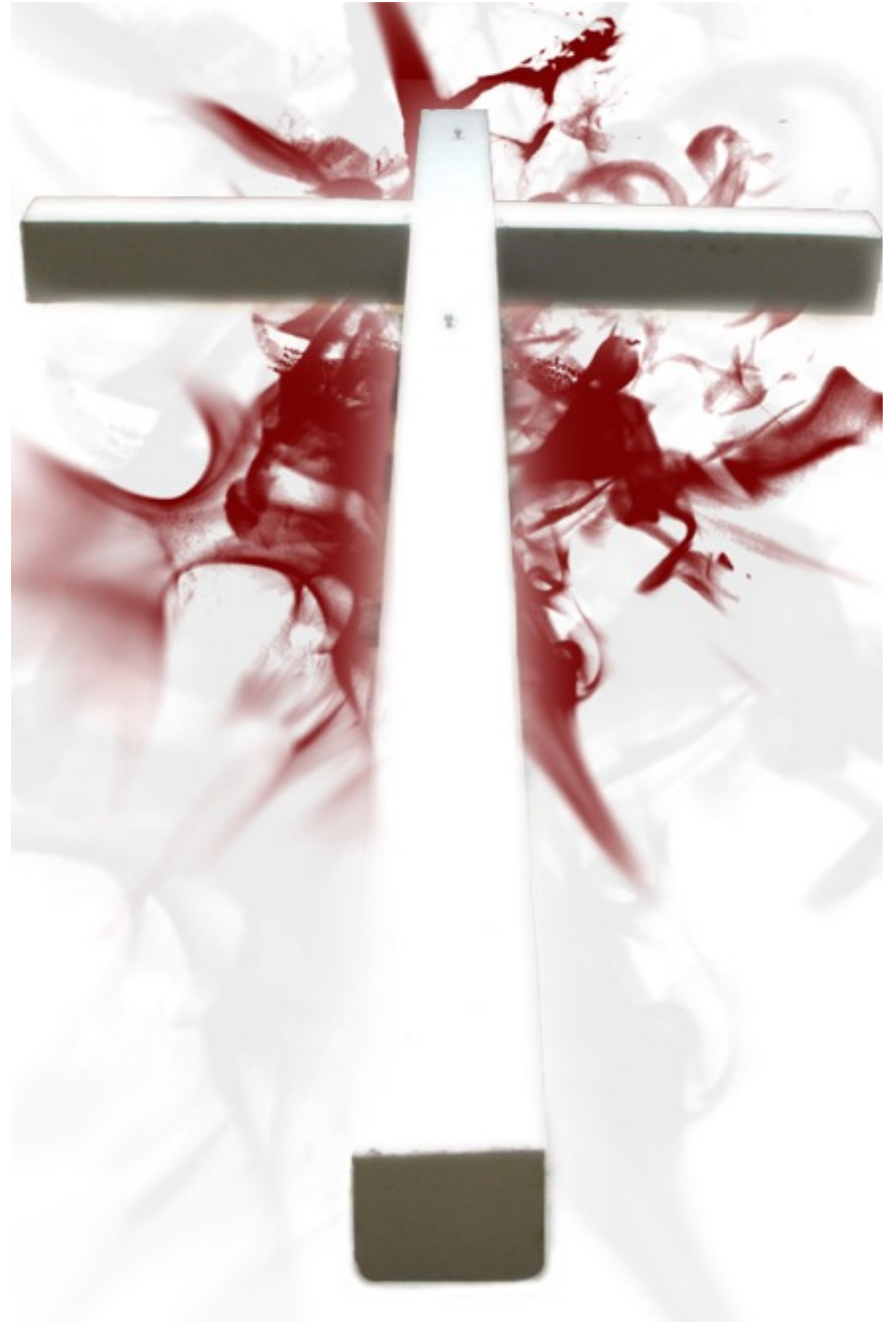
From Demonic Oppression

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A Look at the Beginning

Ephesians 5:25-27

Turn in your Bible to Ezekiel 28:13-19, "*Every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you. You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and shall be no more forever.*"



Look also at Isaiah 14:12-17, "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High. Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?" Now look at Ephesians 6:10-13, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Mark 5:1-19 says, "Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me. For He said to him, Come out of the man, unclean spirit! Then He asked him, What is your name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion; for we are many. Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not

send them out of the country. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, Send us to the swine, that we may enter them. And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea. So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine. Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."

I wanted to share these scriptures with you, so that you would have some scriptural background on our study, and to let you know that there is a war going on around you between the ministering spirits of God and the spirits of darkness, and they are fighting over your life! In this study we are going to talk about the devil, demons, and demon possession and especially their origin. In these scriptures from Ezekiel and Isaiah, Matthew, Ephesians and Mark, God wills us as much as we need to know and as much as He wants us to know on the subject, with some light as to the origin and the fall of him whom we call Satan or Lucifer.

Although we are going to be looking primarily at demons, I want you to understand the origin of Satan. Notice the similarity of Ezekiel and Isaiah. He says, "You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you."

Here was a creature, or a created being who was a covering cherub, one of the angels of heaven. We read further, "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor." Now notice what God said, "I cast you to the ground." This happened before Adam ever sinned, before Adam was ever put in the garden. Let's compare Isaiah's record, "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer." Now do you see the comparison? This is talking about what happened when Lucifer sinned. "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High." This is talking about something that happened when Lucifer sinned in his rebellion against God.

Lucifer, or Satan, as we call him today, had a kingdom, he had a throne, he ruled, because he said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will ascend into heaven, I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the clouds; I will be like the most High." In other words, he wasn't satisfied just with his kingdom, he wanted to take it all over and run the whole thing. It is very obvious where that spirit comes from, because you see it today. That is what Hitler wanted to do. You see the same spirit in the Communists. You see it in the lives of lost and/or carnal church members. They want to rule the whole thing.

Satan had a kingdom of some kind down here before Adam ever existed, because he was in Eden, we read in Ezekiel, before Adam was ever on the scene and before he had been cast down. When he came on the scene, and approached Adam and Eve in the garden, he was already a fallen being. He ruled over his kingdom and had a throne. He said, "I will exalt my kingdom or my throne above the stars of God, I will ascend into heaven, I will ascend above the clouds." Obviously this earth had been entrusted to the oversight of Lucifer.

This will explain something to us that is difficult for us to understand. You see, Satan and all of his cohorts fell (in Revelation 12:4 we are told that one third of all the angels rebelled with Lucifer). That will explain why this earth is infested with these spirits. According to the Bible they are everywhere. These spirits of Satan are loose here on the earth right now and we have to deal with them.

If all of this happened before God created Adam, when did it happen? I believe the answer is found in the Word of God, as seen in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." How long "in the beginning is" I don't really know. The second verse reads this way, "And the earth was without form, and void." The question that we need to answer is this - Did God create the earth "without form and void"? To find the answer we must go over to Jeremiah 4:23-26 describes the condition of the earth as the result of judgment, "I beheld the earth and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all its cities were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger." And Isaiah 24:1 tells us, "Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste, distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants." Isaiah 45:18 takes us back to the creation, and says, "For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it, who has established it, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited..."

The Hebrew word carries with it the thought that God RECREATED, and when He made man, He said to man, "You be fruitful and multiply and REPLENISH the earth." You cannot replenish something that hasn't been plished. God said to replenish the earth!

Peter also talks about the world that was, and is, and is to come. We need to be careful right here not to apply this truth to the Flood. Look at 2 Peter 3:1-13, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in

both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior; knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, by which the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish; but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are in it, shall be burned up. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of person ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, in which the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, in which dwells righteousness."

I do not believe Peter is talking about Noah's flood. Verse 6 says, "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." The Greek word for "world" here in this text is "cosmos." It means "the world system." The world system that existed back there perished. But the world system that existed in Noah's time did not perish. Noah, after the flood, carried on the same system that they had beforehand. The world that existed back there perished. Scientists dig and find the carcasses and bones of giant animals, dinosaurs, and

others. Where did they come from? They come from that world that then was. They had a different world system than we have now.

It is obvious that Lucifer and those angels that rebelled against God with him are now what we call "demons" or "evil spirits."

As a child of God, we have authority over Satan and all demonic activity.

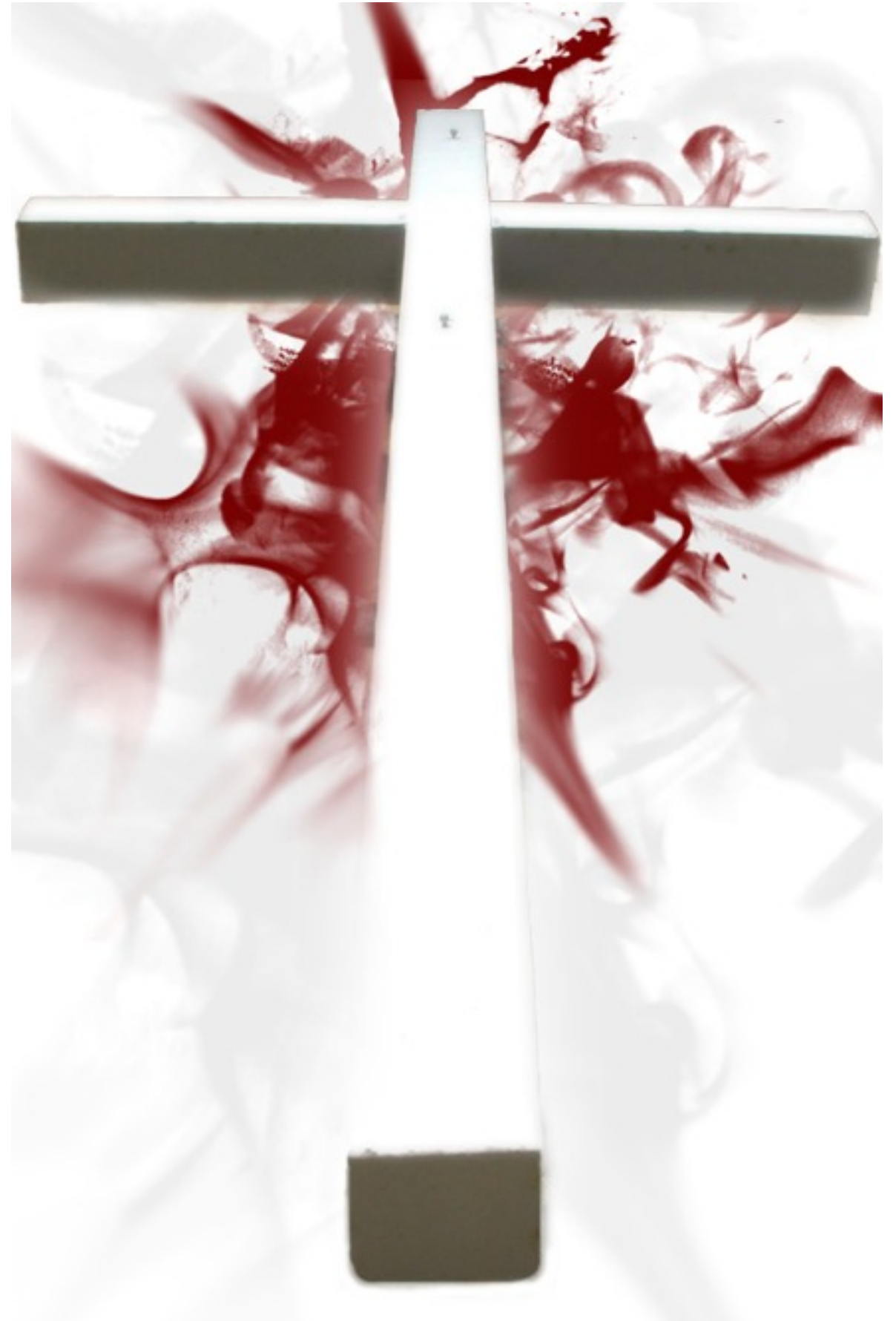
Demons Against Men

2 Corinthians 10:3-4

In our last study we looked at the Scriptures that told us about the beginning of Satan and demons. And the biblical evidence that demons exist brings to light another question: Are demons really working in our modern world of science and so called enlightenment? Skepticism and ignorance concerning the Word of God causes us to miss reality by a mile! Men who deny the existence of Satan and demons are also denying their belief in the truthfulness of the Word of God.

Child of God spiritual warfare is not a game, and the devil is not an innocent puppy. He is the master deceiver, thief, murderer and the force behind nearly all evil. He is full of all kinds of cruelty, pain, curses and blight known to the human family.

To survive his attacks, you must realize that the devil is a real enemy, hell-bent on destroying you. I challenge you to determine today to get serious about how to rebuke him and from hindering your service to the lord.



Denial is the thinking of many liberal preachers and untrained laymen. They leave the security of the Word of God and are caught away in the swirling currents of occult fortunetelling, spiritism, magic, and false cults. A notable example is the late Bishop James A. Pike, who in September 1967 allegedly communicated in a televised seance with his deceased son (a suicide), through a well-known medium, Arthur Ford (now deceased), who was at the same time a Disciples of Christ minister. This sensational seance startled people all over the world and alerted Bible students to the reality of modern occultism and the traffic in demonism.

The tragic picture today includes the well-meaning but ill-taught Christian who professes to believe and honor the Word of God. Such a Christian, through ignorance of what the Bible teaches, may naively become the victim of the erroneous reasoning that since God, can heal and perform miracles, then every case of healing and everything that passes for a miracle is from God, In seeking to be healed or helped, Christians may become involved in some form of demon-energized magic.

Satan knows biblical terminology. He is also a master in masquerading under the guise of divine power. Alleged miraculous cures or manifestations often are accompanied by doctrinal errors. Every believer should realize that Satan can use doctrinal error to his advantage, but he cannot overcome the Christian's defenses in God's Holy Word. That is why what we believe must line up with the Word of God! This is our defense against demonic infiltration.

Demonism flourishes in direct proportion to our neglect or abandonment of the Word of God!! Ignorance of biblical truth breeds gullibility. Deception is easy when the Word of God is not taught accurately. We are ready to believe anything when we cannot evaluate it in the light of biblical truth. It is for that reason we have been told in 1 John 4:1-6, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out

into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. 6 We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

As Satan makes his move on unsuspecting Christians the sales of horoscope magazines run into the millions. Monthly horoscope columns appear in prominent magazines such as "Cosmopolitan" "Harpers' Bazaar" "Ladies Home Journal" one being authored by Sybil Leek, self-styled as "the most famous witch in the world." Horoscope columns appear in over a thousand daily newspapers.

The scope and power of modern occultism staggers the imagination. Millions are unknowingly oppressed and enslaved by the occult. No wonder mental and emotional problems increase at an alarming rate. Unless the reality and purpose of Satan and demons are acknowledged, some of these problems will not be solved.

The Bible presents demons as spiritual beings or spirit personalities, as seen in Luke 24:39 where Jesus said, "A spirit does not have flesh and bones..." That is, demons do not possess a material body. On the other hand, demons can act upon the human body, as well as the human soul and spirit. They are capable of entering in and assuming control of a human body, speaking and acting through it from time to time and even possessing it, as if it were their own property.

The fact that demons are spirits is clear from numerous references in the Gospels. Matthew 8:16 tells us, "When the evening was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with demons: and he cast out the spirits with his word." When the seventy returned and joyfully

declared in Luke 10:17, "Lord, even the demons are subject unto us," our Lord replied in verse 20, "Nevertheless in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you." The "demon" who went out of the lunatic boy in Matthew 17:18, is also called a "foul spirit" in Mark 9:25.

The Apostle Paul emphatically declares that Satan and his demons are spirits. In describing the Christian's conflict against the powers of darkness, he indicates that the intense warfare "is not against flesh and blood" but against evil spirits, described as "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness," and "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6: 12).

The Apostle John also indicates that demons are spirits. He describes the three unclean spirits issuing from the mouth of the dragon, of the beast, and of the false prophet, as the "spirits of demons" (Revelation 16: 14).

The fact that demons are spirits does not in the least suggest that they lack individuality, with all the elements of personality such as will, feelings, and intellect. Like all of God's creatures, they were constituted with self-determining choice. Created originally sinless, they joined Satan in a chosen course of rebellion. Their decision was deliberate and in the full knowledge of the infinite goodness and holiness of their Creator. This is why they are unforgivable and confined in their depravity with no hope of repentance or change. Like Satan's, their choice is irretrievable; their doom is sealed.

The fact that demons are individuals is attested by their intelligent and voluntary actions. They think, they speak, they act through a spiritistic medium or through a person over whom they have acquired control, as seen in Acts 19:15-16, "And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." In the case of the possession, the domination is almost complete, as seen in Mark 9:17-18, "Then one of the crowd answered and said,

"Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. 18 And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid." In the case of demon oppression, their control is less complete and direct, as seen in 1 Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaks expressly that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons."

As spirit beings, demons are invisible. But spirits can become discernible to men through transcendence of natural law. Evil spirits may be seen and communicated with through an intermediary or medium. Just as Peter and Paul saw and talked with an angel in Acts 5: 19, 27.

Communication with the demon world results in supernatural manifestations, but these, strictly speaking, are not miraculous. Demon possession and extrasensory phenomena await people who enter into a spirit realm from which God has forbidden us to go for our own protection, as seen in Deuteronomy 18:10-11, "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or who uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter of mediums, or a wizard, or a necromancer."

When men ignore God's warnings and enter a forbidden realm, they may witness the appearances of spirits, trances, automatic writings, magic phenomena, as well as oral communications. Such manifestations are not miracles. They simply represent the operation of the occult with a certain well defined sphere tolerated by God. Demon possession and demon oppression are the inevitable penalties to all who traffic in the realm of evil supernaturalism.

The Bible reveals the fact that all demons are wicked, but they varying degrees of their wickedness, as seen in Matthew 12:43-45, where Jesus was teaching the worthlessness of self-reformation, "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and

finds none. Then he says, I will return to my house from which I came. And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.” Their wickedness manifest itself in the terrible things they do to their victims. The Bible often refers to them as spiritually and morally "unclean."

People who deal in the occult are often found to be immoral. Men and women who abandon themselves to immorality reach a point when God gives them up, in the sense of restraining Satan and demonic power from them, so that they are abandoned to the degrading depths of immorality and are shamelessly reduced to actions of uncaring godlessness.

In such moral decay the "unclean spirit" takes possession of the sinner to gratify his demonic senses through every type of unclean pleasure. This is apparently why a demonized person often desires to live in a state of nudity and harbors evil thoughts. When men disobey the moral laws of God, especially the law of loving and honoring their Creator, they choose the depraved way of Satan and demons.

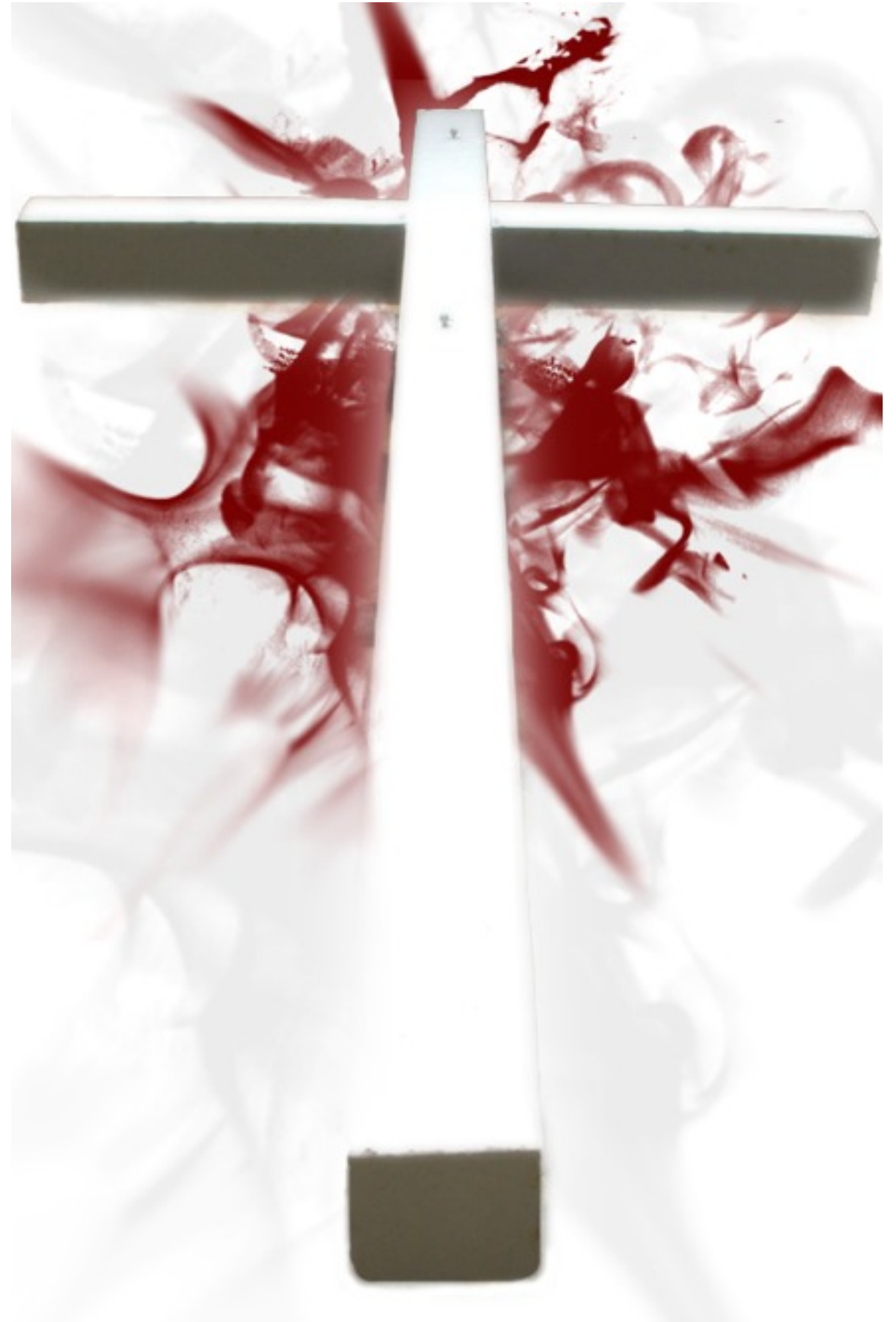
Our Spiritual Enemies

Ephesians 6: 10-12

Ladies and gentlemen, we have been able to see that the root of our problem today is the devil. The spirit of antichrist is in the world today. The blinding, darkening, deceiving, diabolically deadening power of the devil is overtaking America.

Obviously, Christians are not immune – we are prime targets. Just because we are saved, the devil does not give up quietly and go away. I believe when we wade into the flow of God's presence, we start jerking the devil's chain. He is angry and he wants to kill you.

When irritation is high and patience is low, know that Satan has come in great wrath. He will try to plague your mind with fear and grotesque flashing and burning within you. He will try to rob you of restful sleep, drain you of your peace and lay a dark cloud of oppression on your back. Surely, this is all part of what Jesus had in mind when He gave us this warning in John 10:10, "The thief has come only to steal, to kill, and to destroy."



In our last study we were able to see that demons are our spiritual enemies. In light of that truth we must also realize that it is the responsibility of each Christian to deal with them directly in spiritual warfare.

In our text, the scriptures use the analogy of wrestling in reference to our warfare with Satan and his hosts. Wrestling is an accurate and pointed description. It speaks of close-quarter fighting; of personally grappling with the powers of darkness. The truth of the matter is that most of us would prefer not to get involved with Satan at all, but that is not possible. When you received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you were automatically involved, and the battle is personal and close. The enemy is a spiritual one. The weapons are spiritual.

Wrestling also suggests pressure tactics. This tells us that Satan's tactic is to put pressure on us. He does this in the areas of our thought life, emotions, decision-making and our physical bodies. Believers often feel pressured by the enemy in one way or another. When one is ignorant of Satan's devices he may turn for relief to tranquilizers, sleeping pills or even the psychiatrist's couch. But God's remedy for victory over demonic pressures is spiritual warfare. The Bible shows us how the Christian can put pressure upon the demons and defeat them! In light of that, we must learn the practical ways in which this is done. We must throw away our ineffective fleshly weapons and take up the mighty spiritual weapons. The believer must know both his own weaponry and how to employ it, and the tactics of the enemy and how to defeat him.

Ephesians 6:12 reveals four important things about our spiritual enemy. First, we are told that we are fighting against principalities. The Greek word for "principalities" is "*archas*" (ar-khay), and is used to describe things in a series, as leaders, rulers and magistrates. Therefore, a "series" of leaders or rulers would describe their rank and organization. So the word "principalities" tells us that the Satanic kingdom is highly organized. Perhaps Satan has organized his army pretty much on the same basis as God's angelic host. Satan is the head of his kingdom

and has under him a rank of ruling spirits ultimately subject unto himself. The English word "principality" is defined as "the territory or jurisdiction of a prince or the country that gives title to a prince" (Webster). Therefore we are able to see that these ruling spirits are assigned over areas such as nations and cities.

This truth is shown for us in Daniel 10. Daniel was seeking a word from God through prayer and fasting. After three weeks an angel appeared. The angel explained that he had been delayed in getting to Daniel with God's message by an encounter with "the prince of the kingdom of Persia." He is not referring to an earthly prince, for no mere man could withstand a heavenly messenger. He is speaking of a demon prince. From this it is clear that there are ruling demon spirits placed by Satan over nations and cities in order to carry out his evil purposes. Problems that persist and plague churches and homes can well indicate that special evil agents have been assigned to cause trouble in these areas as well. Therefore, we realize that our spiritual warfare involves much more than our individual lives. We are fighting for the welfare of our homes, communities and nation. The enemy is thoroughly organized. Everything he does is to bring destruction and disruption.

Secondly, we are told that our warfare is against powers. The Greek word translated "power" is "*exousia*", which means "authority". This word tells us that the demons who are placed over various areas or territories are given authority by Satan to carry out whatever orders have been assigned to them.

But, listen, the child of God should not be discouraged to learn that demons have been given authority by Satan. We have been given an even greater authority by our Commander in Chief, the Lord Jesus Christ, as seen in Luke 9:1, "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power (*dunamis*) and authority (*exousia*) over all demons, and to cure diseases."

A little later in His ministry Jesus sent the seventy disciples out two by two, and when they returned they reported that they successfully dealt

with the demon powers in the mighty name of Jesus, as seen in Luke 10:17-19, "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord even the demons are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power (*exousia*) to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power (*dunamis*) of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you."

The commission that Jesus has given to His church provides the same authority and power. In Mark 16:17 we are told that believers are to cast out demons in the name of Jesus. The promise was not limited to the apostles or first century disciples, but is for all believers of all times. The commission as stated in Matthew 28:18-20, opens with the declaration, "all power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore."

We today have the same authority and power for ministry that was given to the church initially. It would be sheer folly to go against demon spirits without this power and authority. The authority comes through salvation; the power comes through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The power given the believer through the mighty anointing of the Holy Spirit is evidenced through the operation of the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-11). Such gifts of the Spirit as supernatural words of knowledge and discernment are indispensable in spiritual warfare. This power and the authority of Jesus' name are given that the believer might overcome demon powers.

Listen to me very carefully, when we are under attack from demonic forces, we are not to wait for God to come to our rescue. That is not the time to pray that God will provide power and authority. He has already provided the power and authority for us when we were saved, and surrendered to the filling of the Holy Spirit. He is therefore waiting for us to recognize that He has already made the necessary provisions, and that we are to take up the spiritual warfare and become the militant church prophesied in Matthew 18:18, when Jesus said, "And I say unto

thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Thirdly, we learn that we wrestle against the rulers of the darkness of this world. The Greek word translated "world rulers" is "*kosmokratōras*" (kosmok-rat-ore), and can be translated "lords of the world" or "princes of this age." This designation of the enemy emphasizes his intention to control. Satan is referred to in 2 Corinthians 4:4 as "the god of this world."

In light of these truths we must recognize Satan to be a defeated foe. On the Cross he was stripped of his power and his kingdom. We have every right to treat him as a trespasser in our lives.

Jesus explained His ability to cast out demons this way in Luke 11:20-22, "But if I with the finger of God cast out demons, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."

Jesus declared that the "strong man's" armor was taken away from him. This means that Satan is made completely defenseless. The expression "all his armor" is the Greek word "*panoplia*" (pan-op-leeah), and is used only one other time in the New Testament. In Ephesians chapter 6, it is used when the Christian is exhorted to take unto himself the "whole armor" of God. Therefore, the Christian is not vulnerable at any point while the devil is vulnerable at every point!

Satan is still seeking to rule the world, and we must agree that he has made considerable progress! Why? Because the church has not risen up in the power and authority given it. However, a large segment of the body of Christ today is coming into a knowledge of the enemy, "and of its own spiritual weaponry and strength and is taking the offensive against Satan and his hosts. The more Christians who enter into the warfare, the more Satan will suffer loss.

Fourth, the Scripture says that we wrestle against spiritual wickedness in high places. The key to this phrase is the word “wickedness.” The word suggests that which is highly injurious or destructive in character. These evil powers have only one objective - wickedness. They may appear as angels of light and by their deceptiveness draw many into their nets of destruction. Jesus exposed their wicked purposes in these words found in John 10:10, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy."

These four expressions from Ephesians 6:12 have given us a very vivid word picture of Satan's kingdom. It is highly organized to carry out its purposes. Demonic powers are regimented and given authority by Satan to control the entire world and plague it with destruction. It is a mistake for us to try and ignore Satan's forces and methods. That would only give Satan the freedom to work undetected and unchallenged.

Today Satan is flaunting his power through spiritism occultism, false religions and cults as never before in all human history. The church is being forced to re-examine its own resources. To do nothing is to suggest that we do not care what becomes of ourselves, our loved ones, our community, our nation and our world.

I believe that God is raising up a mighty army today that is going forth with spiritual weapons. The results are impressive! Through the ministry of deliverance thousands of God's people are being set free from the torments of demon spirits!

Child of God, we can not, we must not, and by God's grace we will not allow Satan to take even one more inch of victory that God has already provided for His children and His church!

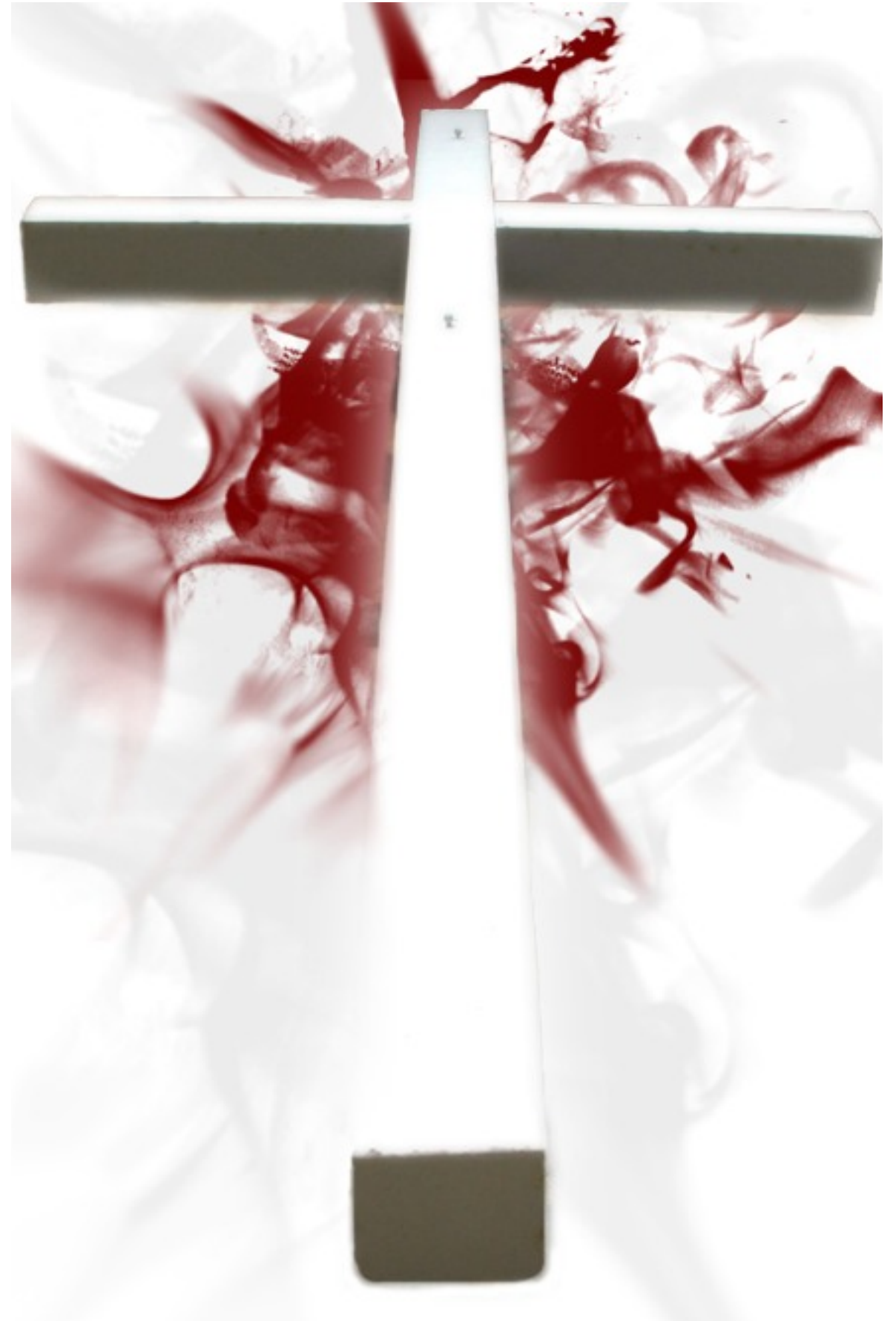
Fight The Good Fight

1 Timothy 1:18

I hate Satan and I hate what he does in us. But I know there is power in the Cross of Calvary to set us free.

I am tired of the devil stealing our finances, stealing our joy, stealing our peace and stealing our prosperity. I am tired of watching the body of Christ roll over and become a doormat for the devil. I am tired of our families being lost! I am tired of God's precious children being tormented by illness. Child of God, do not allow the devil to deceive you into thinking that you have to be tormented in any area of your life.

Jesus Christ did not shed His blood on Calvary for us to submit to the devil. Jesus did not rise in power from the dead for us to live in bondage and fear. Jesus did not declare, "I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore" (Revelation 1: 18) for the church to live in misery and defeat while the devil laughs.



It is an awakening revelation to the church today to discover how organized Satan is and how systematically he is working against us. While most of us have been taught that it is every believer's task to be a witness of Jesus Christ, and even trained and encouraged to witness; at the same time we have not been schooled that it is also every believer's task to be a Christian soldier, active in spiritual warfare. How many Christians have been trained in "the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4), or in how to "resist the devil" (James 4:7), or how to "wrestle against principalities... powers... rulers of the darkness of this world... and spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12)?

It is time for the church to become aware of the wiles of the devil. It is time to track them down and expose them for what they are. And after we expose them, we are going to cast them out of our lives, our families, our city and our nation.

Child of God, it is time for the church of Jesus Christ to march forward, not to be conquered but to conquer, in the name of Christ. It is time to put on our armor and go forth in power to subdue kingdoms, dethrone powers, trample the devil and declare, "We are the church, against which the gates of hell will not prevail" (Matthew 16:18).

As Christian soldiers we must acquire practical knowledge. In Ephesians 6: 10 we are exhorted to put on the whole armor of God and stand against the "wiles of the devil." The word translated "wiles" is "*methodeia*" (meth-od-i-ah), and it means "to follow up by method and settled plan, using deceit, craft and trickery." In other words, Satan has a method - a settled plan - to conquer each one of us, along with our family, church, community and nation. God has provided armor for our protection and weapons for offensive warfare. Thus, we can withstand every assault against us and launch an attack that will overthrow the enemy!

The emphasis in this study will be on personal deliverance. Why? Because personal deliverance is the starting point for total warfare.

When we engage the enemy on the level of personal deliverance we are fighting Satan's front line troops. His "top brass" is beyond, and we must get to them before the battle is over. The first objective in the warfare is to free oneself.

Does everyone need deliverance? I have no doubt in my mind that every one of us have walked in ignorance and darkness, and while we were just kind of wandering around, the enemy successfully made inroads into each of our lives. Therefore, we must learn how to get him out and how to keep him out.

Look with me as we begin to deal with personal deliverance, as it relates to one's self.

First of all, talk out loud to the demons! This may seem foolish and awkward until you have gotten accustomed to it, but it is an effective and necessary tactic in spiritual warfare. It is obvious that one must speak out when expelling demons. We must also speak to demons assaulting from without. For example, suppose a demon has just spoken to your mind: "So-and-so failed to speak to you. They think they are too good to speak to you." Demons talk to your minds like that. It is the way they plant seeds of resentment and suspicion. You can soon learn to distinguish between what is of self, of God or of Satan. You might say something like this to the demon: "You are a liar, demon. I reject that thought about my friend. My mind is under the protection of the blood of Jesus. I bind you from my thoughts. I command you to leave me alone, in the name of Jesus."

That is called "resisting" the devil. Remember this truth, in whatever words you use, vocalize your position in Jesus Christ and resist the demons by the use of the name and blood of Jesus. The truth of the matter is that demons are trespassers and must "flee" when resisted in this way. Do not stop at telling them once. Demons can be stubborn, so keep resisting until your mind is at peace.

Secondly, be honest with yourself. Ask God to help you see where and how demons have invaded your thought life. Attitudes of resentment, hatred, malice, etc. are not from God, therefore, they must be from Satan.

The key is being honest with yourself. As long as we can justify our feelings, and as long as we allow our feelings to dominate our lives, we will never have any measure of success against demonic forces.

Thirdly, begin to practice self-deliverance. Pick out an area in your life where you know demons are troubling you, and command them to come out in Jesus' name. When the demons see that you are absolutely renouncing them and are speaking in faith, they will respond. Do not allow demons to go unchallenged in thought life another day!

Look also at personal deliverance as it relates to our home.

In many homes today, even though husband, wife and children may profess Christ, there is strife, division, confusion and chaos. It is time the devil took his share of the blame. And it is time families learn how to drive the devil out of their homes.

The ideal starting point for victory is for each member of the family to commit himself anew to Jesus Christ.

But some homes have great obstacles other than just carnality. Not all members of the family are believers. Some may be too backslidden to have any interest in spiritual things. If only one in a family is burdened for the welfare of the home, what can be done?

One of the great problems that we have in our churches is that we have been taught for years to pray for our lost family members to be saved. But, what do we mean by that? Are we asking God to be willing to save them? That is a foolish prayer, because 2 Peter 3:9 reminds us that it is already God's will to save the lost. Are we asking God to just "zap"

them into salvation? That will never happen, because God has made every person and "free moral agent" to decide for himself.

What does the Bible have to say about this matter? The answer is found in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." When it comes to praying for our lost family and friends, we should pray that God would remove the blinders from their eyes that they might see their need to be saved.

Let me stop here long enough to remind you of this truth - warfare is not prayer! It is in addition to prayer. There is no point in asking God for something that He has already given you. God has already given us power and authority over the devil. He has already defeated Satan and given us the ability and responsibility to take care of ourselves. Ladies and gentlemen, we need to stop storming heaven for what has already been provided and start using what God has given us.

We must understand that spiritual warfare in behalf of another does not control the will of that person, it simply binds the demon forces and releases the will and thought life to make decisions apart from demonic interference. This type of warfare is in full accord with the Word of God, as seen in 2 Corinthians 10:35, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds), 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." Listen to me very carefully, when a thought comes into your mind that you know is not from God, you must capture that thought, identify it as coming from the devil, and take authority over that thought before it lodges itself in your mind, and cause the birth of some sin. This truth is seen in James 1:15,

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The grand child of "lust" is "death."

It should be the aim of every home to maintain God's pattern of divine authority - wives submitting to husbands, husbands loving the wives as Christ loved the church, and children obeying their parents in the Lord. This will reduce the devil's opportunities to a minimum in any home.

Look also at personal deliverance as it relates to the church.

Satan has a special interest in the church. We can rest assured that he will do everything in his power to side-track, hinder, weaken and destroy the church's ministry. The devil's organizational set up calls for a prince demon be assigned to each local expression of the church. Many churches have a history of certain types of problems. The prince spirit over that church can readily be identified by a church's specific type of problem.

In some churches you will find a spirit of strife member striving with member. This is one of Satan's chief weapons. He will stir up jealousy and competition. Christians will get puffed up with pride, thinking themselves better than others, and thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think. As long as Christians are fighting among themselves they are certainly not fighting the devil. This is what the devil is after. He has won his battle in that church.

Some demons are specialists in getting a church to operate on human talents and abilities rather than upon the power of the Holy Spirit. This kind of church is referred to in 2 Timothy 3:5 as "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Some are still blinded to the great outpouring of God's Spirit today and continue to operate on man-power.

Other churches are controlled by doctrinal demons. 1Timothy 4:1 says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall

depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons."

We need to be careful not to miss a great truth right here. The doctrinal demon might not just seek to get folks to follow after false doctrine, but the devil will cause a church to become involved on some doctrine to the point that they neglect the person and the glory of Christ.

Satan's list for destroying churches goes on and one formalism, ritualism, control by some group, complacency, indifference, pessimism, discouragement, obsession with problems without solutions etc.

Child of God, we must stand on the power of the Holy Spirit and the authority of the Word of God, as we claim our victory for the glory of God! God has given us the power to do so. Therefore, it is up to us to do it!

The Values of Deliverance

Ephesians 5:25-27

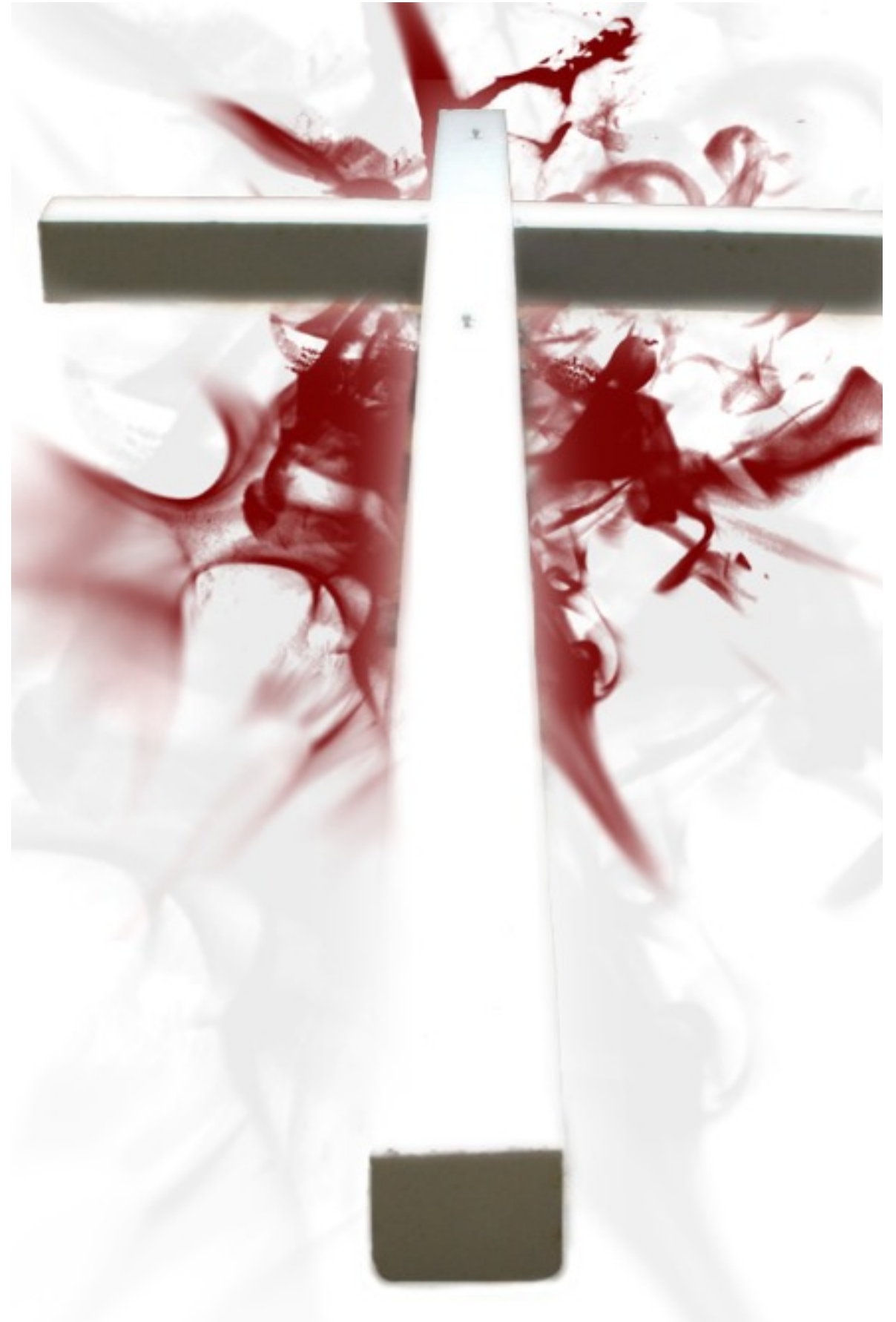
In Mark 16:17 Jesus said, "These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out demons." He is talking to those of us that "believe," those of us who are saved.

Jesus said we would cast out demons. The power to break the strongholds of evil is available to us. But if we are going to go forth in His name, with His authority, to set His people free, you must first be free yourself.

The devil wants us bound. He does not want us free, and he does not want us to set anyone else free.

I believe in living in victory. In fact, I believe in living in victory every minute. We are not called to be discouraged, dismayed or defeated. We are called to be overcomers!

To be an overcomer, you have to enter the fight.



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For the church of Jesus Christ to have an impact upon our society, we must go into the battle. God is calling the body of Christ to rise far above the status quo of "church as normal."

The process of expelling demons is called deliverance. Deliverance is not a panacea - a cure all. Yet it is an important part of what God is doing in relationship to the current revival in the church. Some expect too much from deliverance and others expect too little. We honestly need to find out what part deliverance can play in each of our own lives and receive whatever benefit it offers.

In spite of what we are hearing today about the lack of commitment, I am amazed at the Christians who are reaching out to God, and want to continue in spiritual growth, and realize that every hindrance to spiritual development must be eliminated. It seems that for every Christian that falls victim to the devices of Satan, there are others that are willing to "take up the slack" and go on with God.

In Ephesians 5:25-27, we are told that the Church is the bride of Christ, and "Christ is coming for His bride. The Scripture declares that His bride must be cleansed, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

I believe that deliverance is an essential part of the preparation of the bride of Christ - getting rid of "spots" and "wrinkles". Since the church for, which Christ is coming to be "holy and without blemish." we must agree that unclean spirits must be purged from our lives.

Now, we must be very careful right here because we are not referring to a "cleansing" that affects our salvation, because Hebrews 10:14 reminds us that "by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." And then we have been told in Titus 2:13-14, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people of his own, zealous good works." When we accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, we are cleansed and made whole because of the blood of Lamb!

But, that does not release us from the personal responsibility to live godly, as seen in James 1:23-25, "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he sees himself, and goes his way, and immediately forgets what manner of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." And then in 1 John 3:2-3, "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure." And, then, Titus 2:11-12 says, "For the grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we

should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present age." All of these passages of Scripture emphasize human responsibility!

Demons are enemies of the gifts and fruits of the Spirit. It is their desire to keep them from coming forth in the Christian's life and thereby hinder the believer in his daily walk with the Lord. That is why deliverance is a vital part of the Christian life as we seek to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present age."

For example, one of the gifts of the Spirit is faith. The Scripture says in Galatians 3:11 that "The just shall live by faith." Jesus said in Matthew 21:22, "Whatsoever you shall ask in prayer believing, you shall have it." So, the Word of God tells us that the normal Christian life is a life of faith!

But, you see, the demons of confusion and doubt or unbelief can block the flow of faith and thereby block the child of God from living a life of faith! Many times the demon of doubt and confusion will rise up where there is confusion concerning some doctrine. Satan will use that confusion to cause you to doubt your walk and relationship with God. And the result of that doubt and confusion is that our faith is attacked. Therefore, the gift of faith can come forth in some persons until the hindering spirits to the faith have been dealt with.

Many Christians do not know how demons enter into our thought life and influence our activities. Demons enter through "open doors." That is, they have to be given an opportunity. There must be an opening. In other words, one does not pick up a demon by walking down the street and accidentally bumping into one that is looking for a "home."

The organization of Satan's kingdom enables him to attack each one of us personally. There is not a person on the face of the earth who escapes his notice. He devises a plan to ruin and destroy each one. It is a sobering realization that you and I are definite targets of Satan's wiles. But how does he gain entrance?

Many times Christians are the victims of demonic interference because they, have unknowingly been involved in occult practices. It may be something as seemingly harmless as having played with an Ouiji board. But such involvement in the occult, no matter whether done out of ignorance or knowingly, will open the door for demonic oppression and hindrance to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is important to rid oneself of everything that has been invited in through the occult realm. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you and call to your remembrance every door that has been opened by yourself or others through the course of your life.

The fruit of the Spirit is a special target for the enemy. The first and principal fruit is love. Love is something to be received as well as to be driven forth. The demon of resentment can defeat love in a person's life. Many persons cannot understand why they are unable to love others as they ought. Such a problem is strong indication of the presence of a demon spirit of resentment or unforgiveness. Resentment usually invites in other demons, such as bitterness, hatred and anger.

Love may also be hindered by a spirit of rejection. This spirit is very common and is often to be found as the "strong" or "ruling" spirit within an individual. Rejection has an opportunity to enter when a person is not loved as a child. Parents can easily open the door for the spirit of rejection in their child by failure to give that child proper love. When rejection is strong it keeps the person from receiving the love extended by others. It also prevents that person from giving love to others. The demon of rejection must be cast out before that person can mature in Christian love.

If Satan can succeed in making the Christian feel a stigma attached to having demons he may prevent that Christian from seeking deliverance. While we cannot put all the blame on Satan and his demons for our problems, we are finding out that we can blame them for much more than we once thought. In fact, some Christians have not

yet learned that demons are responsible for any of their problems. When we learn that they do invade our lives then we should be in earnest about getting rid of them.

One of the more obvious ways for demons to enter into our thought process is through the “open door” of some personal sin. This truth is seen in Acts 5:3 where Ananias and Sapphira sold their property to give to the early church. But they became covetous and decided to keep part of the money for themselves. In order to cover up their act they perpetrated a lie. But Peter received a supernatural word of knowledge as to what they had done. Peter asked Ananias why he had opened himself to the devil, "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land?"

Because of their sin, Ananias and Sapphira opened themselves to be filled with spirits of covetousness, lying, and deceit. The same thing can happen to anyone who sins willfully.

Now, once more we must be very careful in our thinking. Galatians 5 gives us a list of seventeen "works of the flesh", and they include the sins of adultery, fornication, witchcraft, hatred, wrath, strife, envying, murders and drunkenness. What does the works of the flesh and the works of demons have to do with each other? Simply this, when a man yields to temptation he sins in the flesh. Through such sins he opens the door for the invasion of the enemy. Then he has compounded his problems, because now he has to deal with the FLESH and the DEVIL. And, ladies and gentlemen, forgiveness alone will not get the job done, there must be deliverance.

Therefore, if we are going to live victoriously for the cause of Christ, then we must realize that we are involved in a battle, but the good news is that we are fighting a defeated enemy.

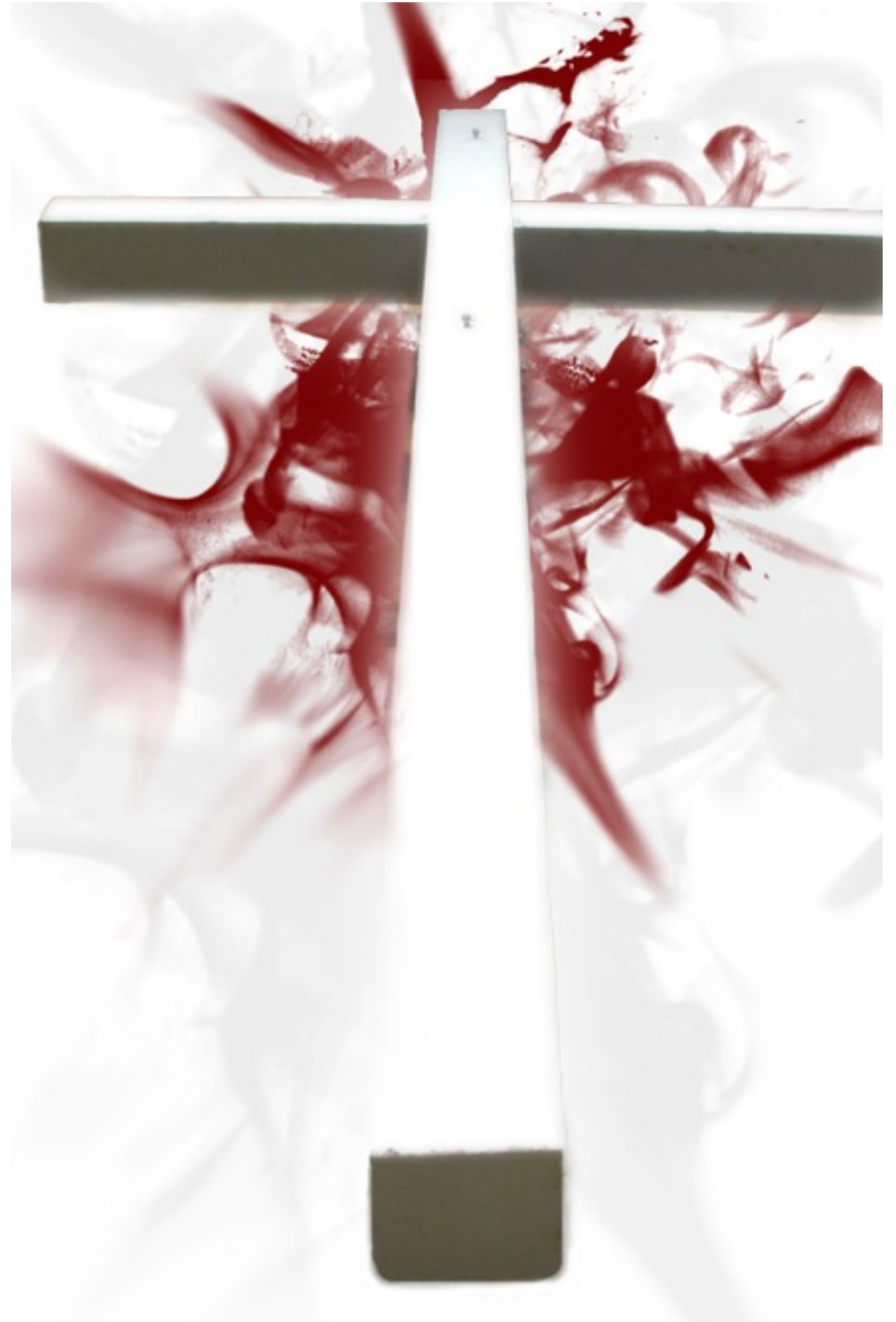
How to Determine the Need for Deliverance

Matthew 4:24

For the church of Jesus Christ to have an impact upon our society, we must go into the battle against the forces of evil. God is calling the body of Christ to rise far above the status quo of "church as normal."

We have lived so long in a society where wrong has been right that righteous, holy living has become abnormal. All around us, people are bound and powerless to set themselves free. They do not know who to listen to. They do not know right from wrong.

Millions are careening helplessly on their way to splitting open the bowels of hell, and they cannot see the danger they are in. The crisis is acute. The danger is imminent! Something must happen in the heart and soul of not only America but in the heart and soul of the church.



What is happening around us? Why all of the hurt and pain? Why all of the failure and disappointment? The answer is simply - Demon spirits are frenzied and running loose in these last days, and they are out to destroy you, your family, your home and your nation. And it is time that we understand where we are and what we can do. Everyone who names the name of Christ must release the power that is resident within us!

Look with me as we determine the need for deliverance from demonic oppression.

The presence and nature of evil spirits can be known by two principle methods: (1) **Discernment**. In 1 Corinthians 12:10 "discerning of spirits" is listed as one of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. The discerning of spirits is not just the discerning of demons, nor is it the discerning of just evil spirits. The discerning of spirits has to do with the entire class of spirits, including good spirits, bad spirits, and human spirits. It is supernatural insight into the realm of spirits.

And (2) **Detection**. Detection is simply observing what spirits are doing to a person. We must also be careful right here also. Detection must not be based on what we think or feel, but must be based entirely on the Word of God. A great example of this is seen Mark 7:24-30. A Syrophenician woman came to Jesus with an appeal that He cast an "unclean spirit" out of her daughter. In Matthew's parallel account the mother says, "My daughter is grievously vexed with a demon." How did she know this? She knew it by the symptoms. We can learn to detect evil spirits by observing what they are doing to a person. Some of the most common symptoms of indwelling demons show up in the following ways:

1. Emotional Problems. Disturbances in the emotions which persist or recur. Some of the most common disturbances are resentment, hatred, anger, fear, rejection (feeling unwanted and unloved), selfpity, jealousy, depression, worry, inferiority and insecurity.

2. Mental Problems. Although emotional problems and mental problems both have to do with our mind, there is a difference. The reference to mental problems here refers to disturbances in the mind or thought life, such as mental torment, procrastination, indecision, compromise, confusion, doubt, rationalization and loss of memory.

3. Speech Problems. Outbursts or uncontrolled use of the tongue. These include lying, cursing, blasphemy, criticism, mockery, railing (condemnation with harsh and abusive language), and gossip.

4. Sex Problems. This has to do with unclean thoughts regarding sex. These include fantasizing sexual relationships with regards to adultery (someone else's husband or wife) lust, homosexuality, fornication (sexual relationships between singles), incest.

5. Addictions. The most common addictions are to nicotine, alcohol, drugs, medicines, caffeine and food.

6. Physical Infirmities. Many diseases and physical afflictions are due to spirits of infirmity. To see this, we need only to turn to Luke 13:10-17, "And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no way lift herself up. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her; and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work; in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham whom Satan hath bound, 10, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath

day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him." When a demon of infirmity is cast out there is often a need to pray for a healing of whatever damage has resulted. Therefore, there is a close relationship between deliverance and healing.

7. Religious Error. Involvement to any degree in religious error can open the door for demons. Objects and literature from sources of religious error have been known to attract demons into houses. Examples are:

1. False religions. Eastern religions, pagan religions, philosophies, and mind sciences. Note: This includes such popular interests as yoga exercises and karate which cannot be divorced from heathen worship.
2. Christian Cults. Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Unity and many more. Such cults deny or confuse the necessity of Christ's blood as the way of atonement for sin and for salvation. Cults also include some lodges, societies and social agencies which use religion (Scripture and even God) as a foundation, but omit the blood atonement of Jesus Christ. All such cults may be classified as "bloodless religions", "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof (2 Timothy 3:5).
3. Occult and Spiritism. These include seances, witchcraft, magic, ouija boards, fortune telling, horoscopes, astrology, divination. In fact, Deuteronomy 18:9-15 says that any method of seeking supernatural knowledge, wisdom, guidance and power apart from God is forbidden!
4. False Doctrine. 1 Timothy 4:1 warns of great increase of doctrinal errors promoted by deceiving and seducing spirits in the last days. Such doctrines are designed to attack both the humanity

and deity of Jesus Christ (virgin birth); to deny the inspiration of Scripture; to deny the necessity of the blood atonement for salvation; to distract Christians from the move of the Holy Spirit; to cause disunity in the Body of Christ; to cause confusion in the church because of their hold on tradition; to be puffed up because of a spirit of pride.

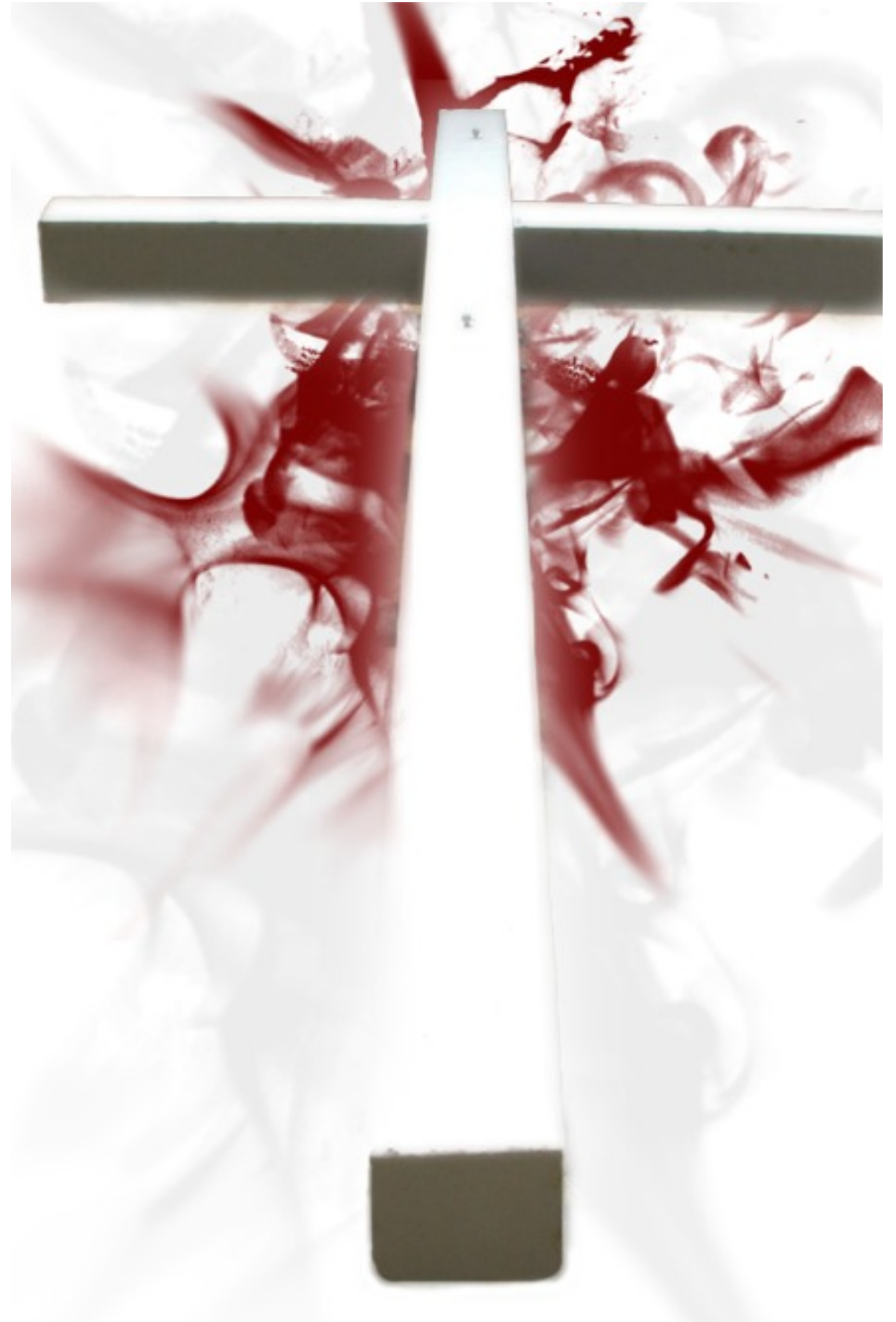
All of these are areas that Satan will use as "open doors" for demonic activity in the lives of mankind, even those of us that are Christians.

Steps to Deliverance

Luke 4:40-41

I want you to get something settled in your mind this very moment
The devil is a liar! He wants you to have a distorted view of God. We must never allow ourselves to believe anything about God that is different from what the Bible says.

I Peter 5:7 invites us to cast all our cares on God "for he careth for you."
The first thing we need to get settled in our heart today is that God is a good God. He cares for you. Many Christians do not seem to understand this truth. God is full of blessing, mercy and abundance. He is the source of strength, health and vitality. He brings prosperity, joy, peace and security.



James 1:17 continues with this reminder, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Ladies and gentlemen, you can always be sure that the good things in your life have come from God. Not only that, you can always rely on his loving character to remain the same. God will not change, You will not come to Him one day and find Him in a good mood, and approach Him the next day and find Him angry and hostile. He is not a God of mercy on Monday and a God of unforgiveness on Tuesday. He has given us this promise in Malachi 3:6, "I am the Lord, I change not."

There is one thing that you can always count on – God will champion the cause of His children. He will bare His right arm to them that bow the knee to Him.

Like Paul, we, too, must make up our minds that we're going to stand steadfast, no matter what comes or what goes.

Secondly, according to 2 Timothy 2:3, we must "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." It's in the hard places where we either overcome or fail.

What good is it to talk about faith and how much faith you have if you never have a battle? If you never have a battle, you can never experience a victory!

Everybody is talking about how to be victorious. Well, the only way to get to be victorious is to go out and get involved in the fight or the game. You can talk about your faith and thank God for that but you have to take that faith and get in the faith fight. You're the one who has to take the initiative by acting on God's Word. But, you see, God is the One who is the power behind your actions as you fight the good fight of faith!

Often in the natural you're responsible for carrying out in your own strength the tasks that you start. For example, in a game or sport, you

take the initiative whenever you're in an offensive position. Then you draw on your own skills, ability, and training for the power you need to perform. In other words, you get out and play ball. And you're the one who supplies the energy to play and win!

But in the fight of faith, all you have to do is supply God with the vessel yourself. The strength and the power to endure adversity and come out victoriously come from on High.

Now I want to focus on two factors that can help us to maintain our strength in the Lord: faith and love.

I stand before you to proclaim that I want God to do something in me to take tribulation and turn it into triumph so I can be a witness that "greater is He that is in (me) than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Listen to me church, if we do not have something better than the world has, then we have nothing to preach about. I believe we do have something better than the world, and we should climb to the housetops and shout it aloud.

No power of the enemy can defeat us as we fulfill the words of Jesus as recorded in John 15:7, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you."

Remember, the same power that spoke the sun, moon, and stars into existence...

The same power that spoke forth the dry land, forests, the mountains, and created the rivers and the oceans...

The same power that spoke into creation all the animals, the birds, the fish, and all forms of life...

The same power that spoke man into creation from the dust of the earth and breathed life into him...

The same power of the Word is in us!

The Word which in the beginning was God; the Word which was and is God; the Word which created all things became flesh.

Now the Living Word dwells within us.

Faith is vitally important. Without faith we would never make it anywhere or do anything for God, as seen in Hebrews 11:6 where we have been told that "without faith it is impossible to please him (God)..." And in I John 5:4 we have been told, "For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." And then our text reads, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

Faith is one of our strengths. But our faith isn't in ourselves. Our faith is in God's mighty power.

Listen to the word of Jesus in John 14:12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." Glory to God, I want to see the "greater works"! I want to see the move of God in my life, in my church and in my nation! I want to see the power of God in demonstration in our worship services! I want to see people get delivered and set free from the power of Satan!

We're talking more about faith and power today than ever before. And we say the Church has more power than it has ever had. But if this is true, why aren't the same works Jesus did, and even greater works, being done today?

I believe it is because we have put too much emphasis on the wrong subject! We've talked more about what we can do and not enough about what Jesus can do. We ought to be magnifying and lifting up Jesus like the Word of God says do.

Love is another one of our strengths. Child of God, one of the reasons the power of God is not operating as it should in our lives and in our churches is the fact that we fall short of God's standard in our love walk!

In our last study we looked at some ways to determine the need for deliverance. As we continue in this study, we are going to look at some steps to deliverance. These steps are very simple, yet they are extremely important for us to follow.

1. Honesty. In Psalm 32:5, David gives us the example of honesty, "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." And, then, in Psalm 139:23-24, we have this very familiar Scripture, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." One must be honest with himself and with God if he expects to receive God's blessing of deliverance. A lack of honesty keeps areas of one's life in darkness. Demon spirits thrive on such darkness. Honesty helps bring them into the light. Any sin not confessed or repented of gives the demon a "legal right" to remain. Ask God to help you see yourself as He sees you and to bring to light anything that is not of Him.
2. Humility. This involves a recognition that one is dependent upon God and His provisions for deliverance. James 4:6-7 says this about humility, "God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and, he will flee from you." Humility is not something that God does in your life, humility is an act of the will before God.
3. Repentance. The word "repentance" carries with it the idea of turning away from something. But, before there can be a turning away, there must be an agreement, as seen in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess (agree) our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our

sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Repentance, then, is a turning away from all that hinders spiritual growth, all that hinders our ministry, and all that hinders our fellowship with the Lord.

4. Renunciation. We must be careful right here, because repentance and renunciation are very closely related. Repentance is the turning away from that which hinders us in our walk with God. Renunciation is the forsaking of that which hinders our walk with God.

A good example of renunciation is found in Acts 19:18-19, "And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." A good present day example would be this: If a person has repented of fortune-telling, they would follow by destroying all of their books that has to do with astrology. If a person has repented of their involvement in a cult religion, then they would follow by destroying all of their books that instruct them in that cult.

In other words, renunciation means a clean break with Satan and all his works.

5. Forgiveness. Forgiveness is another area that we need to look at in relationship to our subject matter of deliverance. Because of the blood of Jesus Christ, and our faith in Him as our Lord and Savior, we live in a state of forgiveness. We also must realize that we need to constantly be aware of those things in our lives that God considers to be "sin", and "agree" with God about what they really are.

But, when it comes to deliverance, forgiveness not only involves ourselves, it also involves all others who have ever wronged us in

any way. Willingness to forgive is absolutely essential to deliverance. As long as you hoard an unforgiving spirit, then you have an "open door" for demonic activity in your life.

6. Prayer. There is a great truth in Joel 2:32 that says that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered." Our greatest weapon in this area of deliverance is that of prayer: ask God to deliver you and set you free in the name of Jesus.
7. Warfare. In our previous studies, we have seen that prayer and warfare are two separate and distinct activities. Prayer is toward God and warfare is toward the enemy. Remember, Ephesians 6:10-12 reminds us that our warfare- is not against flesh and blood, but against demon power as they are directed by Satan.

Therefore, we are to use the weapons of submission to God, the blood of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and. your testimony as a believer. Identify the spirits, address them directly by name in a commanding voice, and in faith command them to go in the name of Jesus.

Enter the battle with determination and assurance of victory. Christ cannot fail! He is the Deliverer, according to Psalm 18:2, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer."

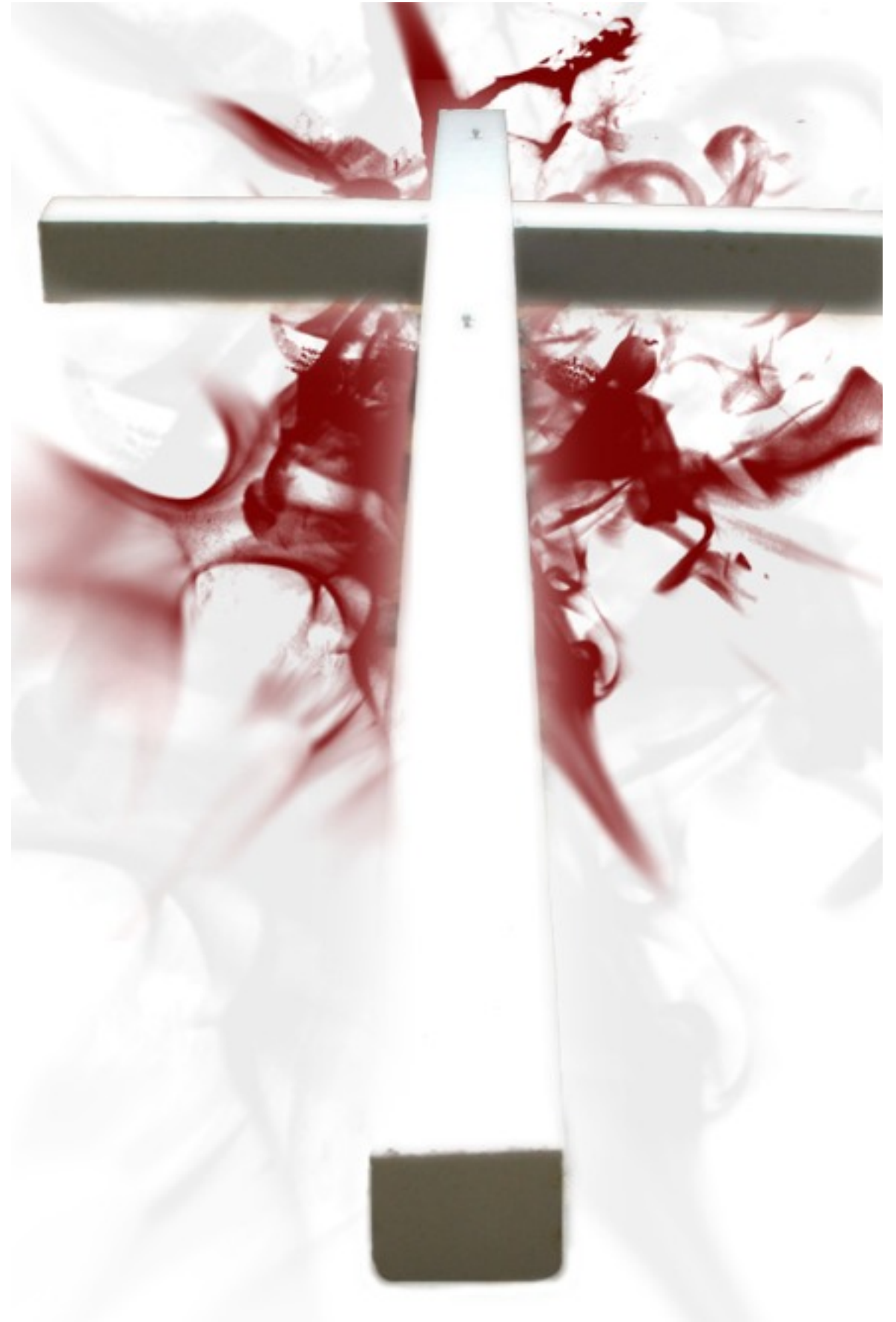
Steps for Retaining Deliverance

Luke 4:40-41

In our study of Deliverance we have seen that demons have to do with the fall of Lucifer. We read in Ezekiel 28: 15 that he was perfect until iniquity was found in him. We read in Ezekiel 28: 17 that he was lifted up because of his beauty.

We have also seen that in the beginning of time, even before man was made, Satan ruled and had a kingdom. For he said that he would exalt his throne (Isaiah 14: 13-14). We believe that Satan ruled upon this earth in a pre-Adamic kingdom because when God made man He told him to “Be fruitful and multiply and to replenish the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

In John 12:31 Jesus refers to Satan as “the prince of the world.” The spirit of the world is a mirror of the devil’s character. It can be summed



up easily; selfishness, ambition, greed, fear, pride and rebellion. When you hear people say, "I have a right," you should know where they are coming from. They are opposed to God. Ephesians 2:2 calls Satan "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience." (Ephesians 5:11 shows us that disobedience brings darkness.) 2 Corinthians 6:14 exclaims, "What communion hath light with darkness?" None whatsoever! They are opposites.

The devil is an oppressor. With his chains of sickness, violence and depression he holds people in bondage. With fetters of ear, deception and addiction he keeps people in his deadly grip.

John 8:44 calls him "the father of lies," Whatever he tells you, the opposite is true. He will tell you that you are going bankrupt, or you are going to get cancer and die. He will tell you your situation is hopeless, and God has turned His back on you. He sows seeds of fear and apprehension in your life. He lies about God.

And the thing that we need to understand is that demons have the same character that Satan demonstrates.

One of the things that we can be sure of is that demons are fallen angels that rebelled with Lucifer against the God of Glory. And they want to manifest themselves in the sense realm in this world. Working from the outside they can oppress. You can sense their presence. Even a child of God many times senses the opposition of the enemy. Working on the inside they can possess an individual.

In our last study we looked at the steps for deliverance. And in this study we are going to look at seven steps for retaining deliverance.

1. The first step is to put on the whole armor of God, as seen in Ephesians 6: 10-18. The Christian's spiritual armor is listed for us (we will look at these in more detail in a later study): (1) Loins girt about with truth, (2) The breastplate of righteousness, (3) Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, (4) The shield of faith,

- (5) The helmet of salvation, (6) The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, and (7) Praying in the Spirit. Pay special attention to the "helmet of salvation" for the guarding of your thought life. Most demons seeking to destroy our fellowship with the Father assail the thoughts. Become watchful of any thoughts that could be considered negative; they are from the enemy. Separate their thoughts from your own. Refuse the thoughts they give you and replace them with positive spiritual thoughts, as seen in Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

2. Confess positively. Negative confessions characterize demonic influence. Positive confession is faith expressed. Confess what God's Word says. Any other confession will open the door for the enemy.

Let me give you an example of what I mean right here. In Mark 5:25-34 we have the story of a woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years, and verse 28 gives us her confession, "For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole." What she said was her faith speaking. I know it was, for Jesus said in verse 34, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole."

When you speak your faith, you have what you say, as seen in Mark 11 :23-24, "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Listen very carefully to the words of Jesus, " ... and shall not doubt in his heart. he shall have whatsoever he saith." Some people, think that just because they have made some type of "confession" that God is obligated to give them what they ask for, but my friend that is not

right. There is a great difference between believing with our heads and believing in our hearts. Listen, confession without faith is just foolish words that have no meaning!

3. Stay in the Scripture. Psalm I: 1-3 tells us that "Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Jesus withstood Satan's temptation by using Scripture. James 1:22-25 tells us that the Word of God is a mirror to the soul; Psalm 119: 1 05 tells us that it is a lamp unto the feet for guidance; Ephesians 5:25-26 tells us that it is a cleansing agent to the heart; Hebrews 4: 12 tells us that it is a two-edged sword laying bare the heart; 1 Peter 2:2 tells us that it is food for the spirit. No person can maintain deliverance apart from the Word of God as a primary factor in his heart.

4. Crucify the flesh. In Luke 9:23 Jesus tells us that we are going to follow Him, we must take up our cross and follow Him daily. We must break old habits and patterns set up in league with evil spirits. If fleshly appetites, desires and lusts are not brought to the cross, a way for demons to return will be left open according to Galatians 5: 19 24.
5. Develop a life of continuous praise and prayer. Child of God, praise silences the enemy. Praise is the most worthwhile endeavor in earth and heaven. Praise is something which occupies the full time of angels in heaven and in which heavenly citizens will engage in eternity. One may be sure that time spent in praise will never prove to be time wasted but will, in fact, prove all else done in the light of it more worthwhile.

Praise is an expression of the heart that will result in more healing physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually than any other form of worship. Praise is manifested in expression of thankfulness, adoration and joy by speaking, singing, shouting, dancing, leaping, playing musical instruments, clapping the hands, etc., as seen in Psalm 34: I -3, "I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name forever." Psalm 6: 8 says, "Then will I ever sing praise to your name and fulfill my vows day after day. II And in Psalm 71:8 says, "My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long." Psalm 119: 164 says, "Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws." Psalm 147: 1 says, "Praise the Lord. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise Him!"

6. Maintain a life of fellowship and spiritual ministry. It is the sheep that wanders from the flock that is most endangered. Find and fulfill your function within the body of Christ. Desire spiritual gifts and yield to their operation through you within the body of Christ. Keep yourself under the spiritual authority of Christ and church leadership.
7. Commit yourself totally to Christ. That simply means that we are to put Christ first in our lives!! Determine that every thought, word and action will reflect the very nature of Christ. Abide in Christ that the fruit of the Spirit might come forth" in abundance. Demon spirits are enemies of the fruit of the Spirit. Faith and trust in God is the greatest weapon against Satan's lies!!

One of the great problems that I see in the church today is this: Our thinking is too small! If we grow spiritually, we will realize that God can keep us. He wants us to grow spiritually so we stand on our own two feet.

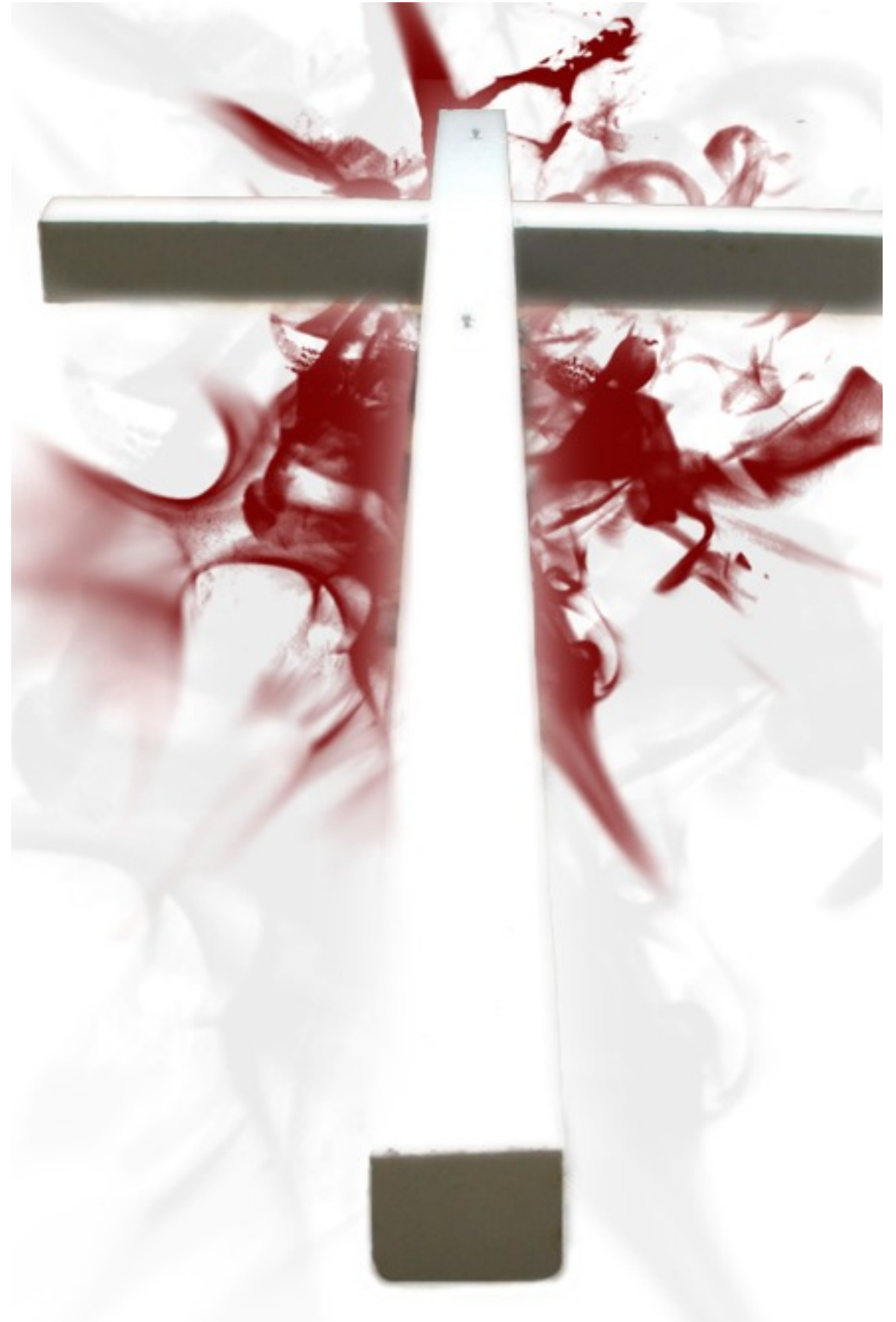
Child of God, we can put the devil on the run and keep him running.

Filling the House

Matthew 12:43-45

In our past studies of deliverance, we have looked at steps leading to deliverance, and steps to maintaining deliverance. In this study we are going to look at our responsibility to fill the void in our spiritual house.

In Matthew 12:43-45 we are told in plain language that it is possible for a demon that has been cast out to return, and not only so, but even to bring other and more wicked spirits with him. The implication is clear. If the "house" is left empty, swept and garnished, it is an open invitation for worse trouble. The house must be filled.



This same account is found in Luke 11:24-26. I want to share with you the truths of these two passages. In Luke's account Jesus cast out a "spirit of dumbness" from a man and he was able to speak. Some expressed the belief that Jesus did this by the power of Beelzebub, the chief of the demons. Jesus explain that if this were true, then Satan's kingdom was divided against itself and therefore could not stand. Then He added, "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you."

Jesus was addressing a Jewish audience who had developed a religion of negatives. That had taken a lot of things out of their lives, but they had not replaced them with anything of any real value. And now, because of their closed mindedness they were refusing the positive ministry. of Jesus Christ. So, to emphasize this point Jesus used an illustration that they would understand. If they did not put something positive in their lives after eliminating so many negative things, they would be like a man delivered of demons who did not put anything positive in his life. They would end up In worse condition than when they started.

The context in Matthew is even clearer. Jesus had just been condemned for picking com on the Sabbath. He also healed a man's withered hand on the Sabbath. Again the Pharisees accused Him of casting out demons by Beelzebub. Jesus reminded them that their words was an evidence of having an evil heart. They had already seen enough to change their lives, but they had not changed. And the truth of the matter is that unless they changed they would grow worse and worse - like a man cleansed of demons who did not fill his house with something of God.

Jesus is simply teaching us that there comes a time when we had better put some positive things in our lives. There must always be a balance between the positive and the negative factors. After we take authority over the demonic forces, and dealt with the flesh desires, we must put

in Jesus - let Him rule our lives., In fact, the reason for getting rid of demonic activity from our lives is to make more room for Jesus!

Now, the question that we must answer is this - How do we fill the house with more of Jesus? We must be very careful right here, because when we were saved, we got all of Jesus when He took up residence in our lives. But, we must also realize that in order for Jesus to fill our "house" we must be willing to get ourselves out of the way, and allow Him to do His work through us!!

To be filled with Jesus is to be filled with PURITY and POWER. These two words summarize His person. As we shall see, our purity comes through abiding in Christ and the result of the fruit of the Spirit: our power comes through the filling of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.

For every deliverance of demonic activity, the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit must replace it. This is the express responsibility of the delivered person.

We are filled with PURITY as we allow the Word of God to continually conform us "to the image of his Son (Jesus Christ)." The blood of Jesus has cleansed us from all unrighteousness, but, as we "walk by faith" and look forward to His blessed Return, we will purify ourselves, according to 1 John 3:3, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure."

We are filled with POWER as we allow the Holy Spirit to fill us, as seen in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." After the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, the Word of God tells us in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 that this Holy Spirit power was manifested through the nine supernatural gifts of the Spirit. These gifts are listed as: (1) The Word of wisdom, (2) The Word of knowledge, (3) Faith, (4) Gifts of healing, (5) Working of miracles, (6) Prophecy, (7)

Discerning of spirits, (8) Kinds of tongues and (9) Interpretation of tongues.

The entire book of Acts show us how the power of the Holy Spirit operated through these gifts of the Spirit. Through Peter and John a gift of healing was ministered to the lame man (Acts 3); Peter spoke the word of faith to Ananias and Sapphira and they fell dead (Acts 5); through Peter a miracle of resurrection brought Dorcas back to life (Acts 9); words of wisdom and knowledge came to Ananias for ministry to Saul (Acts 9); while Peter preached in the home of Cornelius there were tongues and interpretation (Acts 10); and through a disciple named Agabus the church was blessed through prophecy (Acts 11); Paul dealt with the demon of divination in a young woman harassing his ministry, through discerning the spirit (Acts 16).

Demons despise these gifts of the Holy Spirit and cause men to despise them. Why? Because the operation of these supernatural gifts of power counter-act the work of demons. Listen, demonic activity is exposed by the discerning of spirits and the word of knowledge. Their evil is undone by the word of wisdom, faith, gifts of healing and miracles. Their plans to bring harm are thwarted by a timely word of prophecy. No wonder demons so strongly oppose these gifts!!

Apart from the gifts of the Spirit the church cannot function. And that is the reason that Satan, the enemy of the church, has set himself against that which is designed to build up the Body of Christ.

We must also fill our spiritual house with the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, as seen in Galatians 5:22-23. The fruit of the Spirit is: (1) Love, (2) Joy, (3) Peace, (4) Longsuffering, (5) Gentleness, (6) Goodness, (7) Faith, (8) Meekness, (9) Temperance. The nine fruit of the Holy Spirit represent the very nature of Jesus. When the fruit of the Holy Spirit is produced in a believer's life, he becomes identified with Jesus in character.

I am convinced that many, many Christians who are saved, are not producing any "fruit" because they are not "abiding" in Jesus, as seen in John 15:4, "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me. Notice that the fruit is not produced by independent action or by self effort. It only comes by abiding in the Vine! So the key word here is "abide." To abide in the Vine means to stay connected to Jesus so that the life of Christ will flow into the branch and fruit will result.

The question is this - How do we stay connected to Jesus? The answer is this: Through our fellowship with Him!!

Child of God, we need to spend some time in fellowship with the Savior!!

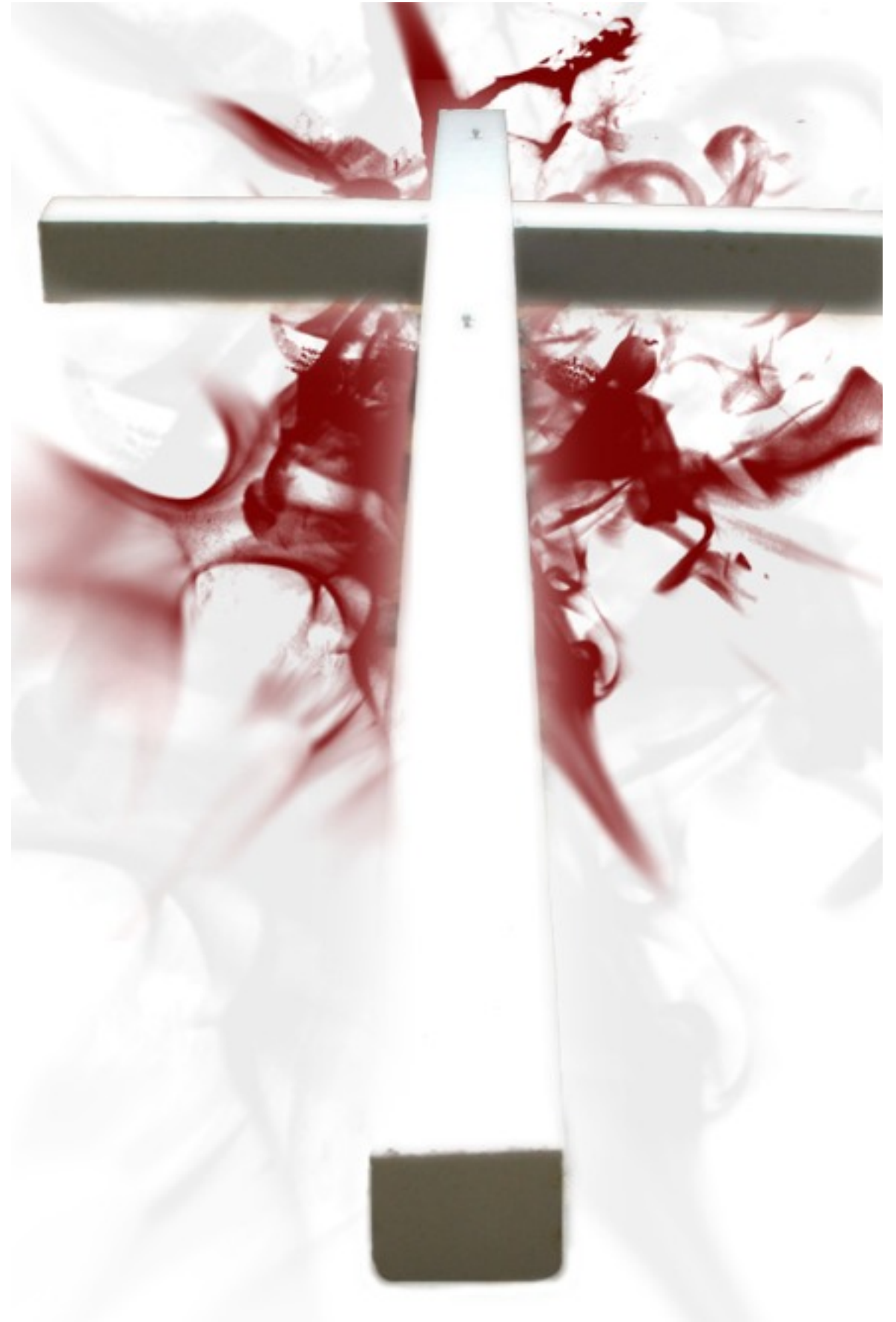
Intercessory Prayer

Ephesians 6:18

We have looked at deliverance as it relates to us, but tonight, I want us to look at how we might intercede on behalf of another who needs deliverance.

Before we can rightly intercede for others, we must learn how to plead the blood of Jesus on our own behalf.

The blood is for more than eternal salvation. The blood is our protection. Jesus shed sinless blood that the devil cannot cross. When we plead the blood of Jesus we can do it in authority, with boldness and with confidence, knowing there are not enough demons in existence to cross that line. If they all join hands and push together, they still could not cross that line.



My property has a bloodline. My house has a bloodline. My family has a bloodline. Your dominion in the spirit realm has a bloodline and you have to draw it.

In Exodus 12, God told the children of Israel to take the blood of lambs and paint the lintel of their doors with it, so the angle of death could not cross the blood to reach those inside.

I am convinced that today we can apply the blood of Jesus in realm of the spirit. We can dip our brushes in the eternal, everlasting blood of the Lamb of God and paint it on the doorposts of our hearts. That blood will proclaim, "No entry devil. We give you no place. You cannot come in!"

And the devil cannot cross the line!! Glory to God!!

What can be done in behalf of others who obviously need deliverance, but who are not open to receive it?

First of all, what is the person's spiritual condition? Has he been born again? Is he backslidden? We must remember that salvation is deliverance. It is the deliverance of a man's spirit. Before salvation comes, a person is dead in his trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). In what sense is he dead? We know he is not physically dead because he is still breathing and moving. We know his soul (the seat of his personality and/or. thinking) is not dead because he is still thinking, feeling and making decisions. But his spirit is dead. He has no comprehension of, nor interest in, spiritual things. It takes the quickening (life giving) power of the Holy Spirit to resurrect a man's spirit. He needs to be born again (John 3:3). This comes about by the grace of God through that person's faith (Ephesians 2:8). And faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10: 17). Salvation is deliverance. The Greek word for salvation is "*soteria*", and denotes deliverance. Therefore, salvation of man's spirit is the first stage of deliverance 'and it is the basis for further deliverance.

So, the priority in deliverance is leading a person to a right relationship with Jesus Christ. And we must realize that salvation involves intercessory prayer that the spiritual blindness be removed. The lost person is blinded by satanic power, according to 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of the world (Satan) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

But, intercessory prayer is needed for the saved person as well. Anyone. who is closed to the Lord's provision of needed deliverance is held by deception. Whatever excuse is offered for rejecting deliverance represents some form of deception. Satan, the deceiver, is having his way, and that person is held in needless bondage.

Jesus taught us to intercede for one another that we might be delivered from the snares of the devil. He taught us to pray: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Literally, "deliver us from the evil one." Notice the plural pronoun "us". We should include others in our prayer for deliverance.

This is exactly what Paul was telling us in Ephesians 6: 18, "Praying always with all prayers and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

There is one caution that we must deal with in our efforts to lead a person to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, as well as seeking to restore a backslidden Christian to fellowship with the Lord. We must realize that WE CANNOT CONTROL ANOTHER person's WILL. Spiritual warfare has as its goal the releasing of a person's will in order that he can respond directly to ,the Lord and receive the help God has for him. In cases where the person is in the bondage of sin and of Satan by decisions of his own free will, then he has chosen that path, binding the devil will not cause him to turn. When the demonic powers are bound by others he then has the ability to choose Christ and His kingdom.

The greatest weapon that we can place along side intercessory prayer is our ability to love. Listen to me very carefully, buried deep within every man, woman, boy or girl lies the need to be loved. Somehow, you can be sure they have been hurt and/or rejected.

The eye of love distinguishes between the person's true self and the indwelling demons that manifest hatred, rebellion, suspicion or whatever else separates them from deliverance. Such discerning love enables us to love those persons who are unlovable, and not get blown away by their storms of frustration caused by an unstable personality. Even when those persons do not recognize or respond to our offered love, we can be assured that it is a spiritual wrestling technique that puts intolerable pressure on the powers of darkness.

In the Bible, spirits are equated with breath and air. The Greek word for "spirit" is "pneuma" which means breath or air. Just as carbon monoxide is deadly to our breath, so is love to an evil spirit. Listen carefully, an evil spirit cannot exist and work when surrounded by love. Our godly love forges a weapon that breaks down the anti-love powers in the lives of others. This is why Jesus taught us to love our enemies. It heaps coals of fire upon their heads. That is, it purifies their minds.

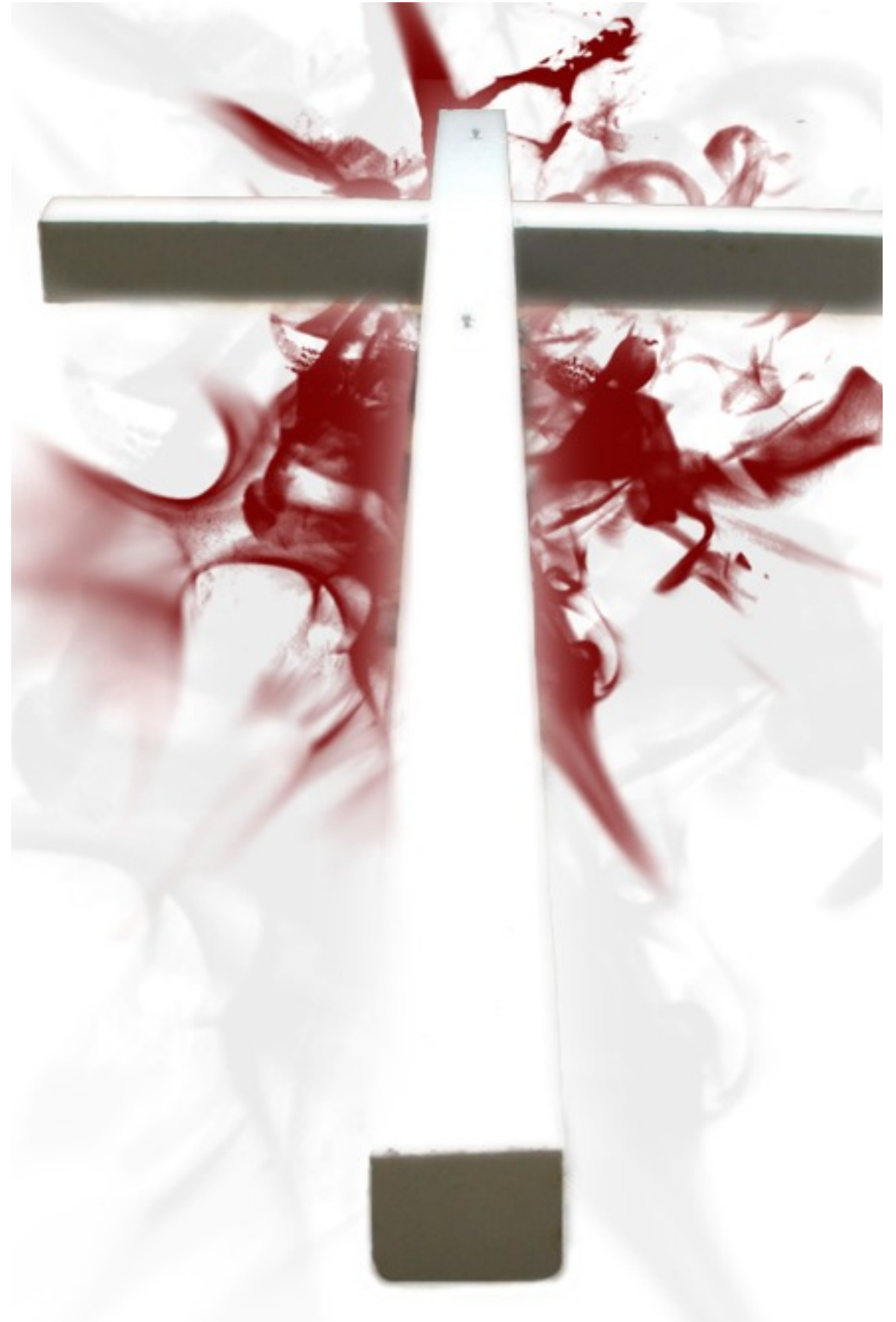
Now, the truth of the matter is this - the very people most needful of deliverance are often the most difficult to love. They may turn away from your offers of compassion and love, but we are commanded to love even our enemies in Matthew 5:43-48. In fact, that is exactly the way God delivered us from our sinfulness. The Word of God says in Romans 5:8, "But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He loved us even though we were altogether unlovely. His love broke down the barriers! Love has the power to break down every wall. It is a powerful weapon in the hands of a Spirit anointed Christian!!

Binding & Loosing

Matthew 16:8-19

In our studies on deliverance, we have seen the origin of Satan and demons, we have seen how they work and possess the lost person and oppress the Christian, we have looked at how we might gain and maintain deliverance in our own lives, and the power of intercessory prayer in the lives of others.

We need to understand that the devil may be the opposite of God, but he is not God's equal. He is not omnipotent. In fact, the devil has no real power.



The devil has no right to have any power. All he has are his abilities. The abilities he uses against the creation of God are deception and thievery. He lies and steals. A thief does not have to be strong to steal. He can be scrawny and weak and still be the greatest thief the world has ever known. All he has to do is wait until there is no one home.

That is what the devil does. He preys on people who are "not home" spiritually. He stalks those who do not believe he is real, because he knows they will not be on guard against him. He lurks behind Christians who believe he is real but leaves themselves open to his oppression. He sets traps of temptation and deception.

2 Timothy 2:26 tells us backslidden Christians are in "the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. "

Satan is subtle. He is a liar and a sower of doubt. He is the enemy of all righteousness.

In Acts 13:10 Paul confronted Elymas, the sorcerer, who had tried to thwart the deputy's hearing and responding to the Gospel. Paul said, "O full of all deceit and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" That is exactly what the devil does. He perverts. He twists the truth, mixes it with lies and injects it with doubt. He is our enemy.

In this study, we are going to look at Binding and Loosing.

In Matthew 16:18-19 the Scripture declares that Jesus has given us power to bind and loose in reference to Satan and his cohorts. The context of this promise is in connection with Peter's declaration concerning Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. "

Now, notice how Jesus answered, "And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall

be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

This passage of Scripture has been preached many different ways, and then simply skipped over as if it were not in the Bible. But to understand it, we must understand it in light of the setting in which it was given.

What is the immediate context of the authority to bind and loose? The immediate preceding phrase is: "And the gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail against it." Now, to what, or whom, was Jesus making reference? The simple, yet obvious answer is: the church!! In other words, the church is given complete authority over the "gates of hell". The Amplified Bible translates verse 18 this way, "The gates of Hades (the powers of the infernal region) shall not overpower it - or be strong to its detriment, or hold out against it." Jesus pictured the church as militant. Nothing can stop it - not even the forces of Satan!!

With that truth in mind, it is easy to understand that the power to bind and loose in regard to Satan is described as "the keys of the Kingdom of heaven." The word for "kingdom" is the Greek word "*basileia*" (bas-il-iah) which means "to rule." This same truth is shown to us in Colossians 1: 13 where we are told that when we were saved, God "delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." The Greek word for "power" is the word "*exousia*" (ex-oo-see-ah) and it means "authority" It is the promise of God's Word that those who are saved rule with Christ now. This same truth is seen in Romans 5: 17, "For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Hallelujah!! Our God has promised that we shall reign, or rule, as kings in life - now.

How could we do that apart from being able to bind the power of the devil, and to loose that which he has already made captive? And that is exactly what Jesus is saying here in Matthew 16.

Child of God, we need to wake up and realize that we have been given much more authority than we have ever imagined! It is no longer a matter of prayer by which we cry out, Oh, God, please come and do something about this awful devil that is giving me such a hard time." But it is a matter of rising up in the power of the name of Jesus and telling the devil what he has to do!!

What is the meaning of the phrase "shall be bound in heaven ... shall be loosed in heaven"? Williams, the Bible translator, points out for us that the verb form is the perfect passive participle, so the reference is to things in a state of having been already forbidden or permitted. This tells us that whatever is bound or loosed by the believer is done on the basis that it is already done "in heaven" by the Lord himself!

What is it, then, that the Lord has already bound and which he has given us power to bind again? The answer is found in the words of Jesus in Matthew 12:29, "Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house." The context of this passage finds Jesus casting out demons. His authority for doing this is challenged by the religious authorities. They accuse Him of doing it by the power of the devil himself. Jesus is explaining that He is able to control demon spirits and make them obey him because He has already bound the strong man - Satan. The fact that the demons obey Him is evidence of Satan being bound. Satan is already bound "in heaven" - by heaven's power. His power is broken. The key is given to us. We have power over him, too. Glory!

The Greek word for "bind" in this passage is "*deo*" (deh-o), and it means "to fasten or tie" - as with chains, as an animal tied to keep it from straying. This is glorious! When Satan is bound he is made inoperable in our lives! He loses his ability to act against us!

Why is this so? Now listen carefully, when we use our authority to bind Satan on earth it is even as he is already bound in heaven. What does

that mean? It simply means that Jesus has already done the "dirty work" for us, all we have to do is exercise our authority!!!

Satan has his "strong men" appointed over nations, cities, churches, homes and individuals. God is showing us that these strong men have already been defeated and bound by heaven's power. Therefore, we have this truth is shown for us in 1 John 3:8b, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

Now, listen carefully, God has given to us the "keys of the kingdom". What is the "key" to growth and victory in the church of the living God? The answer is this - there is power to rule over the forces of darkness. We do not have to pray for it. The battle has been won in heaven; we are to bind on earth what has already been bound in heaven.

What, then, does the loosing refer to? The loosing is setting the captives free! Through the authority that God has given His children the captives are released from the bonds of enslavement which Satan has put about them.

The Greek word translated "loose" in Matthew 16 is "*luo*" (1000), and it means "to loose anything tied or fastened; to loose one bound; to set free." This is the same word used in Luke 13:11-12, "And behold there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity."

When the ruler of the synagogue became angry over this deliverance because it was done on the Sabbath, Jesus answered in verses 15-16, "Thou hypocrite, doth not each of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, 10, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

Child of God, the victory over demons is already won by Jesus. As far as heaven is concerned every captive is loosed! The principle is the same in salvation. Jesus has provided for every man's salvation. But, why are people still lost? The blood must be applied by every man. Every man who, by faith, applies the blood of Jesus Christ on his life is saved. Those who refuse or neglect to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior will be eternally lost. In like manner, those who refuse or neglect to accept their birth-right of deliverance, will be bound in this life.

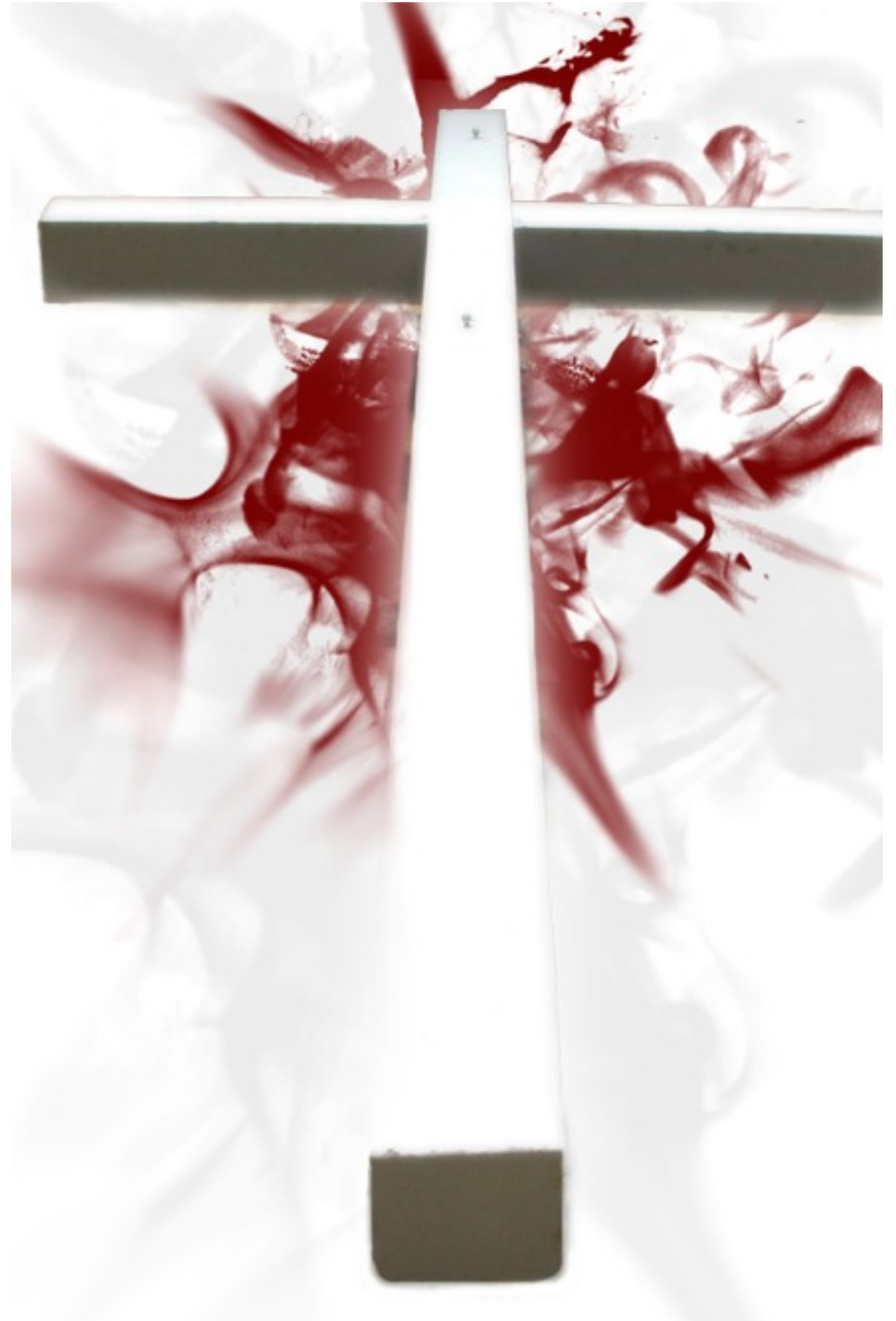
Be Strong In The Lord

Ephesians 6:10

In our study of deliverance we have seen the origin and operation of Satan and his demonic cohorts. We have seen that there is a war going on around us between the ministering spirits of God and the spirits of darkness, and they are fighting over our lives.

Demon spirits are frenzied and running loose in these last days, and they are out to destroy the children of the living God, our families, our homes and our nation.

America is rolling in luxury, reveling in pleasure and rotting in sin. Passions run amok like riderless horses. Lust is exalted as lord. Sin is treated as sovereignty and Satan is worshipped as a saint.



From perverted politicians who promote godless legislation to the street punk with an assault rifle, to the so-called solid citizen who shakes his fist at the commandments of a holy God ... America is possessed!

This onslaught of evil is too sinister and too subtle to be the work of human origin. It is the carefully calculated conspiracy of demonic entities.

We have also seen how Satan uses "open doors" to get into our personal lives and then into our families. We have seen the importance of intercessory prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit. In this study we will look at Paul's admonition to "Be strong in the Lord. "

Verse 10 says, " ... be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. " That tells you to do something; that's a command.

In the military, when a command is given, you obey it whether or not you think or believe you can. There is no negotiating with the individual in authority who gave you the command. You just obey it.

Paul commanded us to be strong in the Lord. But to be strong in the Lord takes more than the Lord doing His part. It takes us making a commitment to obey this command.

First of all, if we are to be strong in the Lord and maintain our strength in Him as we're commanded, we must first learn to be steadfast.

What does, steadfast mean? Steadfast means: loyal, unwavering, not changing, firm of purpose, firmly still, unchangeable, and established. Those are pretty descriptive words!!

Let's take; for example, the word loyal. There are a lot of people who are loyal as long as everything is going good. But to be steadfast means you're loyal even when things aren't happening the way you've planned them.

A lot of people praise God as long as they can dance and shout. They say, "Oh, yeah, we're loyal." But let the least bit of adversity come, and

you can't find them. If they had been a part of the Apostle Paul's traveling company, I'm afraid their loyalty would have ended before they ever got started.

The Apostle Paul, however, was steadfast in his loyalty. In the face of every obstacle he encountered, he was still loyal to the message of faith in God's Word. Paul incurred tremendous adversity. He was left for dead, physically beaten several times, and put in jail many times. And yet he was still loyal. Not one time did he ever waver pursuing the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!

We can talk about love all we want, but talking and doing are two different things. In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Most Christians have no problem loving the Lord with everything that is within them. But Jesus also said to "...love thy neighbor as thyself." Until we learn to fulfill this commandment of God, we cannot expect to have the move of God and the power of God demonstrated in our lives, in our church, or in our nation!

Once more, please allow me to remind you that people are not our enemies! Actually, what we need to do is Just begin to deal with the unseen enemy Satan. For instance, if someone is giving you a hard time at work, don't deal with that individual. Instead, deal with the unseen enemy who is causing the problem!

Ephesians 6:12 reminds us that "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." The Word of God says here that we don't deal with flesh and blood, or in other words, with people. We need to realize what we are standing in faith against. Then instead of getting out of love and talking about this person and that person, we can use our energy to deal with the unseen

enemy, Satan. He's the one who is working behind the scenes and causing the problem in the first place.

Listen to Paul's warning to the church in I Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons." Because Satan has blinded the mind of some preachers and laymen alike, he has been able to bring some very twisted teaching into the church.

We don't call sin "sin" any longer. Now we call it "a problem" and send the person to a psychologist.

A murderer is no longer a heinous criminal. He is just a victim of society, born on the wrong side of the tracks. He was deprived of the right socioeconomic opportunities. He is the real victim.

Adultery is no longer considered sin in Hollywood ... or in 90 percent of the church world. Movies and television never show any of the disastrous consequences. The audience never gets even a hint that AIDS exists.

Teenage sexual activity will result in nearly 1,000,000 pregnancies annually, leading to 406,000 abortions, 134,000 miscarriages and 490,000 live births. About 3,000,000 teens will contract a sexually transmitted disease ("The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators," Vol. 2, March 1993, p. 12).

Half the marriages in this nation end in divorce. Even in the church the divorce rate is keeping pace with the rest of America.

Alcoholism is no longer considered a sin. Instead, the alcoholic has a "disease" we spend millions of dollars in advertising each year to propagate. We put a state funded liquor store on one corner and a rehab center on the other!

The President of the United States promised us a cabinet that "looks like America." Twenty five percent of Americans claim to be evangelical Christians (False Premises: The Assumptions that Hinder Ministry," Glendale: Ministry Currents," Vol. 2, No. 4, Oct-Dec., 1992, p.2). But how many have been put in high level government positions? Absolutely none.

Doctrines of humanism and modernistic theology erode the very fiber of the Word of God. Churches have sold out to accommodate the world's decaying values. They no longer believe in the blood. They no longer believe in the Cross. They no longer believe in the virgin birth.

I am not talking about philosophies. I am not talking about ideas, tendencies or sociological trends. I am talking about what the Bible calls "demon spirits," dispatched from the realm of the supernatural to afflict the lives God so lovingly designed and created.

Everything I've mentioned ties together with being strong in the Lord, and it is important that we get all of these areas in order in our lives.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is a devil on the loose!

Teen suicide is the third leading cause of death among adolescents (William Bennett, "The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators, Vol.2,, March 1993, p. 12). Between 1960 and 1990 the rate of teen suicide increased 400 percent. When our children living in our homes and attending our churches are tormented in their minds and driven to take their lives, there is a devil on the loose.

When the public school systems ban the Bible and use tax dollars to pass out condoms, there is a devil on the loose.

When 28 percent of all babies in America are born to single mothers, there is a devil on the loose.

We do not need another social program. We do not need another government policy. We do not need another self help psychology book.

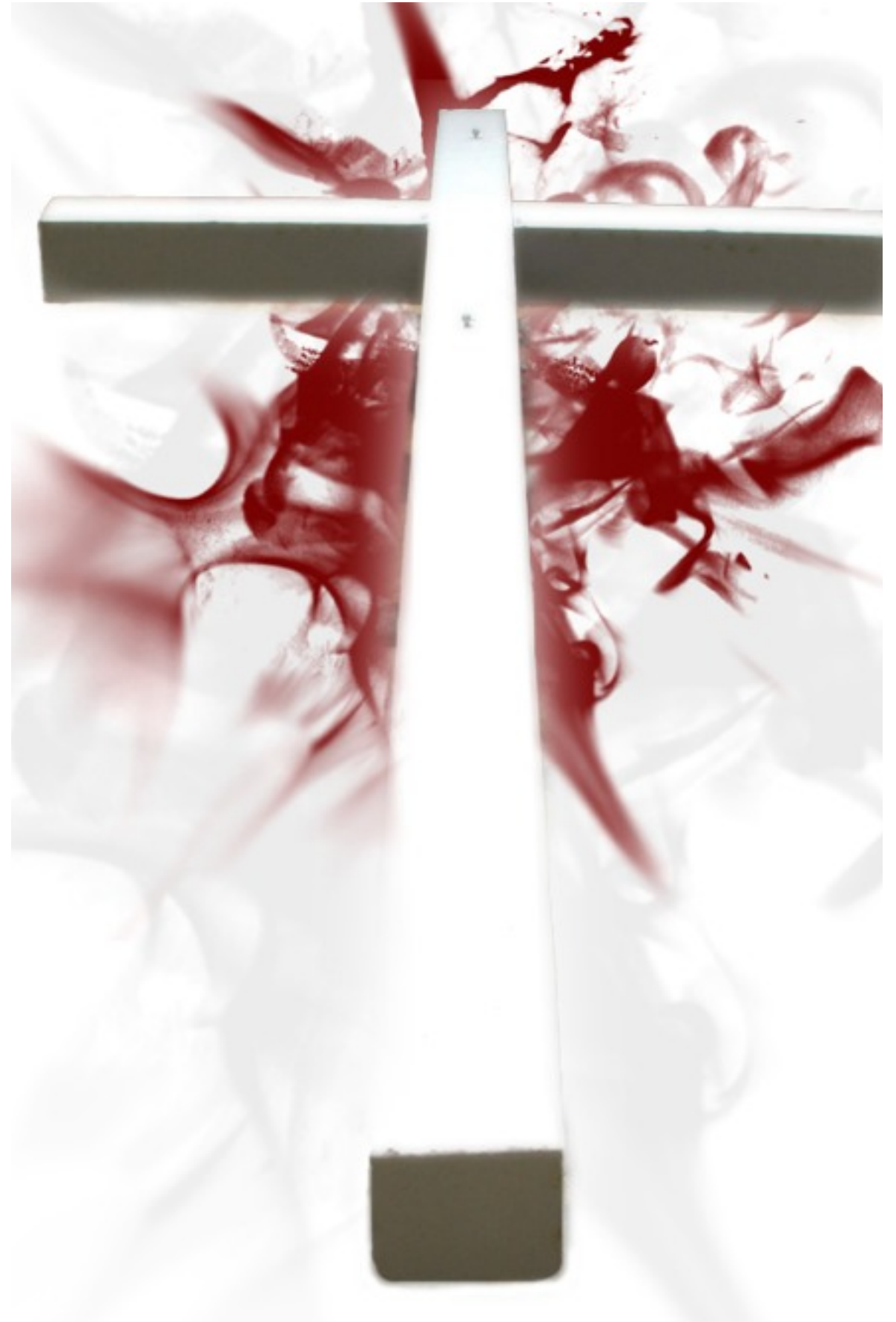
We need to recognize there is a devil on the loose!

We need to have a strong commitment to obey the Word of God. We need to be steadfast Christians who hold steady and endure hardship. We need to know how to operate in faith based on love. And we need to learn how to deal with the unseen enemy with the Word in prayer, using the name of Jesus as our authority.

The Whole Armor Of God

Ephesians 6:10

When we read the last chapter of Ephesians, we find that the epistle that began in the heavenlies concludes on the battlefield. The Apostle Paul, in the first chapter, directed our attention to our glorious position in the heavenlies in Christ. In the second and third chapters, he traced the glorious union of Jew and Gentile in one body, through the work of the Holy Spirit. In the fourth and fifth chapters, he described the walk of the believers in unity. Then, as he brought the epistle to a close, he found it necessary to give a warning to those who had received these truths, for the life in unity and in love will be lived on a hostile ground. The apostle desired that those who had received these truths should be prepared for battle. As Christians, we are not only servants but soldiers. We live not only in the home but also in a citadel. We must be equipped for the life we are called upon to live, and the warfare we are called upon to fight.



I have only vague memories of World War II, but I can still remember watching men stand in train stations and kiss their wives good-bye. They held and hugged their children with tears streaming down their faces.

Careers were forgotten ... professions left behind ... comforts forsaken. They left their homes, their wives and their children. Why? A madman named Hitler was trying to enslave us, to take our freedom and to replace the Stars and Stripes with the swastika.

In the fight for political freedom this sacrifice was calculated and expected in the name of patriotism. Thousands of men died in blood soaked foxholes. Thousands more returned home crippled, blinded, or emotionally unstable from the horror of war.

But what about our call to spiritual warfare? We are facing today an enemy more evil than Adolf Hitler and Saddam Hussein combined. Every day of our lives we are engaged in an emotional, physical and spiritual fight for our lives.

I am amazed that men, at the call of their president, will lovingly kiss their wives and children good-bye. They will forsake their careers and the comforts of home. They willingly risk death or disability in the pursuit of political freedom. (And that is great.) Yet these same men will shrink back at the call of Christ to fight the supernatural forces of Satan.

For warfare in the natural realm, men will leave home for years. But to fight against the principalities and powers of darkness that are ripping America to shreds, they won't leave home one day a week to visit the house of God.

For warfare in the natural realm, men will freeze in snow-covered foxholes, lying face down in the mud and the blood. Yet the same men find it impossible to spend an hour worshipping God in a warm church with carpeted floors.

For warfare in the natural realm, men will study the tactics of the enemy around the clock. Yet for spiritual warfare, they refuse to pray and seldom open the Word of God, which is their sword.

For warfare in the natural realm, men will spend fortunes for superior weapons systems. Yet for spiritual warfare they won't give 50 cents to a gospel quartet...they won't tithe to their church ... they won't make a pledge to the building program. All they want to give the divine Commander-in-Chief is their advice.

The church of Jesus Christ sings about our victory, yet millions live in defeat and humiliation because they do not understand spiritual warfare. They have not heeded the battle cry to suit up in their armor and resist the enemy. Most people don't even know who their enemy really is.

Listen to me very carefully, we are at war with the world, the flesh and the devil. There is no compromise with it. There is only victory over it!

The apostle Paul gave our marching orders in the New Testament: "Fight the good fight of faith ... Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

But the church doesn't want to hear about hardship and battles. The church wants to hear about greasy grace and gospel lace, not battles. The church will show up in force for bingo, bazaars and book reviews, but not for battles.

If strict discipline is necessary to excel in the arts, in athletics, in academics, how can the church of God expect to advance against Satan with an army of carnal, compromising, cowardly Christians afraid of conflict?

We've turned the church into a country club for religious fat cats. It is supposed to be the recruiting center for the army of God.

The church is not the punching bag for Hollywood's hell raisers bent on destroying traditional families. The church is not a bunch of tongue-tied patsies sitting on the sidelines of life waiting for the great escape called the Rapture.

The church is the army of God! Our mission is to pull down the strongholds of sin and Satan by putting on the whole armor of God and standing in the evil day.

Some Christians have become traitors to God. Compromise with the enemy is treason in the courts of heaven. James 4:4 tells us that whoever is "a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

Some Christians have become secret agents. What they do for Christ is so pathetic that if they were on trial for being a Christian, the Supreme Court could not get a conviction.

Some Christians are double agents. They can't make up their minds which side they're on. On Sunday they're on the Lord's side. Monday through Saturday they walk on the side of the world.

Satan is looking for those casual Christians without their armor he knows they are easy prey. What would you think of the middle linebacker for the Dallas Cowboys or the Washington Redskins playing in the Superbowl without his helmet or protective padding? You would think, "That guy's not too bright. He's going to get killed. "

That is exactly what the devil says about you when he sees you without the armor of God.

What is the armor of God? It is the Word of God applied to your life. The Word will protect your mind, your heart, your soul and your body - but only if you know and apply it to your life. Putting on the whole armor of God is the only way to survive in spiritual warfare.

In our last study we talked about being "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." We saw that the strength and power is available to

God's children to give us victory in our daily life, as we believe His promises and walk by faith.

In the eleventh verse we are told to "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." When Paul wrote this to the Ephesians, he was a Roman prisoner. Perhaps the soldier into whose keeping he had been committed was standing before him even as he wrote. Seeing the soldier would guide Paul as he described the armament provided for the child of God.

The phrase, "put on," in the Greek means "to put on once and for all." In commanding us to assume this "uniform of the day", Paul is reminding us that the battle to which we are called is continuous, unceasing, and relentless because of the nature of our enemy. Neither the duration of the battle nor the wiles of the devil will permit us to lay aside our armament. So he gives us the command, "Put on once and for all the whole armor of God."

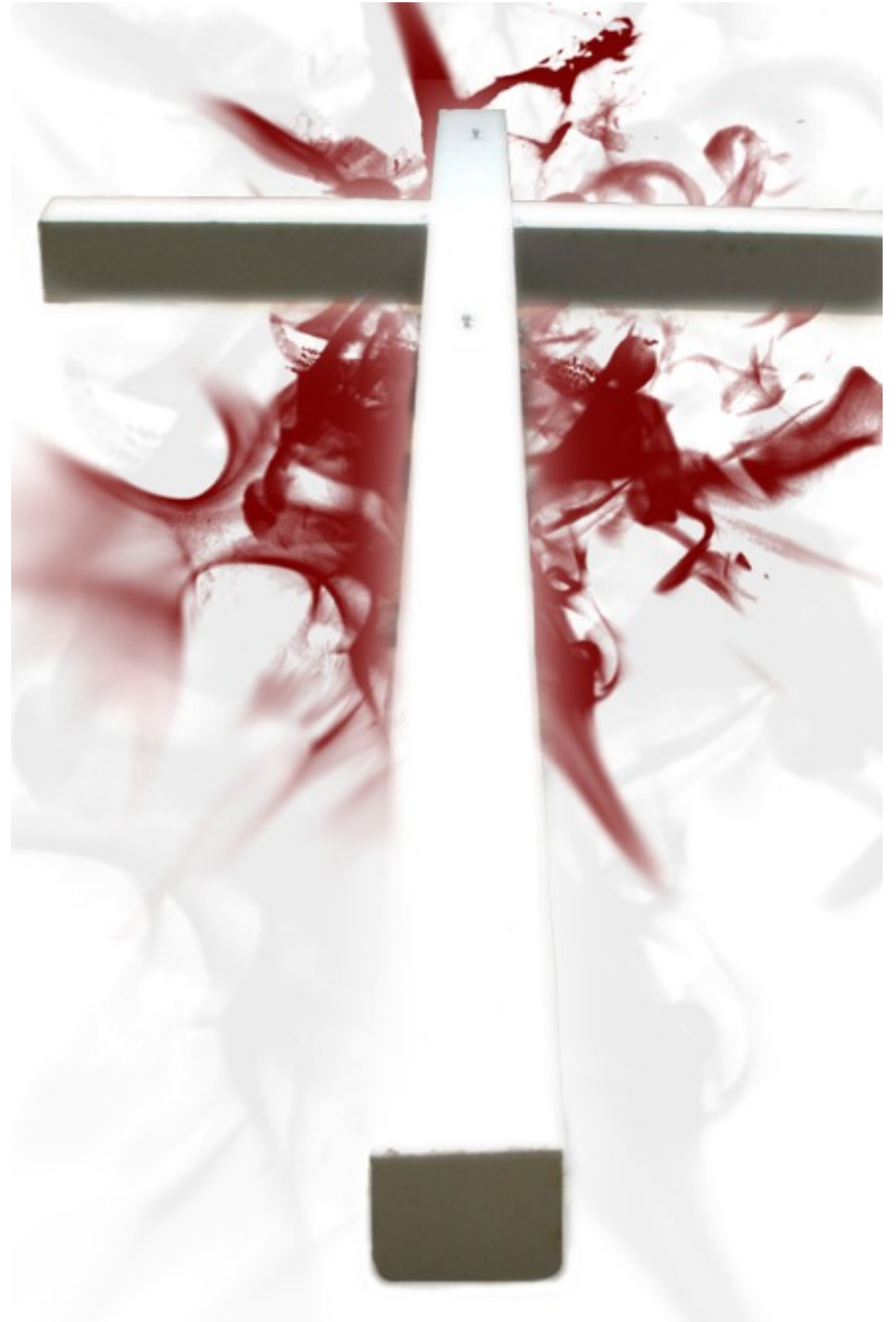
In our next study, we will look at what God expects us to wear as we do a lifetime of warfare with our arch-enemy, the devil.

Putting On The Uniform

Ephesians 6:12-17

Satan hates what we are about to study in this lesson on deliverance. It's a life and death matter - life to those who hear it, believe it and do it, and death to those who don't. But I'm trusting that the church triumphant will become the church militant so that life will flow, and life abundantly!

Remember that we looked at Luke 12:31, where Jesus said, "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Yet at the same time, in Matthew 11: 12 we are told that "from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."



God wants to give us the kingdom. But there is only one way to receive what God wants to give, and that is by force - not force over men, not force over institutions, but all-out force over spiritual powers, principalities and rulers of darkness. Someone is trying to keep you from receiving the kingdom that God wants you to receive, and force is required to overcome the enemy.

Remember also that we run this race of the gospel not just to go through the motions of running. We run to win! We run with a view toward winning the race and its prize. This is the Christian's goal!

People who think that we're on a stroll through the park don't understand the full message of the New Testament. The apostle Paul exhorted us in 1 Corinthians 9:24 to "Run in such a way as to get the prize." He said in Philippians 3: 14, "I press toward the mark of the high calling of God, which is in Christ Jesus." Press on! Someone is trying to trip you up and take you on a detour to keep you from winning the race. Child of God, it will take a concerted effort to win!

Listen to me today, something must rise up within you to say, "I won't let the devil take what belongs to the kingdom of God and what belongs to me and to my family ANY MORE. I won't just stand by and let him ravage our homes, take advantage of our children or gain any authority over our church."

The biggest lie Satan tells today is that "everything is OK." Everything is not OK! Most people I know need more deliverance, more health, more peace and joy in their hearts. And it will take effort, commitment, even force, to meet that need.

In Ephesians 6:10-18 we have a passage critical to our understanding of how to succeed as a warrior for God and win over the devil. We have already seen that we must "be strong in the Lord." We have looked at the fact that we are in a "real" battle against "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places."

Verses 14-17 give us the pieces of armor that we are to wear. But, what is this armor? It is the very character and attributes of God Himself. As we go through these pieces of armor and learn what they mean and how to put them on, turn your attention to one central fact: Each piece of armor is nothing more than a manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives. We are really putting on Jesus Christ - and the character traits manifested by Him, which were a reflection of the character of God Himself - as our defense and our offense while we live out our lives in this world. We are talking about a way of releasing the character of Jesus Christ so that the One who is on the inside of us can be manifest on the outside of us.

Do you have Jesus living on the inside of you? Then "putting on the whole armor of God" is a way for you to manifest the Lord Jesus Christ in an outward way.

The first piece of armor is described as our "waist girded with truth." In another translation it says, "loins girt about with truth." What exactly is that waist covering? What are your "loins"?

Your loins are those secret parts of the body - your reproductive organs and the organs that dispel waste. In the spiritual realm, then, you are appropriating truth to release the spiritual waste - or falsehood, lies, deceit - out of your life. And you are appropriating truth so that you are ready to reproduce yourself in God. The Bible calls this process being "conformed to the image of' Jesus Christ in Romans 8:29.

How do you put on that girdle of truth? May I suggest this way? Every day stand before God in prayer and say, "Father, in the name of Jesus, I know that You are the Truth and You are in me, and I say amen today that You are my Truth. I confess to you my desire to know the Truth and to speak the truth wherever I go."

The next piece of armor is the breastplate of righteousness. This breastplate of righteousness, placed on my chest, covers my heart and lungs.

Now my heart pumps blood to my body in the natural, and the Scripture teaches in Deuteronomy 12:23 that "life is in the blood." The same thing is true spiritually. My Jesus heart pumps blood to my entire life, and my spiritual life is in the blood of Jesus. My spiritual lungs allow me to breathe deeply the Spirit of God. And when those vital organs of my body are spiritually covered with the righteousness of God, then I can breathe the fresh sweet air of God's Holy Spirit and experience His life in a way that activates and energizes my entire being.

How do we put this piece of armor on? Stand before the Lord and say, "God, You gave me as a free gift my righteousness, which is the blood of Jesus. Therefore, I plead the blood of Jesus on my life."

Child of God, when you know that you are covered with the breastplate of the righteousness of God, which is your gift through the blood of Jesus Christ, then your heart pumps its spiritual vitality freely to all parts of your being. Why? Because you are no longer struggling to make your own life right before God according to your works or performance. The pace of your life evens out because you are not struggling to achieve righteousness on your own.

When you aren't struggling to achieve your own righteousness, you can breathe deeply those things of the Spirit of God. You can take them into your being with freedom, breathing all the way down and completely filling your spiritual lungs with the breath of God.

The next piece of armor is the shoes of the gospel of peace. Jesus is ready to walk in the right paths. He is living on the inside of me. He is prepared to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh.

To have your "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" means that we are to have ever ready shoes. We are to be prepared to go wherever God sends us, wherever He leads, wherever He directs us.

Folks, that means that we can no longer try to buy God off by "sending" our money to the "mission field". God is not asking for your money, He is asking for you!

How do you put on this piece of armor? Stand before the Lord and say, "Thank you, Lord, that You are my Truth; You are my Righteousness; You are my Readiness. And because of my salvation I have a testimony."

The next piece of armor is the shield of faith. Verse 6 says, "taking the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." The "fiery darts" are Satan's offense. Your shield of faith, therefore, is your number-one defensive weapon.

Now what are those fiery darts? What are you lifting your shield against? Satan throws at you lies and temptations that are aimed directly at the five-fold covenant you have with God once you are born again by the blood of Jesus. He lies to you:

- 1) that your sins really aren't forgiven.
- 2) that you don't really possess the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit is just an imagination of your mind.
- 3) that you will never be healed because God doesn't really want to heal you.
- 4) that you will never prosper because God doesn't care about your material well-being.
- 5) that you will never be a winner before God or a "conqueror" in life.

Now those are fiery darts. Satan does everything in his power to penetrate your mind with those lies. He is faithful to his task.

How do we fight against those fiery darts? We lift up our shield of faith. We speak our faith.

- 1) I am saved, because I have asked Jesus Christ to come into my heart and I believe that He did.
- 2) I do have the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, because Acts 2:38 says He is my Gift, and Jesus Christ indwells me with the Person of the Holy Spirit.
- 3) I will be well. God does want to heal me because He said in Exodus 15:26, "I am the Lord who heals you." Isaiah 53:5 tells me that He was wounded for my transgressions, bruised for my iniquities; the chastisement of my peace was upon Him and by His stripes I am healed!
- 4) I will live in prosperity. According to 3 John 2 God does want me to prosper.
- 5) I do have victory, because Romans 8 tells us that we are "more than conquerors through him that loved us."

How do you put on this piece of armor? Stand before God and say, "Father, Jesus is my faith. He is the author and finisher of my faith. He is the source of my faith. Therefore, I confess that I will stand on the promises of Jesus in Your Word for my life."

The next piece of armor is the helmet of salvation. The helmet of salvation is hope, as seen in 1 Thessalonians 5:8, "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. "

Hope is protection for the mind. Some Christians have put so much emphasis on faith they have ignored hope. The word of God is filled with hope The Bible says we are saved by hope. The Bible says we are looking for that blessed hope, the return of our Lord and Savior. It says we have hope as the anchor of our soul.

What is hope? Hope is the expectation that good things are going to happen to me based on historical fact. Hope is not wishful thinking. Hope is not an illusion. Hope has a historical basis in fact.

Ladies and gentlemen, historically God has been faithful! God has provided financially in the past; He'll do it again. God has answered prayers in the past; He'll do it again. Jesus has healed in the past; He'll do it again. He made a way where there seemed to be no way; He'll do it again. He is the God of all hope!

The last piece of armor is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. There is only one thing to do with a sword - fight! When Satan attacks, counter attack with the sword, which is the Word of God.

The sword of the Word is the only piece of our spiritual armor that is both offensive and defensive in nature. It is alive and powerful, as seen in Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is quick (alive) and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. "

Child of God, get to know the Word of God or you "sword" will be useless to you.

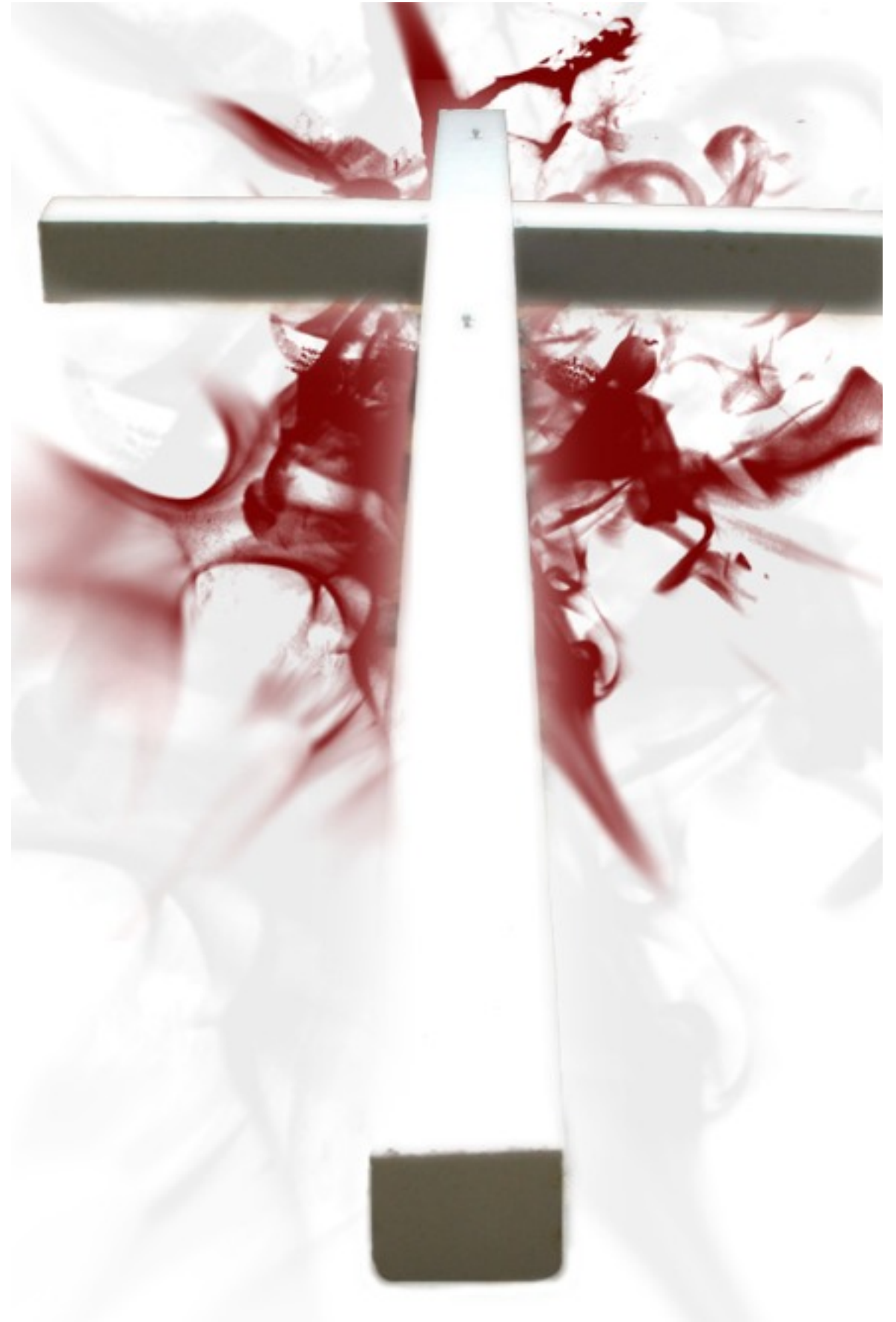
Piercing the Darkness Through Prayer

Ephesians 6:18

Prayer is the key that unlocks the storehouses of God's grace and power. All that God is, and all God has, is available to those who pray.

Paul said to put on the whole armor of God. After he lists the various pieces of armor - the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, the breastplate of righteousness and the shoes of the gospel of peace he says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

Many Christians have never learned to pray. The disciples said to Jesus, "Lord teach us to pray." There is a right way and a wrong way to pray.



Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance. Prayer is laying hold of God's will. Find out what God wants and pray for that. Prayer is not sending God to run your errands. Prayer is submitting to the purposes of God. Prayer produces boldness. Paul says in verse 19, "Pray that I may speak boldly." That is an important prayer for a preacher. A preacher of the Gospel should speak with the boldness of a lion. One of the great problems in America today is that our pulpits are full of preachers who have presented such a water-down, sin-free gospel that people can't find redemption.

Prayerlessness is sin. 1 Samuel 12: 23 says, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." In 1 Thessalonians Paul went so far as to say that we should pray without ceasing. My point is that prayerlessness is sin. We should pray because God answers prayer. The Bible says in Jeremiah 33: 3, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not." America is waiting for the church that will demonstrate the great and mighty things of God. When the church of Jesus Christ becomes supernatural again, our young people will stop seeking the occult. When the power of God is once more manifested, people will walk the aisles of our churches to be saved ... their dead marriages will come back to life... their sons will come off drugs and their daughters set free from alcoholism, all because the power of God is being released in our churches.

As powerful as God is, He cannot answer prayers until they are prayed. Prayer is the only way to get God's power released in your life. A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian. Prayer is the secret to power with God. Daniel was thrown to the lions because his prayer life terrorized the demonized bureaucrats of Babylon. He pierced the darkness with prayer. Elijah prayed and fire fell from heaven. If that ever starts happening in your prayer life, it won't be boring, I guarantee you. In the early days of the church, they prayed until the building shook. Acts 4:31 says, "And when they had prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled together."

Moses prayed, and as long as his hands were held up, Israel won the war. The moment his hands came down, Israel lost the war. The point is this: what you do on the ground in prayer is what God can do in the heavens. The moment you stop praying is the moment God's power stops. Your prayer is the secret of releasing God's power in your life. Jesus had a powerful prayer life; He prayed all night many nights. And after He had prayed all night, then came the signs and wonders.

When you pray, you tap into the supernatural world. Through the Holy Spirit, you can pray with supernatural intelligence that goes beyond the knowledge of man. Romans 8:26 says that when we don't know how to pray, the Holy Spirit helps us: "Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Our "infirmities" include our mental capacity. Regardless of how brilliant you think you are, you are playing in a sand box compared to the genius of all-knowing God.

Listen, answered prayer is not a miracle, it's a law. When you take an ice tray and fill it with water and place it in a freezer, if the temperature is below 32°, the water turns to ice. That is not a miracle. That is natural law. It is the only thing that can happen. When you meet God's conditions in prayer, you will get an answer. It is not a miracle. It is the only thing that can happen. John 14: 1 4 says, "If you shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." Matthew 7:8 says, "For everyone that asketh receiveth." Prayer is not a mystery. Answered is not a miracle. It is the law of God!

There are some things that will hinder prayer.

- 1) Unbelief hinders prayer. The Bible says in Hebrews 11:6, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is."
- 2) Sin hinders prayer. The Bible says in Psalm 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." God will hear your

prayer of confession, but if there is sin in your life, He doesn't answer your prayer.

- 3) Discord between husbands and wives hinders prayer. The Bible says in 1 Peter 3:7, "...Husbands, dwell with (your wives) according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered."

There are some conditions for prayers answered.

- 1) There is the law of asking. The Bible says in James 4:2, "... you have not, because you ask not." And Jesus said in Matthew 7:7, Ask and you shall receive." Child of God, we have the awesome privilege of prayer, use it!
- 2) Ask according to God's infinite power. Knock God off His throne by asking things that stagger the human mind. Attempt to do such great things for God that unless He comes through, you'll fall flat on your face. Live in that dimension.
- 3) Ask believing. In Mark 11:24 Jesus said, "Therefore, I say unto you, Whatever things you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them."

Child of God, stand on the Word and pray with confidence! Do you need healing and the doctor says you can't have it? "Ask and you shall receive." Do you need the supernatural powers of heaven to break the yoke that binds your son or your daughter? "Ask and you shall receive." Do you need peace that surpassed understanding? "Ask and you shall receive." Do you need the stain of sin to be removed from your soul? "Ask and you shall receive." Nothing is impossible with God!

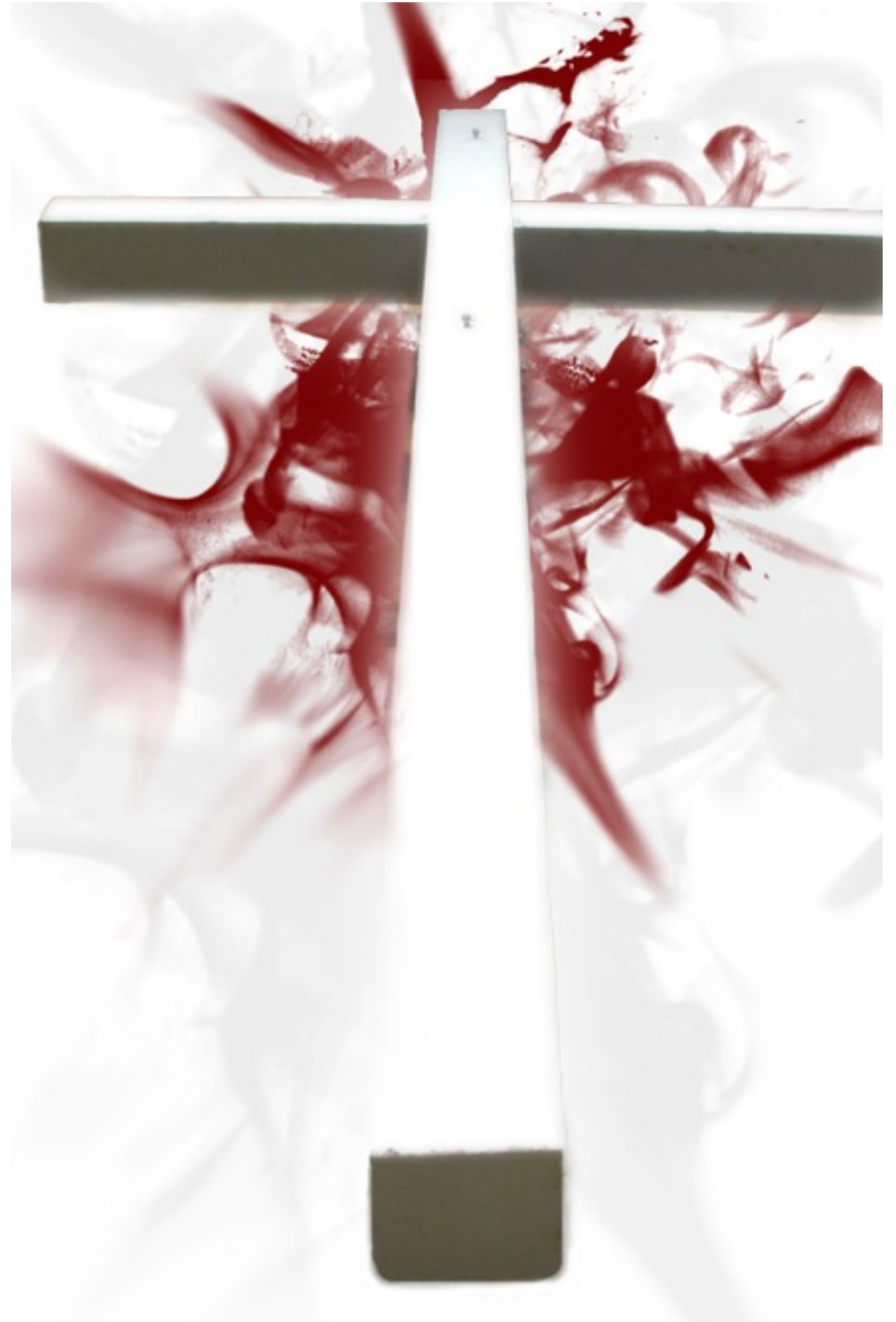
Marching In The Spirit

Galatians 5:22-26

In our past studies in this series of deliverance, we have looked at Satan, how he attacks, the Christian uniform of the day, and our need to pray. I believe that Paul has another order for we as Christians, and that is to "march in the Spirit."

As God's soldiers, how do we "march in the Spirit"? How do we move as the body of Christ from one battle to the next, arriving prepared and ready to take on the enemy?

First of all, we have to clear up some misconceptions. The first misconception is many folks seem to think after you've been born again, all your problems should be solved. You just automatically march in the Spirit and you never have another trial.



But that is, not the way it is. It's after you're born again, after you've come to Christ, repented of your sins, received His forgiveness and been filled with the Holy Spirit, that you learn to walk in victory. Problems and troubles won't disappear just because you've become a Spirit-filled Christian. You're still in this world.

A second misconception about the Christian life is this: Walking in the victory of the Holy Spirit is only for an elite group of super-spiritual people. Not so!! Walking in victory, walking in the Spirit, marching as part of the body of Christ with a warrior mentality to take on the enemy, is for every believer.

How do we begin?

Philippians 4:6-7 says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." The Greek language simply says, "Don't live full of worry." In other words, as Christians, we must make a decision not to dwell on our problems!!

Of course, that doesn't mean we won't have any problems, for in John 16: 33 Jesus said, "In this world you will have tribulation." The world is full of problems, and in today's high-pressure society especially, no one is exempt from stress.

The first thing we must do, then, to walk victoriously in the Spirit is to make a conscious decision that we will not dwell on the problems around us.

But, Paul does not stop when he says that we are not to be anxious, but he also says, "but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known unto God." In short, instead of worrying, start praying!

To me, "prayer" means having a conversation with God, while "supplication" means really getting down to business with God. But all of this must be done by faith!! Why? Because the only kind of prayer that God hears is a prayer of faith!!

Faith is knowing that God has already provided the solution before the problem ever arose!! Faith is knowing that God is still in charge of every circumstance.

But Paul does not stop there, for he says that we are to let our requests be made known to God by "prayer and supplication with thanksgiving." This means that within the circumstances you are experiencing you must start praising and giving thanks to God for the victory you can see only through your eyes of faith!

Praise is the language of faith!! Praise is our way of saying, "I acknowledge You, God, as the victor in this circumstance. You are the Lord. You are the King. You are my Provider. You are the Healer. You are my Savior and Deliverer. You are my Comforter and my Counselor."

Praise is focusing on the outcome of the situation. It is believing and saying with your faith that God wins.

What does the Word of God promise will happen when you move into praise? What will happen when you stop worrying, start praying and voice your thanksgiving to God? The answer is found in Philippians 4:7, "The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Deep, abiding peace is the hallmark of walking in the Spirit. The psalmist expressed it this way in Psalm 23:2, "He leads me beside the still waters." Show me a man or woman who is walking through life's circumstances with great peace and I'll show you a person who is walking in the victory of the Holy Spirit. I am not talking about some kind of artificial confession, where on the outside everything looks

calm and under control, but on the inside the pressure is building up and things are about to explode. That is not peace. That is a charade!

I am talking about true, deep, abiding peace. In John 14:27, Jesus told His disciples on the eve of His crucifixion, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. "God wants us to have peace!

In Colossians 3:15 the Word of God tells us to "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." How is it possible to "let" or "allow" "the peace of God to rule in your hearts"? The answer is: by faith!

Now, listen carefully, as soon as you start trusting God and declaring the praises of God, God activates the solution to your problem, the supply for your lack, and the answer for your dilemma. All of heaven gets to work on the problem the minute you start trusting and praising!!

Let me give you a biblical example of what I am trying to say. In 2 Chronicles 20 we read about a terrible mess Jehoshaphat found himself in. He was completely surrounded by the children of Ammon and Moab and the inhabitants of Mount Seir. He was invaded from three sides by the combined forces of the enemy and there was no apparent way of escape.

The Bible says in 2 Chronicles 20:3 that Jehoshaphat "set himself to seek the Lord." He didn't set himself to worry. He had a real problem and he knew it. But he made up his mind that he would seek the Lord.

Notice what Jehoshaphat said next to the Lord, "Lord, we don't know what to do." That is not a bad place to be before God. There is nothing wrong with coming to God with an attitude of not knowing.

Then Jehoshaphat added, "But... our eyes are upon You." He didn't have an answer and he knew it. He hadn't been to college to earn a degree in how to defeat these armies. He hadn't been in this position

before so he couldn't rely on past experiences. He did not know what to do!

Nevertheless Jehoshaphat did know Someone who had the answer. He knew where to put his eyes. Therefore, 2 Chronicles 20: 13 tells us that "all Judah with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord." There was unity among the people as they waited on God!!

What happened next? Jehoshaphat got an answer about what to do! I have never seen it fail: When a person begins to stand on the promises of God, an answer comes every time!!

The answer God sent came through Jahaziel, who was the son of somebody, who was the son of somebody else - four generations of Jahaziel's family are mentioned. They knew who this Jahaziel was precisely. As Jahaziel stood, the Spirit of the Lord came in the midst of the congregation and said through him, in effect, "Listen, everybody. The Lord says to you, Don't be afraid or dismayed. The battle is not yours, but God's. Go down to where they are tomorrow. But you won't need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand your ground, and see the salvation of the Lord. Don't be afraid, for the Lord will be with you."

Jehoshaphat bowed his head to the ground and all the people fell before the Lord, worshipping Him. They started their praise service! 2 Chronicles 20:19 says that "They stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with loud and high voices." They got happy before the Lord - even with those three great armies camped all about them.

The next morning Jehoshaphat gathered all the people together and said, "Listen, everybody. Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established. Believe His prophets and you will prosper."

Then he gathered the choir together and told them, "You will march on the enemy, but not with man-made weapons of warfare. You will lead

the way with spiritual weapons of warfare. You will march declaring the high praises of God and singing praises to the Lord." Glory to God, every choir ought to be the "hot-bed" for praise in any worship service!!

The Bible says, "When they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir." Notice that it doesn't say God began to act after they finished their song, but when they began to sing. Folks, a sovereign God knows the end before the beginning. He already had the plan figured out. He was just waiting for them to push the "start" button with their praises.

What happened next? The enemy became so confused that they began killing one another. The soldiers of Ammon and Moab started fighting the inhabitants of Mount Seir. Then after they had slain them, they turned on one another until, according to 2 Chronicles 20:23, "they helped to destroy one another."

It took Jehoshaphat and the people three days to gather up all the spoil. They found an abundance of riches and precious jewels. In fact, it was more than they could carry away. They had prospered in the face of an enemy assault. So Jehoshaphat renamed the valley "Berachah," which means "the valley of blessing."

He had decided that instead of worrying, he would trust and praise the God of his salvation. Then the Lord dropped faith and direction into the people's hearts and they stood to praise God with him. Finally, out of praise, great victory came to pass.

God's plan and purpose has not changed!! Why not choose to trust and praise God as you march in the victory of the Spirit??

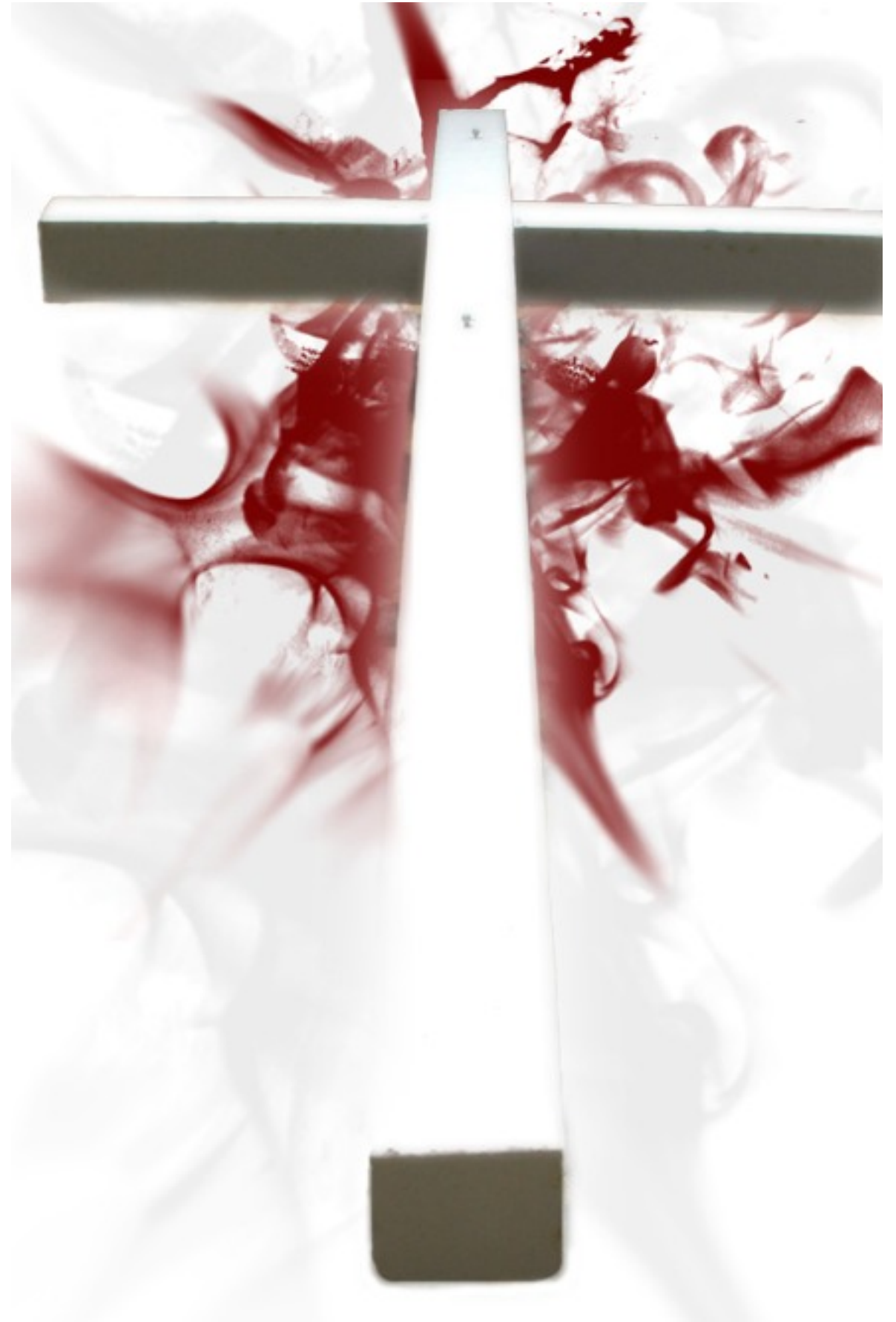
Our Battle Cry

Deuteronomy 30:11-15

The Philistine army had gathered on one mountain range, and the armies of King Saul on another. Between them lay a great valley.

Every morning for forty days, Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, had come out onto the plain and stood there defiantly, shouting a challenge to Saul and his mighty men, "Send out a man so we can fight together. If he wins, we will be your servants. But if I win, you will be our servants."

Day after day the challenge came. But the story in 1 Samuel 17 tells us that Saul and his men had become dismayed and afraid. Fear was reigning in the camp, not faith. Gloom filled the atmosphere, not joy. The Israelites believed their enemy would win, and that belief was at the root of their fear.



There stood Goliath, six cubits and a span tall - about nine feet nine inches! He was dressed for battle. His helmet was brass. His coat of armor, or "breastplate," weighed 157 pounds. In addition, he was wearing brass leggings' and an extra piece of brass across his chest. The point of his huge spear was made of nearly nineteen pounds of iron. He was an awesome fighting machine - in the natural.

Each day as Goliath bellowed out his challenge, "Send me someone to fight," his voice echoed out across the plain and up into the mountains. There the great soldiers of Saul quaked in their boots, scuffed the ground in front of them and said, "Not me, please."

Now a man named Jesse had three boys in that army, and since his sons had been away for over a month, Jesse got a bit worried about how they were doing and whether they had enough to eat. So he called his youngest son, David, in from the fields where he had been taking care of the family's sheep. He told the boy, "Son, take your brothers some of this dried com and some loaves of bread and these hunks of cheese, and see how they're doing up there in Shochoh (Sho-ko)."

Then, David found someone to take care of the sheep for him and he set out. Meanwhile, Saul had positioned his armies for battle and the Philistines had positioned themselves as well. So, you can just imagine David as he came riding up right into the midst of this battle totally unaware of what was going on. I can see him as he got down from his donkey, found his brothers and said, "Hi, brothers. What's happening?"

Just at that time, Goliath, that massive henchman of the Philistines, came out from among the armies and stood there in all of his armor, shouting, "Send me a man!" And when this giant of a man stepped forward, everybody in the Israelite army took a giant step backward.

So David asked, "Well, why aren't you guys doing something about this guy?"

They answered, "Who are you with your bright ideas? You're just a smart-mouthed kid straight from the farm who wants to see somebody go out there and get butchered."

David said, "This is a cause worth fighting for; why don't you fight?" He stirred up conviction and trouble. (They often go together.)

Eventually word about David got around to King Saul, so he called for the boy. When David walked into the king's tent he said, "King Saul, I don't understand this. This guy's not worth anybody getting scared over. I'll go fight him. "

King Saul must have smiled. Here was an inexperienced kid from the farm who had never been a soldier and was not even full-grown yet. So the king said, "You're not able to go out there. You're not even a man yet. And this guy has been a trained soldier from the time he was a boy."

David said, "Well, maybe I'm not trained as a soldier. But I'm a pretty good shot with a sling. And I've already killed a lion and a bear with my bare hands as they tried to steal our sheep. Surely the same God who delivered me from a roaring lion and a powerful bear can deliver me from this guy who's defying God's people."

So Saul said, "All right, if that's the case, maybe you are our man, take my suit of armor. " And King Saul tried to suit up David in man-made armor.

But that was a mistake. Goliath was suited up in man-made armor and King Saul tried to send David out in man-made armor. But the battle was really a spiritual battle.

I believe it took David about sixty seconds of wearing that manmade pile of sheet metal before he said, "This won't work. I don't know how to wear this suit or use this sword."

So he took off that man made armor, took up his staff, chose five smooth stones from the river bed put them in his little shepherd's bag. Then he took up his sling and said, "I'll just go like this, thank you." He set out down the mountainside, and all along the way, he was putting on his spiritual armor.

I can just hear David as he went down that mountainside. "God I've got on the breastplate of Your righteousness. I've got on Your helmet. I've got Your protection on my loins. I've got on Your shoes. I've got Your sword and Your shield. I'm a soldier of God. I've got on God's armor. I'm wearing the Lord from head to toe."

When he got there on the plain and came toward Goliath, the giant looked down at him – from way up there nine feet above the earth – and his eyes took in this light-weight teenager who didn't even have a beard yet. He roared with laughter and swore at him, saying, "What an insult to have then send someone like you! You're about to be fed to the buzzards!"

Now that moment was a make-or-break point for David. David could have run away and no one would have thought much about it. His brothers and their friends up in the mountains would probably have said, "See, we told you so," and had a good laugh; but deep down inside, they wouldn't have held it against David because they were afraid themselves.

But if he had turned back, something would have happened inside David. He would have known that he had failed God.

Instead, something took hold inside David in that moment. A warrior mentality rose in him; pressing toward-the-mark faith began to mount up.

David said, "Look here, Philistine. You're coming at me with all your man-made weapons - your sword and, spear and shield. But I've got on the armor of God. I'm coming to you in the name of the Lord of hosts,

the God of the armies of Israel. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand. I'll kill you, Goliath, and cutoff your head. Not only that, all those 'armies behind you will be defeated and left to rot out here in the plain to feed the vultures and wild animals. The whole world will know that the Lord saves not with the sword or spear, but by His power. This battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands."

Can't you hear that echo as it rolled back through the hills of Israel and through the camp of the Philistines on the other side of the valley.

"The battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands."

I believe as that shout of victory echoed, faith took root in the hearts of those soldiers of Israel, driving out their fear. I believe they stood a little bit taller in that moment. Something happened. It may not have been visible, but in the spiritual realm, the tide was turning at that very moment.

At that same time, I believe, a seed of doubt and fear took root in the heart of Goliath. He considered for just an instant, "Maybe this kid is right."

Now the Bible says that David RAN toward Goliath. He didn't inch his way into the situation; he didn't stick one toe into the water to test it first; he didn't back into the battle. He went running flat out toward this foe of God almighty.

As he, was running, he got a stone out of his bag, put it into his sling and started to whirl it around his head. In those few seconds with David coming at him full speed, his slingshot whirling, Goliath must have had a split-second of knowing, "This isn't what I had in mind."

Can't you just see David running toward Goliath, his arm whirling that sling and shouting at the top of his lungs, "The battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hand!" This was do or die! This was putting it all on the line!

So David let that stone fly straight at Goliath's forehead, and the stone sank in, stunning the giant so that he fell with a great thud to the ground. Since David had no sword, he ran up to Goliath, took the man's sword and used it to whack off the giant's head.

When the Philistines saw what had happened, they turned tail and ran for all they were worth. The soldiers of Saul gave a mighty victory shout and came running down from the hills. They had become electrified by what David had done and they pursued the Philistines all the way to the gates of the nearest city, killing and wounding thousands of them as they went. When the battle was won, they went back and cleaned up the spoil from the Philistine tents. The battle was won in a day, ending a war that had been at a stalemate for weeks.

Does David's story sound anything like your own? Of course, you may not be facing an armored giant and an enemy host in the natural sense. In your case, it may be that the bills are piled up, the doctor's diagnosis isn't hopeful, or the problems with your child or spouse seem never-ending. Perhaps day after day the devil and all his hosts call out to you, "So you want to fight? Well, come on out. If I defeat you, you'll stay my slave. You'll be forever held in bondage to this situation of poverty, sickness and despair."

No matter who you are, I doubt that everything is perfect in your life, your family, your church, your workplace. In some area of your life, you're bound to face trouble, because there is a war going on.

The sides are divided up: God's people are on one side; the devil and his host of demons are on the other. The enemy is sending trouble out on the plain to shout at you in defiance, "Come on out and fight, you scaredy-cat! I dare you. I double-dare you. You call yourself a Christian and yet you won't even lift a finger to come out here and fight!"

Meanwhile, most of us Christians are hiding up in the hills of our lives, too scared to move. We don't have a fighting mentality. We don't have the mind-set of a warrior. We're saying to ourselves, "If I just lay low,

this will pass. Don't ask me to go out on that plain and confront this trouble."

But, what are we to do? The answer is seen in Revelation 12:11, which tells us that "they overcame him (the devil) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony."

Revelation 12:11 is a good commentary on Deuteronomy 30:11-15. In Deuteronomy 30 God says that the ability to experience victory is "not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it? Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it? But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it."

What is it that we have the ability to determine by what is in our mouths and in our hearts? Life and good, or death and evil (verse 15). A few verses later in that same chapter God says to His people, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life."

What is your word, your confession, your declaration about Who God is to you and about what God will do in your situation? What are you saying to the devil in the midst of your struggle?

Child of God, the Word of God is very clear right here. Your spoken word has great power!! God has given us the answer, He has given us the victory. "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

The Word of God is clear - Choose life! Believe God for life. Believe for blessing. Believe for good. Speak out for life. Speak out for blessing. Speak out for good.

What is your Goliath today? What problem is calling to you from the valley of your life? And what is your battle cry in response? What is the word of your testimony?

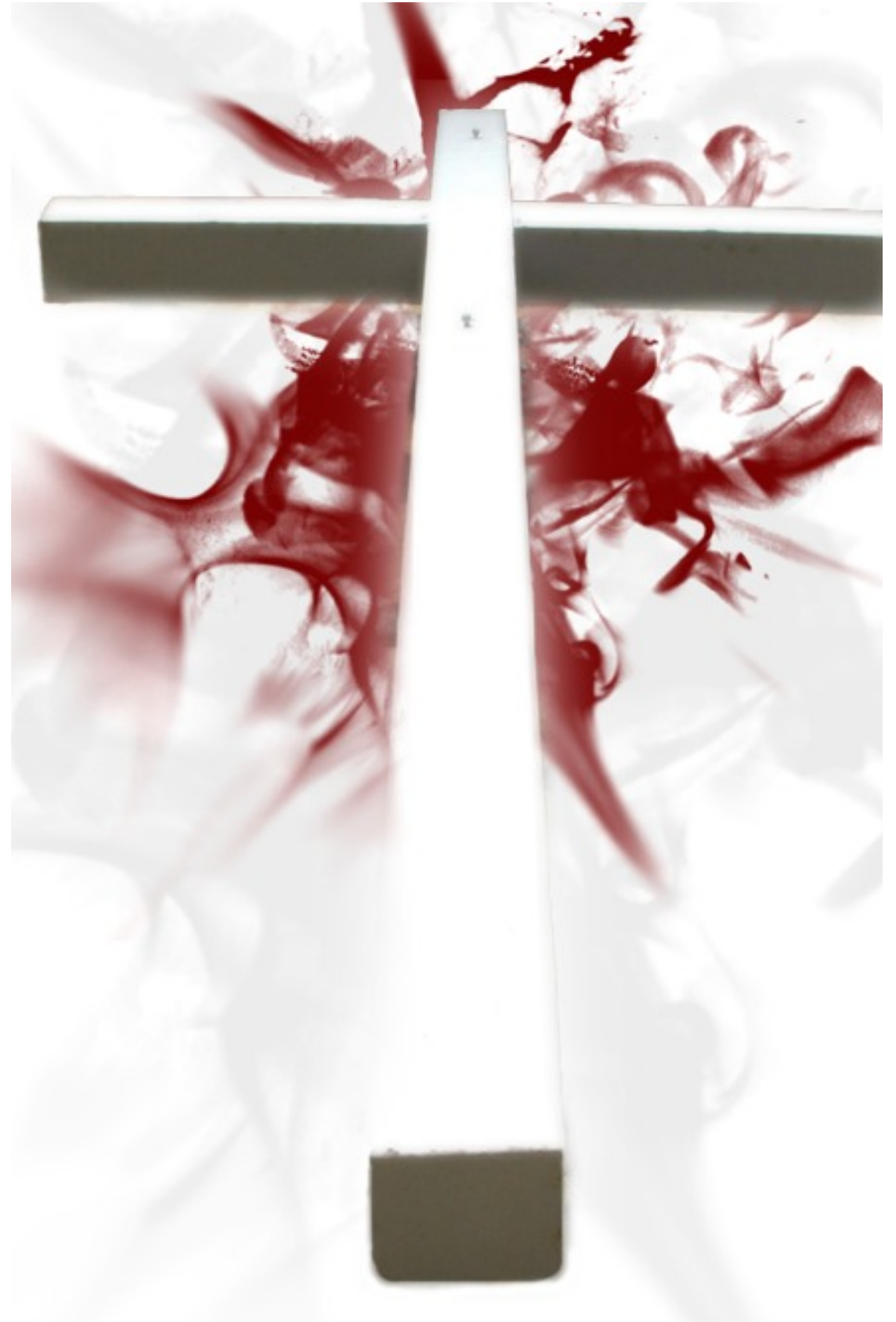
Let it be strong for the Lord. Shout it loudly and clearly today. The time has come to engage in combat.

Disarming The Enemy

Acts 3:1-11

The Great Awakening was ignited in New England in 1734 under the preaching of Jonathan Edwards. As a student and practitioner of revival in the church, Edwards was familiar with many of the ways the devil seeks to oppose the work of the Holy Spirit.

In one of his writings, "The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God," Edwards outlined the devil's strategies to halt advancement of the kingdom of God. Any revival of godliness and spiritual power, he said, would automatically produce a wave of opposition.



Edwards proposed five ways in which the devil attempts to halt God's work:

1. Satan rages against any fresh work of God.
2. Some people are misinformed and spread falsehoods about this new work.
3. Some people are offended because they have not personally experienced the renewing work.
4. Some people are jealous when they are not used as instruments in this new work.
5. Some people are outraged because the revival confirms principles they cannot embrace.

In Acts 4:1-22, we see Edward's five principles played out in the life of the early church. Satan tried his best to halt the fragile Christian movement at its inception, instigating external persecutions upon the church as well as promoting internal dissension and confusion within it.

Today, millions of people are coming to Christ as a great move of God's Spirit sweeps the world. But as we are witnessing this movement, we are also seeing much evidence of intensified spiritual warfare.

The enemy seems to be mobilizing massive forces to counterattack God's work throughout the world. But if Christians learn to expect these five strategies of the devil and understand them, we will be prepared to disarm his assaults when they come. Therefore, look with me as we look at these five points as offered by Jonathan Edwards.

1. Satan rages against any fresh work of God. Acts 3-4 records the account of a miraculous healing that brought explosive church growth and eventual persecution. A man more than 40 years old,

who had been crippled from birth, was instantly healed by the words of the apostles.

Why did this make Satan so upset? Because the lame man's healing and Peter's ensuing message added at least 2,000 people to the church (Acts 2:41, 4:4).

This was not just one isolated instance of healing. It was the beginning of a movement. When such large numbers of people become zealous for Christ, Satan takes notice and begins to rage.

Theologian Richard Lovelace has described the devil's tactics in terms of ACCUSATION and INFILTRATION. I quote: "He may attack the subjects of revival directly and internally with despair and discouragement. He may plant lies, suspicion or stereotypes in the minds of unbelievers or unrevived Christians so they will reject the work of God and attack its progress. If possible, he will set the leaders of the revival against one another in this way in order to divide and conquer.

"To create evidence to corroborate accusations, he will ... cause (converts) to run to extremes. Finally, he will sow tares among the wheat in the form of counterfeit revivals, leading people to confound these with the real work which is in progress and to discredit it."

There is a common testimony among those who have led their churches into a spiritual awakening and in a great church growth. The beginning of a fresh work always triggers spiritual warfare. Many suffer illness, physical persecution or emotional problems. Others lose jobs and family members, or experience untimely accidents. The devil uses any means available to halt the momentum of affection for Jesus Christ.

How did Satan show his rage in the Acts 3-4 account? First, the enemy stirred up an emotional reaction in the religious

establishment. The Jewish leaders were "greatly disturbed" by what was going on (Acts 4:2, NIV).

During times of great church growth, it is common for religious leaders to be hostile toward the work of God and encourage distraction. Such people; have little discernment about what is godly and what is carnal! They are more concerned about religious respectability and tradition.

Second, Satan incited the religious establishment to throw the leaders of the new work into jail. The term "seized" suggest Peter and John received rough treatment as they were hauled off to prison (4:3).

Third, Satan vented his rage through the religious leaders as they warned and threatened the apostles (4: 17 -21). Physical force would not work, so the Sanhedrin tried intimidation.

Verbal abuse is intended to persuade us that human opposition can stop the work of God. This is not true, but our enemy wants us to believe it.

People who are bringing fresh life to the church are often approached with negative gossip, false accusations and outright lies. Therefore, it is important that we learn to recognize this as the discouraging work of the enemy.

2. Some people are misinformed and spread falsehoods about this new work. The religious establishment did not know what was going on, so they had to ask, "By what power or what name did you do this?" (Acts 4:7). These religious leaders assumed personal power, knowledge or piety had healed the lame man. But, the truth of the matter is that Peter and John were empowered to minister in Jesus' name.

Listen to me very carefully, when the renewing presence of God is transforming the church, there will always be uninformed individuals who criticize what is happening. They tend to be trained religious leaders who are not filled with the Spirit, who spend little intimate time with Jesus and who seldom pray in Jesus' name, particularly for someone to be healed. such people often devise "theologically correct" explanations to account for what is happening. But we need to recognize this type of opposition by religious leaders to God's work.

3. Some people are offended because they have not personally experienced the renewing work. According to Bible scholar F.F. Bruce, there is a "scornful emphasis" in the religious leaders' question that says in Acts 4:7, "By what power or name did people like you do this?" The religious leaders had extensive education and superior positions in the community. So they assumed that, if God would bless the people through anyone, it would be them.

Our attitudes today can be remarkably similar. Some of us may brag that we have 40 years of Christian experience under our belts when we really have only one year of experience - repeated 40 times.

The power of the Holy Spirit offended first-century religious leaders, and Satan will see to it that it offends every generation like them.

4. Some people are jealous when they are not used as instruments in this new growth. Listen carefully, the problem with the anointing of the Holy Spirit is not that it is too emotional; the problem is that it is too personal!

The Spirit-filled life is based on our personal willingness to allow God to take control of our very being!!

5. Some people are outraged because' great growth confirms principles they cannot embrace. The healing of the lame man, done in the

name of the resurrected Jesus, was contradictory to everything these religious leaders believed and taught. After all, they reasoned, it could not be right if it contradicted their theology.

Some people will never believe in the power of the Holy Spirit until they experience it for themselves. And that will be hard, because it is a matter of walking by faith!!

F.R. Maltby, in his writings, said Jesus promised His disciples three things: "They would be absurdly happy, completely fearless and in constant trouble." That is still our lot today, as we become involved

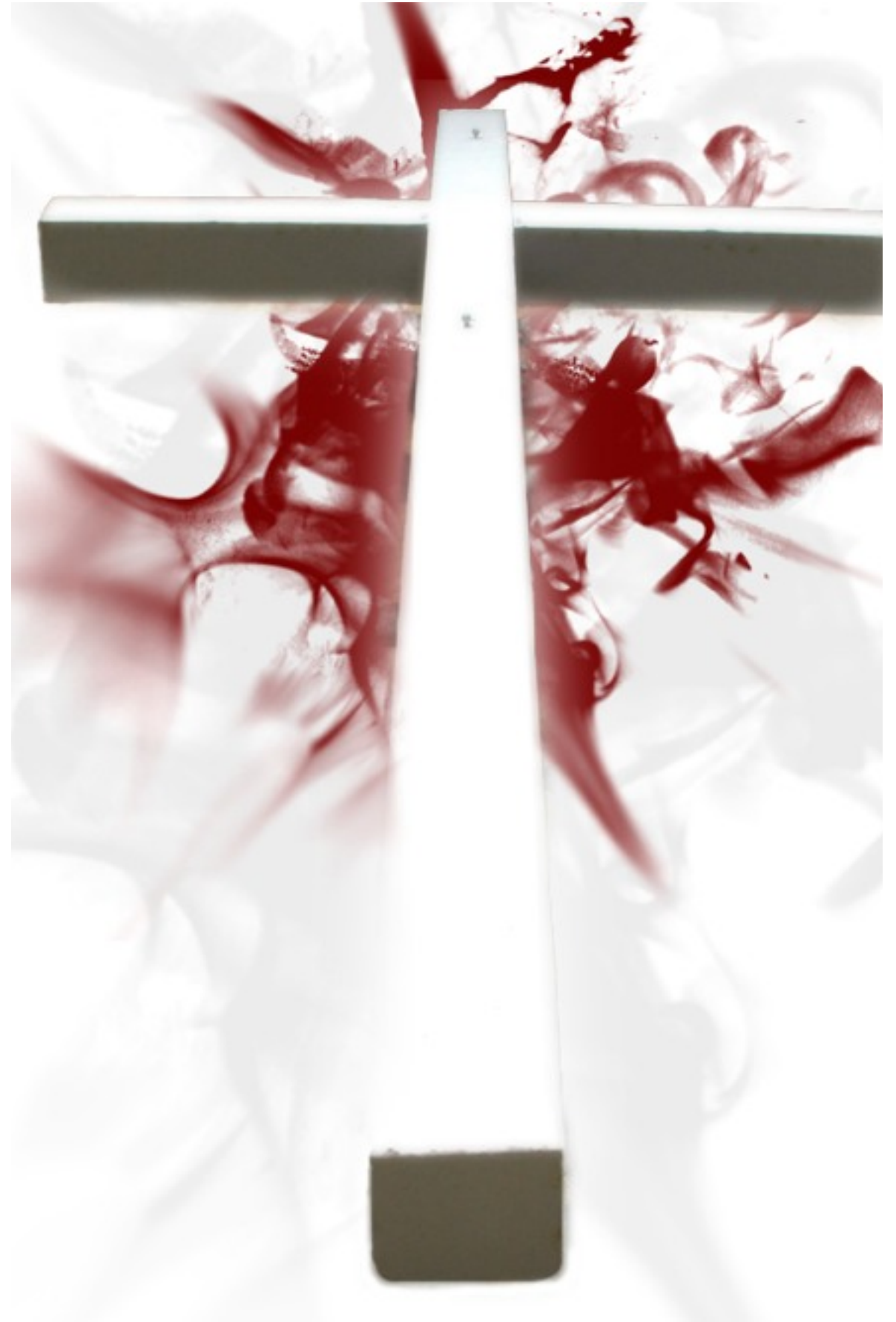
Ladies and gentlemen, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Therefore, as God warns us of Satan's strategies for resisting God's work, we should be prepared to expose and counter his assaults when they come.

Satan's Target - Your Mind

Proverbs 23:7

In our previous studies of demonic activity, we have seen that Satan's goal is to capture your train of thought. Therefore, as we come to the end of our studies in this area of Deliverance, we are going to target some demonic activity by name.

When Satan wanted to lead the first man and woman into sin, he started by attacking the woman's mind. This is made clear in 2 Corinthians 11:3, "But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ."



Why would Satan want to attack your mind? Because your mind is the part of the image of God where God communicates with you and reveals His will to you. It is unfortunate that some Christians have minimized the significance of the mind, despite the fact that the Bible emphasizes its importance, as seen in Romans 12:2, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Your mind affects your whole being!!

As one studies the emotions of a person we come face to face with what psychologists call "Schizophrenia." Schizophrenia is a very common problem. Some authorities in the field of mental illness estimate there may be as many as fifty million persons in the United States who are afflicted to some degree with schizophrenia. In their book, "Brain, Mind, and Behavior", Bloom and Hofstadter conclude that " ... schizophrenics are estimated to make up about 50% of state psychiatric hospital admissions, with 3,000,000 new cases every year." Some cases are acute while others are quite mild, requiring no professional treatment. Schizophrenia has remained a very baffling problem to mental health professionals. The cause and cure has remained shrouded in uncertainty.

Schizophrenia is often referred to as "split personality" or "double mindedness." It may surprise some people to know that the Bible has a word for this problem in James 1:8, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. II The Amplified translation translates James 1:7-8 this way, "(For being as he is) a man of two minds - hesitating, dubious, irresolute - (he is) unstable and unreliable and uncertain about everything (he thinks, feels, decides)."

The phrase translated "two minds" comes from a compound Greek word literally meaning "two souls".

I want to share with you how demonic activity manifest itself in your every day living, by showing you the drawing of the hands and Fingers.

(see drawing and notes next page)

Millions of people live in perpetual defeat and humiliation because they do not understand spiritual warfare.

In Ephesians 6, we are told to "stand". Listen to me, God's highest goal is not your comfort. God's highest goal is that you conform to the image of Jesus Christ, and Jesus stood for something.

Listen to me, Calvary is not the name of some picnic ground just outside the eastern wall of Jerusalem. It is the place of a battlefield where Jesus Christ made a stand against the hordes of hell. Thank God He won the victory! Stand in the face of your enemy and command him to leave your life alone!! Victory is ours in Jesus' name!!!

Resources

Diagram: Outward Affects of Demonic Oppression

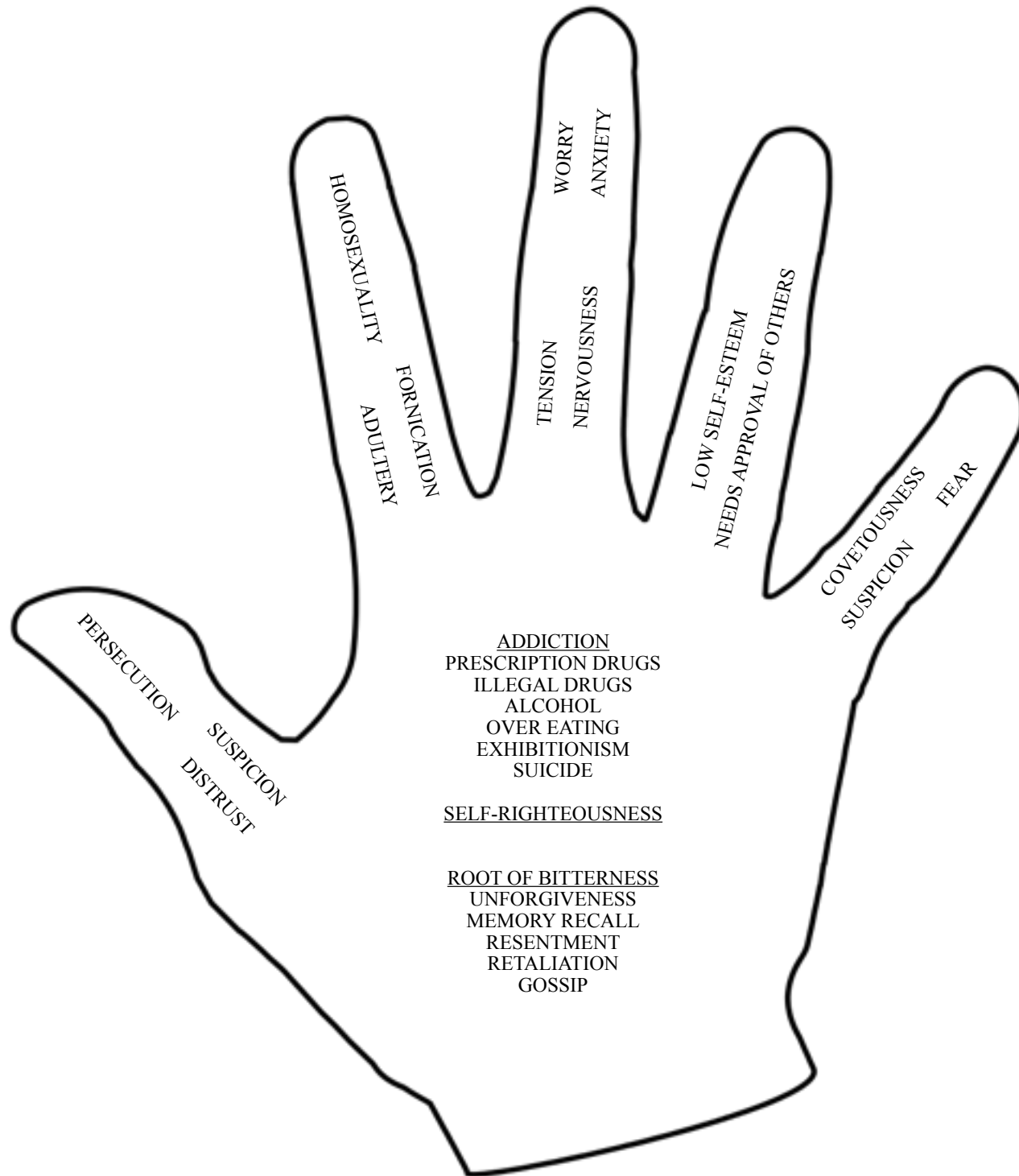


Diagram: Inward Affects of Demonic Oppression

