

The Holy Spirit in Spiritual Warfare

Last week we studied the **unseen realm of the spirit** - what the Bible refers to as “the heavenlies” or “the heavenly realm.” *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.* (NIV) The original Greek says, ...*against the spiritual powers of wickedness in the heavenlies* (**Ephesians 6:12**). We noted that Angels and Demons are constantly in battle in this ‘unseen’ realm, and this is Spiritual Warfare.

Whether we accept it or not, we are also in the midst of this battle. All around us there is conflict taking place in the spirit realm. Only through God’s Spirit we can become aware of this battle and know how live in victory, rather than defeat. Understanding the dynamics of the battle, and how we are to engage the enemy is vital if we want victory. For example, what if you were an army trying to engage an enemy and stop its advance, but you did not even know where the attack was coming from? You would be at the mercy of chance, hoping your army has enough force to repulse an attack when it comes. On the other hand, if your army had “intelligence” about the enemy, you could plan for their attack and their reply. Through the Holy Spirit (and God’s Word) we can “see” our enemy and become more aware of the spiritual battle. Note, without the scriptures, we would be fighting an invisible unknown enemy, without even knowing we are at war. The Bible, when revealed through the Spirit of God, has unveiled the “invisible” world which surrounds us. In this spiritual world, we have an enemy who is at war with us, and wants to stop the kingdom of God from advancing. Satan and his fallen angels are our enemy! They seek to kill and destroy us, or at least make us ineffective against their evil work. Yes, there is a battle raging all around us, and the tools of satan are fully engaged in this battle.

Therefore, as spiritual warriors we need to know we are in a battle, and since we are in battle, we should put together our own battle plan - so we can live the **victorious life**, advancing the Kingdom of God. But how exactly is the battle waged against us? As we shall see, this battle is waged primarily in the **minds** of humanity, through whom; events in the physical world are transacted. We are spiritual beings inside a physical body; but the war being waged is in the battlefield of the mind. Satan is conducting a war in the spiritual realm, engaging our minds in the battle. *“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them”* (**2 Corinthians 4:4**).

Here Satan is called the god of this age, who blinds the lost so that the light of the gospel cannot shine on their **minds**. The mind of humanity is satan’s battleground; satan is not fighting a physical war, but a spiritual one, attacking soul of man. Satan and his fallen angels accomplish this task in the spirit realm by lies and deception, appealing to the fallen nature. When we come to Christ, our mind and thinking is transformed through the **power** of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We however have a choice, we can yield control of “self” to God’s Spirit, or resist. If we yield control of ourselves to the Spirit, we will be **led by the Spirit**. And as much as we are led by the Spirit, we become more like Christ. For this reason in **Romans 12**, we read about our need to be human sacrifices, sacrificing the desires of our old nature, and being transformed by *“the renewing of our mind”*. The old nature has a fallen way of thinking, susceptible to the deceptions of satan. Therefore, we need to recognise that the battle is not ours, but the Holy Spirit living within. The hardest thing for many believers is to get out of the Spirit’s way. Often, we refuse to surrender control to Him - to our own detriment!

Romans 8 describes how the Holy Spirit equips us for spiritual warfare. He leads us and guides us in how to engage in spiritual warfare. When we are **fully** surrendered to the Spirit of God we are fully equipped for any conflict. Why? Because we are **led by the Spirit** and being led means taking on His divine attributes (become more like Christ). By being *spiritually minded* we can engage in spiritual warfare through having the mind of Christ. Obtaining **“the mind of Christ”** should be our main objective in spiritual warfare. When we have the mind of Christ we know exactly what to do when the forces of evil are trying to kill, steal and destroy. In **John 16:14** Jesus says, “He (the Holy Spirit) will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” Another translation says, “He will bring me glory by telling you whatever He receives from Me.” The Holy Spirit equips us with ‘Christ-like’ abilities so that we can become *more than conquerors*, and He does this by telling us what is on Christ’s ‘mind’ (revealing what He has received).

Another thing to be aware of is that we do not seek the mind of Jesus, but the mind of “Christ.” This is the mind of the ascended and victorious Lord of Lords! When Jesus walked the earth He sought to have the mind of His Father at all times, and especially when dealing with the devil. This is why all the forces of darkness were unable to harass Him. If the devil knew what Jesus was thinking, he would never had crucified Him. *“However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

But as it is written:

***‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’***

But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God” (1 Corinthians 2:6-12). We enforce the devil’s defeat through knowing the “mind” of God. This is our greatest weapon against the enemy. *“For, ‘Who can know the Lord’s thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?’ But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16).*

Romans 8:5-6, *“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”* Notice, being “spiritually minded” is the key to attaining **life** and **peace**. This verse does not say, *“but to be spiritually minded you will find life and peace”*, it says, *“to be spiritually minded IS life and peace.”* It is not what you find, but rather, what you become. It’s a **condition** - a state of victory! Being “spiritually minded” is a prevailing condition whereby you always triumph over the forces of darkness. However, this cannot happen without the Holy Spirit. We have the “mind of Christ” because we have received the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, having the “mind of Christ” is being **“spiritually minded.”**

Even though the Holy Spirit is the most powerful force in the universe (the resurrection power of Jesus Christ), He does not directly engage in combat. Only through us, does He continue the ministry of Jesus and destroy the works of the devil. **1 John 3:8** says, *“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”* The Holy Spirit, is the divine guidance system. He directs our prayer missiles to destroy satan's strongholds wherever they are. Without the Holy Spirit's help and direction our prayers would be futile and ineffective against satan's evil strategies. For this reason I would like to suggest that the primary evidence that we are baptised with the Holy Spirit is not for speaking in tongues, but rather, for having a passion and burden to destroy the works of the devil. *“...How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him”* (**Acts 10:38**).

Many Christians, have a real misunderstanding about the Holy Spirit. If you are someone who sees the Spirit as a friendly little ghost, or as a “power” that you can use for self-advancement, be careful! Such ideas are bordering on blasphemous! Equally blasphemous, and deadly, is to speak against or ignore the promptings of the Holy Spirit. According to God this is the only sin He will not forgive (**Matthew 12:31-32; Luke 12:10**). To be truly productive, all spiritual warfare must be offered according to a divine design. Praying *‘in the Spirit’* is a portion of that design. Often many prayers remain unanswered simply because the petitioner / intercessor failed to observe this clearly defined condition, *“...praying always with all kinds of prayer and supplication in the Spirit”* (**Ephesians 6:18**). *“...Building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit”* (Jude 1:20).

Let's have a quick review of who the Holy Spirit is and what He does. Before returning to heaven, Jesus promised His followers, *“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper (Comforter, Counsellor, Advocate, Intercessor) that He will remain with you forever; the Spirit of Truth... He will teach you all things”* (**John 14:16-17, 26**). Jesus says the Holy Spirit, is *“the Spirit of Truth, our Helper”*, the One who testifies of Christ. But He also grants us *“the mind of Christ.”* That way He empowers our spiritual warfare, guides our prayers, comforts and strengthens us in battle, and gives us victory strategy. And just like Jesus, the Holy Spirit will *“never leave us, nor forsake us.”* God's Spirit is our Intelligence Agent - gathering and distributing the intelligence we need. Taking from what is Christ's and revealing it to us! Warfare under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit reminds us that we fight this war from a position of victory, and not defeat (**Romans 8:31**). We have “resurrection power” abiding in us, but with the right information and Counter-Intelligence we have the *mind of Christ*. Consequently, we can apply the same divine strategy that Jesus did during His ministry on earth. We can destroy the works of the devil!