**DISCIPLESHIP AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE:**

**AUTHORITY TO DRIVE OUT DEMONS**

What were the sons of Sceva missing in Acts 19:13-17? Sometimes we meet people who seem to be possessed or afflicted by demons. How can we care for them? What are we supposed to do? How can we drive out demons?

**Background and Introduction**

* **Reality of the Spiritual World**
  + Naturalism vs. the Biblical View
    - *Naturalism*: Nothing exists outside / in addition to the natural, physical world identifiable by our best empirical science.
    - *The Biblical View*: “So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on *what is unseen*” (2Co 4:18).
  + The Heavenly Realms
    - God is in heaven and we are on earth (Ecc 5:2).
    - Levels of heaven (2Co 12:2,4); God’s throne room (Rev 4:1; Job 1:6).
    - The kingdom of the air (Eph 2:2); the “world” (Jas 4:4, 1Jn 5:19).
  + Angels
    - Good angels (loyal to God) and bad angels (aligned with Satan).
    - “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” (Heb 1:14).
      * Michael (Dan 12:1; Jude 9); Gabriel (Da 8:16; Lk 1:19).
  + Perceiving Spiritual Reality
    - Accessible to the “spiritual man” with the Spirit of God (1Co 2:10-16), whose eyes have been opened (2Ki 6:16,17).
      * Spiritual reality as real as the physical world (not-naturalism).
* **The Nature of Spiritual Warfare**
  + Christian Life: The Spiritual War Zone
    - “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” (Eph 6:12; cf. 2Co 10:3-5).
  + The Enemy
    - The devil and his army - fallen angels (Rev 12:7-9). Satan (adversary): devil, prince of demons, Beelzebul, the ancient serpent, prince of this world, prince of the power of the air, accuser.
    - Be self-controlled & alert; resist him; stand firm (Jas 4:7; 1Pe 5:8).
  + Conflict in the heavenly realms
  + “...your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.” (Da 10:12-14)
    - Angels move in response to believers’ prayers
    - Angels are finite & have different levels and strength
    - Battles are fought in the heavenly realms between spiritual powers
    - The devil appoints demons to oversee his interests among nations

**The Strong Man and the Stronger Man**

* **Satan's Dominion of Darkness (The Strong Man)**
  + Calling to discipleship not into neutral territory, but into one kingdom (Christ’s) that is at war with another (darkness).
  + Spiritual Strongholds
    - “...we do not wage war as the world does… the weapons we fight with… have divine power to demolish *strongholds*. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2Co 10:3-6)
    - Satanic deceptions holding people in bondage (Jn 8:44).
    - Hinder the knowledge of God and obedience to Christ.
  + Genesis 3: How strongholds are established (Satan’s strategies)
    - False arguments and pretensions set up in Eve’s mind / heart:
      * God’s restriction outweighed His gift
      * God had lied because He was afraid they would become “like God”
      * Becoming “like God” is something desirable
      * If God really loved them, He would not have withheld this from them
    - False views facilitate disobedience
    - The result is death (separation from God) - the devil’s goal
  + Examples of Spiritual Strongholds
    - Strongholds exist at the individual, cultural, national and global levels
      * ISIS / Radical Islam - destroying Christians
      * Western Secular Humanism - hostile to the gospel
      * False Religions of the world
      * Sexual immorality - pornography, sex tourism, sex trafficking
      * Legalistic self-righteousness (Mt 23:25-28): The most dangerous / serious?
    - Strongholds rooted in deception & lies must be demolished by divine truth. Jesus Christ is the truth. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth.
* **Christ's Triumph over Satan (The Stronger Man)**
  + Jesus is Stronger
    - Satan is under God’s sovereign rule (Job 1-2)
    - Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1Jn 3:8)
    - Jesus the stronger man overpowering the devil (Mt 12:29)
  + Jesus' Victory by His Cross and Resurrection
    - Christ triumphed over Satan and authorities by His cross and resurrection (Col 2:13-1)
    - The battle is the Lord’s (David vs. Goliath)
      * The risen Jesus has all authority in heaven and earth
      * We fight from the place of accomplished victory in Christ

**Spiritual Authority & Weapons**

* **Authority Rooted in Relationship with God / Faith**
  + Identity*–*Jesus is the Son of God and we are the sons of God. We are seated with Christ Jesus in the heavenly realms. We have authority over all creation including the demonic powers. (Jn 1:12; Eph 2:6)
  + Commission*–*As Jesus commissioned his disciples, he gave them his authority over all demons.(Lk 9:6; Mk 16:15-18)
  + Holy Spirit*–*Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit and his power over the demonic powers of the evil one. (Ac 1:8)
* **The Church as the King’s Army**
  + The gates of Hades will not overcome Christ’s church (Mt 16:18)
* **Spiritual Weapons**
  + Key: Prayer and Dependence on the Holy Spirit
  + Defensive Weapons against the flaming arrows of the enemy
    - Our God is our shield and defender (Ge 15:1; Ps 11:9:114). Clothe yourselves with Jesus Christ (Ro 13:14)
    - The belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace and shield of faith. (Eph 6:14-15)
    - Prayer and the Word (Mt 4:4). We can defend ourselves with the word.
  + Offensive Weapons to Demolish the Devil’s Works
    - Praise and worship (David and Saul)
    - Prayer and Intercession (Moses, a mother, and Daniel)
      * Mk 9:29 - Prayer and fasting
    - The word (the truth of the word shall set us free - Heb 4:12)
    - The blood of Jesus (1Jn 1:7)
    - The name of Jesus (Mt 18:18; Ac 4:12)
  + As much as we grow through years of Bible teaching for discipleship, we are to grow through years of spiritual warfare by depending on the Holy Spirit.

**Practical Strategies**

* Distinguish between the person afflicted and the powers afflicting
  + Act in love; maintain person’s dignity; strengthen their will to be free
  + Primary goal: To see the whole person free and healed
* **The Ministry of Inner Healing, Deliverance, Intercessory Prayer**
  + Demons attach themselves to our emotional & spiritual garbage
    - E.g. Resentment, bitterness, unconfessed sin.
    - Therefore, we need to deal with these issues
  + Focus: Restore healthy relationships (God, self, others)
  + Teams of 3-5. Prayer & Fasting
    - Command spirits to go in Jesus’ name and authority
    - No formula - rely on God’s power in constant prayer (Eph 6:18)
* **Discipleship**
  + Ongoing healing and spiritual growth
    - Practical ways: 1:1, reflection / life testimony writing / sharing, shepherding and counseling
    - Spiritual growth weakens demons’ ability to work in or on a person (Bible reading, prayer, worship, fellowship, thanksgiving, and witnessing)
    - E.g. Purity prayer meetings facilitated by leaders ([www.freedomfight.org](http://www.freedomfight.org))

* **Forming a Healthy Community**
  + Christian Home Environment
    - Parents’ responsibility: “Do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4)
    - Legalism → Rule-based parenting vs. Grace-based parenting
  + Love One Another
    - Forgiveness and acceptance (as Christ forgave and accepted you)
    - Live “under the cross” with Christ’s attitude: joyful, thankful, prayerful
  + Cultivate Emotional Health
    - Grow in emotional maturity - vulnerable, self-care, loving well

**Conclusion**

* Our spiritual authority is in direct proportion to our spiritual intimacy with God because driving out demon is done not by our own might or power but by the Holy Spirit (Zec 4:6)
* It is appropriate to expect that even today triumph over the power of demons is a normal part of each believer’s life in spreading God’s kingdom
* In Luke 10:20, Jesus says that we should not rejoice too much or become proud in our authority over demons, but that we should rejoice rather in our great salvation. We must keep this in mind lest we become proud and the Holy Spirit withdraw his power from us.