

Spiritual Warfare - Part 2

by David Ravenhill

David Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the reality of spiritual warfare and the need for believers to recognize and resist the devil's tactics in their lives.

Duration: 52:13

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:9, 1 Corinthians 15:33, 2 Corinthians 2:10, Galatians 6:3, Galatians 6:7, James 1:22

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Discernment"

Description

This sermon delves into the topic of spiritual warfare, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and engaging in the battle against the enemy. It highlights the deception that can lead believers astray, such as thinking they are not vulnerable to spiritual attacks, being influenced by bad company, false pride, lack of action despite knowledge, practicing sin, and unforgiveness. The speaker urges the audience to be vigilant, discerning, and proactive in their spiritual walk to avoid falling into these deceptive traps.

Transcript

I want to do a little bit of teaching in this first session, because the pastor told me you guys are the sort of the Bible student part that love the Word of God, hopefully the second guys do as well, but anyway, this will be a two-part message, I'm going to continue it tonight, so we'll see, I may cut it a little short this morning and then tonight deal with another aspect. But I want to talk to you about spiritual warfare. Spiritual warfare, you may ask the question, why are you talking to us about spiritual warfare, that doesn't seem to bother me, the devil doesn't bother me, well, if the devil doesn't bother you, you should be concerned.

In other words, if you are no threat to the kingdom of darkness, then there is something wrong with your spiritual life, isn't that right? My father went to a Bible college for one year in England, run by a very godly man by the name of Samuel Chadwick, I just reprinted one of his books out there, but he would send them out on the weekends, the students, they were just an all-male school, they were there to study for the ministry, not to get a wife, and so anyway, on the weekends they were sent out to various preaching assignments and this old man would give them a word of exhortation and then at the end he would pronounce a benediction and then he would pause and he would say, go and may the devil go with you, because if the devil doesn't go with you, you're not worth sending. That's a good Methodist, that's the way they used to be at least, now they don't even believe in the devil most of the time, but anyway, in other words, this man understood your job as a believer is to ransack the enemy's camp, you know, give him a

headache and so on and so forth, so if spiritual warfare doesn't apply to you, you should ask yourself the question why. The fact is it does, 1 Peter 5 and verse 8 it says, your adversary, the devil, not the person on the left of you or the person on the right of you, not the person in front of you or behind you, your adversary, the devil, goes around as a roaring lion, seeking to devour, seeking to destroy your life.

Notice it doesn't say that the devil sits at home as a roaring lion waiting for you to give him a call. No, he is active, he's on the prowl, he's constantly out and about your life trying to do everything he can to undermine what the grace of God is doing in your life. He will find your weakness, he will find your besetting sin and he will sort of play that for all it's worth.

Now, there are two levels to spiritual maturity. This morning I'm going to deal with what I call the minor leagues and then tonight we'll deal with the major leagues. The minor leagues deal with our own problems, you know, whether we're fighting lust or pride or anger or unforgiveness or bitterness or resentment or whatever it is, you know, those things that tend to come around and hang around our lives on a regular basis and we've got to rise up and we've got to resist, as the Bible says, the devil.

It says, again, your adversary, the devil, goes around as a roaring lion and it says, but resist him. We don't flee from the enemy, we fight the enemy. The Bible says we flee from certain things, flee from youthful lusts, but when it comes to the enemy, we don't flee from the enemy, we don't run in fear, we fight the enemy.

We wrestle against principalities and powers and so on. Now, the Bible tells us that the enemy is a master of disguise, he's a master of camouflage and there are three ways in which the enemy comes, in fact, not just three, but these are the main three, if like, he comes, as I've just mentioned, as a roaring lion and if a roaring lion came in at the back door right now, we would know to head for the chandeliers or whatever, I guess there's not too many to swing from here, but, you know, we would head for the door, right? And what the enemy didn't get, the rest of us would be trampled to death by those trying to get out of here because we know we're in danger. After all, this is a roaring lion, we don't, you know, treat it like some little pussy cat or whatever.

But the enemy also comes, the Bible says, as a wolf in sheep's clothing. And unless you've been around sheep, I was raised on a farm in Ireland for a number of years, in my early teen years, and we had sheep. And so I'm pretty familiar with sheep, but, you know, a wolf in sheep's clothing can get right up to you and unless you are a master at, you know, knowing about sheep, that thing can devour you before you realize it.

After all, here's this nice woolly, you know, fluffy thing and the thing about sheep is they're not very aggressive, they're pretty, you know, laid back, so to speak. You don't need to worry about walking through a pasture of sheep like you would about a bunch of buffalo or something like that. They're not going to run after you and trample you to death.

And the enemy comes many times, you know, with this disguise of being just a big, friendly, old sort of teddy bear type of an individual. But he also comes, the Bible says, as an angel of light. And there he can disguise himself into the most spiritual being, if you like, that you could ever imagine.

I will never forget one Sunday morning during the revival down in Pensacola back, that's going on, what, 20 years or more now, but John Kilpatrick, who would always take the Sunday morning message, Steve Hill, of course, was the revivalist, but John Kilpatrick would minister on a Sunday morning and he shared

one Sunday morning about an experience he had when he was a young boy. If I remember, he was just around the teen years and he was home alone and he could hear the creaking of the floorboards in the house that he was raised in and he said all of a sudden his bedroom door opened and in came this most beautiful being he had ever seen in his life, just absolutely pure white. He was convinced it was some sort of angelic appearance and he said he was just about ready to bow down and worship who he thought, again, was the Lord of some angelic sort of being and he said something within him as a young boy said, look at his hands.

And he said, I looked at his hands and there was no nail print. And he said he knew immediately this was not anything to do with God, it was a demonic appearance, but he said the devil came as an angel of light. I remember when he told that and he told it in a lot more graphic way than I am, you know, I had goosebumps going up and down my spine.

He made it so real that here was this being that he was convinced, again, was angelic and it was demonic. And so the enemy, again, comes in a variety of ways and we, you know, if there's one gift the body of Christ needs in these days is the ability to discern, isn't that right? The Bible says in the last days, Matthew 24, along with wars, rumors of wars and everything else, the one thing that is mentioned over and over again is, beware lest any man deceive you. And it is full of that word deception, I think it's used about four or five times in that chapter and it all has to do with supernatural deception.

False Christ, false teachers, there's some false that, signs, wonders, miracles and so on. And we've got to discern, is this God or isn't it God? And so we've got to be aware, again, of the Bible says we're not to be ignorant concerning His ways or His devices or His methods. We've got to understand those things.

I want you to turn with me to Matthew chapter 13 this morning and we're going to look for a little while at this particular chapter. And if you're familiar with this chapter, you know that this is a chapter that has a number of parables in it and the parables are kingdom parables. All the way through this chapter, the kingdom of God is likened to the kingdom of God, the kingdom of God, it's all about the kingdom of God.

But the very first parable that Jesus shares in this sort of string of parables, and it's true in Mark's account and Luke's account, He gives the parable of the sower. Well, how many of you are familiar with that parable? I'm sure if you've been raised in church for any length of time at all, it's one story that you know pretty well. The sower is out there in the field, of course, Jesus would use illustrations that people could relate to these days, I guess, if Jesus was sharing, He'd talk about somebody, you know, John Deere or something, and we could all, you know, picture that in our mind.

But in those days, it was a common sight. This was an agricultural country, and the sower would be out there sowing the seed, and so Jesus just borrowed an everyday sort of an illustration. Now the sower, as you well know, is who? In this parable, okay? Nobody knows who the sower is, certainly you do, you're a little shy, who is the sower? The sower is the Lord Jesus Christ, right? Okay.

And He is sowing into different types of soil, and the soil represents what? The heart. Various types of responses depending on the heart condition of the individual, whether that seed does anything at all and so on and so forth, all depends on how we respond to that seed. And then the seed itself is what? Okay, the Word of God.

Anybody can prove on that? Verse 19, if you have your Bible open or your little tablet there, tells us a little bit more detail. It says, when anyone hears the words of the kingdom. Now we could say that the sower is

not just the Lord Jesus Christ, this is the King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In other words, He is establishing His kingdom. This parable is really about the King establishing His kingdom. And what is the purpose of the parable? The purpose of the parable is increase.

Is that right? Do we have any farmers here? No farmers here. Okay, surprise. All right, South Dakota, I thought there'd be a few more, but let's assume that a man has, you know, a reasonable amount of acreage and he is going to sow some wheat and he orders a ton of seed.

And he spends days, first of all, plowing and then disking and harrowing and breaking up the ground, maybe fertilizing the ground, all the various stages that are necessary. And then finally he sows the seed, covers the seed over and then he prays that there'll be rain and so on. And the harvest comes three months later.

Now imagine after all of that toil, all of that labor, all of that work that is involved, he has sowed one ton of seed. He does not expect to get back one ton of seed. That would be an absolute disaster if that were the case.

He is looking for an increase, a minimum of 30 tons, 60 tons, the Bible says, or 100 tons. In other words, he is wanting to increase what he is sowing. I believe that God wants to increase his kingdom.

Isn't that right? We are told, pray, thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. That's one of our mandates as believers. We should be praying on a daily basis for the extension of God's kingdom.

Isn't that right? The Bible also says as believers we are to seek first the kingdom of God. It's not something we put on the back burner. It's not something we say, well, one of these days I'll get around to it.

If we are truly born again of the Spirit of God, we should have that one passion and that is we are to be kingdom people, constantly thinking in terms of the kingdom of God, extending the kingdom of God, whatever we can do to benefit the kingdom of God. And so that's what this parable really is all about. Now there's a different types of responses again.

It says here that he was sowing the words of the kingdom, sowing the words of the kingdom. The first situation is it says there in verse 19, when anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown. Now the evil one obviously is just another name for the devil.

In fact, Luke's account of the same parable, Luke chapter 8 and verse 12, it says the devil comes and he takes away the word that has been sown. So what you have in this parable really, you've got kingdoms in conflict. You've got two kings.

You've got the kingdom of darkness and you've got the kingdom of light. You've got King Jesus and you've got King Devil. If we can call him that, because his kingdom is called the kingdom of darkness, so he also is a king, meaning he's got authority, he's got power.

And these two kingdoms are at war, one against the other. Kingdom of darkness does not want the kingdom of light to expand. The kingdom of light wants to destroy.

In fact, one of the reasons Jesus came, he came to destroy the works of the devil. And so there is a battle going on. If we belong to the kingdom of light, then we should hate everything that has to do with the

kingdom of darkness because it is contrary to everything that God has called us to do and to operate in and so on.

And so it says in Luke's account, he takes away the word from their heart so that they may not believe and be saved. The enemy does not want God's kingdom to expand. And he will do everything within his power to stop that.

The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 4, the God of this world, speaking about the devil, has blinded the minds of those that believe lest the light of the gospel should be revealed to them. In other words, if you are in some sort of evangelism, and we should be all involved in some type of evangelism, but whether you're praying for a brother or sister, a husband or wife, you know, a neighbor or a friend, whether you're doing child evangelism, mass evangelism, whether you're doing door-to-door evangelism, whatever type of evangelism, we are in a spiritual battle. The God of this world has blinded the minds of those people lest the light should penetrate.

And so there's a spiritual battle that is going on. And here we find as soon as that seed is sown, it falls into hard ground, a hardened heart, a heart that is indifferent, doesn't care about the things of God, and so on and so forth. And, of course, we will always have those types of individuals.

Verse 20 is the next one. It says, it falls upon rocky soil. Now, my understanding of this as I've looked at this over the years is that this was not just soil with a few little rocks in it.

This was a deep layer of rock underneath a very small amount of soil. And it says that the seed springs up quickly. It springs up quickly because it is received with joy.

In other words, this is more of an emotional response to the gospel. You know, boy, this sounds good. I'm going to get with this.

This is a fad. All my friends are involved in it, and so on. But then it says, when persecution arises because of the Word, it eventually withers.

Jesus said, the first He interpreted what He said was the sun rises, and it beats upon the soil, but the soil has no root. It's interesting that it says He has no root in Himself, almost like He's one of those individuals, He doesn't have the willpower, and so on. It's all emotion.

There's no, you know, He hasn't sat down and really counted the cost. But the sun rises and beats upon it, and it withers away because it has no root. Now, notice, I believe that this parable, and the reason I'm sharing it with you, is a warfare parable.

In other words, we no longer have the roaring lion. I liken that to the birds of the air that just simply come in and grab the seed and take it away. You know, that's sort of easy.

But here, the enemy comes with a little different strategy, persecution. And it's that unrelenting sort of persecution. The sun rises and begins to beat upon it.

Let's say this is a college kid, he's invited to a campus ministry, maybe it's a couple of weeks before the end of the term, and he hears the gospel, and he thinks, wow, that sounds great. You know, all of his friends are, you know, doing their thing and getting excited about the Lord, and so he says, yeah, I want a piece of this type thing, you know, what do I have to do? And, you know, he supposedly gets saved, and

then he goes home two weeks later. He attends maybe one other class, but then he goes home and he tries to make a stand.

You know, he, maybe his buddies call him and say, hey, you're back in town. I just heard, you know, you're back in town. How about getting together? You know, we're going to be meeting down at the bar tonight, and so on.

He says, you know, he says, I'm not really interested anymore. And his buddies say, what do you mean you're not interested anymore? And he says, well, I, you know, I became a Christian a couple of weeks ago. You became a Christian? Oh, come on, you know.

And he says, well, listen, at least come down and meet us. You don't have to have a drink, but come down to the bar anyway. All your friends want to see you, you know, Tom's going to be there, Mary's going to be there, you know, whatever, and so on.

So he shows up and he does his best to, you know, but the mocking begins, the persecution begins. Oh, come on, tell us about this. You mean you're a Christian now, man, come on, you know, can you believe that he's a Christian now and everybody laughs and, you know, and the pressure begins and pretty soon he sort of wilts.

The enemy, in other words, changes his strategy. The enemy will go after us and try and wear us down and do everything within his power to destroy the effectiveness of that seed. He doesn't have time to really get grounded before the persecution begins.

He doesn't have time to really get to, you know, read and study his Bible. His friends are not around him for support and so on, and we can, you know, argue whether he was saved or he wasn't saved, but the fact is there was something going on that the enemy was effective in cutting short, and so he never produced anything. And then we go to the next one, and this is the one I think is the most deceptive of all.

We find it in verse 22, and it says, this is one on whom seed was sown among the thorns. Seed was sown among the thorns. And when he hears the words, the worries of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word and it becomes unfruitful.

It becomes unfruitful. Now it doesn't destroy it. In other words, the birds of the air don't take away the seed.

This seed was subject to the same sun rising that everything else in the field was. In other words, it endured the persecution and the ridicule and all of those other things, but something else came in. Riches came in, worries came in, and in fact Luke's account says, if I've got it here, the love of other things came in.

In other words, other desires came in, and it never brought fruit to maturity. Let me give you a couple of the different references here. I'm getting ahead of myself.

Mark 4 and verse 7, it says, it yielded no crop. Luke says, Luke 8 and verse 14, and it brought no fruit to maturity. It brought no fruit to maturity.

Now I believe, and hopefully it's not true of this church, but I'm speaking generally here, I believe that 80% of the average makeup of an evangelical church fits into this category, and they don't even know that they

are involved in spiritual warfare. It is so deceptive. In other words, we expect the devil to come in his red suit and his pitchfork sort of thing, and we think we're okay.

We think, well, I've survived a little bit of ridicule, you know, when I first got saved my friends ridiculed me and so on and so forth. I survived that, and we think, you know, I'm pretty good. I go to church every single week and so on.

But am I fruitful? Because the whole purpose of this parable is increase. What am I doing to increase the kingdom of God? You see, the devil doesn't care if you get a hold of that seed and it falls into soil that produces something, the roots go down, and, you know, you've got some sort of manifestation of being a Christian, so to speak. Somebody can look at you and say, yeah, that's wheat, all right.

You know, that's not a tear, that's wheat, that's wheat, that's wheat. The thing is, does that wheat ever produce any fruit? If it doesn't, then it's ruined the whole purpose of the parable. Because the purpose of the parable, again, was to get fruit, isn't that right? Let me give you some scriptures here, John 15 and verse 16, well, let me, I'll come to that in a moment.

Let's look at this in a little more detail. The seed, again, was not snatched away as it was in the case of the first person. This person, again, suffered the same heat as the second individual, but it did not bear fruit.

So John 15, verse 16, I have chosen you, the Lord said, and I have appointed you that you should go and that you should, what, bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain. Romans chapter 7, verse 4, it says, we are made to die to the law that we might be joined to another, to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. In other words, you were raised up in newness of life and you were joined to Christ in order that, the Bible says, you might be fruitful.

That is our calling as believers. As believers we are called to advance the kingdom of God, and yet the enemy will do everything within his power to stop us. And one of the most subtle ways that he's come in is not through lust, it's not through some other, you know, gross sort of immorality or whatever, it's this very subtle thing of the riches and the worries and the cares of this world.

Paul writing to Timothy warns him about the deceitfulness of riches. He says the love of money is what? The root of all evil. It's that inordinate desire.

Obviously we need money, the world functions with money, you know, we can't buy clothes without money, put gas in our car and so on and so forth, but it's that inordinate desire. In other words, I'm seeking first the monetary things of life rather than the kingdom of God. That's why the Bible says, listen, have as your priority the kingdom of God, and these things will be added.

In other words, God is not opposed to you having money, he's not opposed to you having a home and car and so on and so forth, but it has to become a secondary thing. As long as we seek first, God will take care of those things. It's when we reverse that and we begin to seek first the material things and we put God on the back burner, and as a result, our spiritual life suffers and the kingdom of God suffers.

We're not extending the kingdom of God. We're not fruitful. You know, 30, 60 and 100 fold is just way sort of beyond us, and we've got to understand again that this is a type of spiritual warfare.

Like I said, this is the minor leagues in that sense, but nevertheless, most of us are not even aware that we're in spiritual warfare because we think of spiritual warfare as joining the Mormon faith, you know,

getting totally deceived, you know, becoming a Jehovah's Witness or, you know, some other sort of way out type of deception. I'll mention some of this in another moment here, but this is the strategy of the enemy to distract us with riches, cares, worries, and so on and so forth so that we never produce anything again as far as increase in the kingdom, and we've got to, you know, take stock of that. We've got to honestly say, listen, I have been deceived.

I'm not, you know, practicing some sort of immorality and so on and so forth, but neither am I advancing the kingdom of God. How do I get involved in the kingdom of God? How do I become one that is, you know, concerned about the advancement of God's kingdom? Number one, we need to stop praying. Pray thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

Pray the Lord of the harvest. He sends forth laborers. Ask God to give you opportunities again to advance the kingdom, to invite somebody to church, give somebody a track, mention to somebody at work, listen, I've been praying for you, and that's all you've got to say.

And they say, praying for me, why? And all of a sudden you've got an open door. Well, I want you to know Jesus the way I do it, whatever. You know, I understand you've been sick, and I've just been praying.

You know, I believe God is a healer, and He wants to heal you, and I'd love to pray for you if you're open to it, whatever. But, you know, veil yourself of these opportunities, and let's see the kingdom of God increase, but the enemy hates that. And so he is a master again at coming with these various disguises, if you like, these various camouflages, and we don't think anything about riches and worries and cares.

We don't think of that as a sort of a demonic thing. We don't think of that as being inspired by the enemy. You know, the enemy can give you promotions to thwart the kingdom of God.

Let's say that, you know, you're very active in church, you've got a home group, and you work for, you know, some IBM, let's say, and IBM, because of your solid job performance, they promote you, and your promotion means now that you're going to be traveling. And you come home that day and say, guess what, honey, I've got a promotion, extra \$25,000 a year. Wow.

Trouble is, it means I'm going to be a traveling lot, won't be able to spend time with the kids like I used to, won't be able to go to a Wednesday night Bible study like I used to. I'm going to have to give up, of course, our home group, won't be able to go to a prayer meeting anymore. In other words, the enemy also knows how to use money.

You know, I go to church at some time when they take the offering, you know, they pray for inheritances and they pray for a whole list of things, but the enemy can also do that to thwart again the kingdom of God. And so we've got to be discerning. Is it worth taking this promotion? Because if it does, the kingdom of God is going to suffer, my kingdom is going to grow, so to speak.

I'll be able to afford that, you know, RV now or whatever it is or that boat and so on and so forth. With my increase, my family is going to suffer, my kids, I won't be able to go to, you know, their games and so on and so forth. In other words, the deceitfulness of riches will come in and they will choke my spiritual life.

They'll zap, you know, just take everything out of me and I've got to be discerning. Is this God or is this the enemy? And if it's the enemy, then you need to, you know, resist that thing and so on. Let me talk here about some other forms of deception because, again, this is what I'm calling the minor leagues of spiritual warfare.

Tonight we'll get into the sort of the heavy hitting, so to speak, and get into what it means to, you know, take territory, so to speak. We're now just talking about our own sort of besetting sins. I'm going to be looking into the life of David a little bit and a bunch of New Testament scriptures about binding the strong man and so on.

David had to kill the lion and the bear before he took care of Goliath. Is that right? And so the minor leagues are when we've got to, you know, take care of our own, David and Goliath, our own little flock, our own little problems and circumstances and so on. And then once we become a master at that, so to speak, then we have the faith to go into a different realm and take on the Goliaths.

And believe me, there are some Goliaths. But we've also got to get over this whole strategy of how the enemy comes and understand it. Matthew 24, like I said, we've got this word that comes, Beware lest any man deceive you.

And it all has to do with spiritual deception, signs, wonders, miracles, false Christ will arise and so on, you know, for many, many years. And I was raised in church. My father was a minister for many, many years.

I thought, you know, nobody is ever going to deceive me into thinking that they are a false Christ. In other words, a substitute for Christ. You know, I've been a Christian long enough to be able to discern that, you know, that, you know, I just put it out of my mind until I realized one day that that word Christ means what? Anointed.

So, you can translate that, false anointings will arise and deceive many. And then I began to worry. So, somebody comes to your church and he's holding meetings and miracles are happening.

I mean, big miracles, signs, wonders, and miracles are taking place. And you think, wow, I mean, all of a sudden the place fills up because nothing fills up a church like, you know, either acro prophetic ministry or signs and wonders and so on. And so, you know, before long, yeah, I'm meeting some auditorium somewhere and now the crowds have, you know, up there in the thousands and this man is waxing eloquent every single night, again, signs, wonders, miracles, and so on.

And then towards the end, he begins to put in a little bit about, well, you know, there really isn't a trinity, there really isn't this, there really isn't that. And gradually he, but you're so mesmerized, well, listen, you know, he's got the power of God, so therefore maybe you have been deceived about this. And pretty soon we can buy into those things.

You know, I have, I'll be very, very honest with you, there's certain things that go on in the body of Christ that I still don't have a grid for. You know, the gold dust and the diamonds and, you know, all of this sort of stuff. And I was praying one day, and this is some time ago now.

And the Lord gave me a verse there on the day of Pentecost where, of course, the people said, you know, these guys are drunk, they've, you know, been out drinking all night and so on and so forth. And Peter stood up and he said, no, he said, this is that that was spoken of by the prophet Joel. In other words, what you are seeing is a fulfillment of what God said was going to happen.

John the Baptist, when he was in prison, he had some doubts about the Lord. And so he sent his disciples and they said, you know, are you really the Messiah? And Jesus said, go tell John, the eyes of the blind are open, the lame, you know, leap and so on and so forth. In other words, this that I am doing is what the Bible said would happen.

In Isaiah it says, when he is come, the eyes of the blind will be open, the lame will leap and so on and so forth. So this is that. And the Lord said to me, until you can find a this for the that, be cautious.

In other words, if I could find a verse in Jeremiah or Ezekiel or something where it says in the last days, gold dust will come down, I could say, this is that. But because there is no this for the that, I have to take it with caution. You know, and that's where I'm at.

I've been in the ministry 50 years, but I just have to say, listen, if it's not according to this word, the Bible says there is no light in them. Remember when they said, should we go after mediums and spirits and so on and so forth? And the prophet said, listen, if they don't speak according to this word, there's no light. This word has everything that pertains to life and Godliness.

Do I believe God could fill this place with gold dust? Yes, I do. He's God. You know, he could turn this into gold and I'd be the first one out of the door with it.

No, but, you know, he can do anything. But what I'm saying is, is there a this for the that, you know, and that's why, you know, they were able to say, listen, it's there in the word of God. This is a fulfillment.

I want to see the practical demonstration, not, you know, people pulling rabbits out of hats type stuff. I want to see blind eyes open, people that are crippled, walking and so on and so forth. So we are warned over and over again, Matthew 24, again, about the fact that there is deception and it is spiritual deception that will take place.

Signs, wonders, miracles and so on. Let me give you some other areas of deception that you may not have thought of, because, again, for many, many years, you know, pride sounds wrong, but I thought to myself, you know, I'm not going to be deceived. I'm not going to end up, you know, joining a Mormon faith or some other, you know, thing like that.

But listen to these deceptions in Galatians chapter six. In fact, before we do that, I'm just looking at our time here, so I've got a little bit of time. Go back to Matthew 13.

I didn't intend to follow through on this. We'll pick up the deceptions here in a moment. Matthew chapter 13, we've looked at the parable of the sower, and then in verse 24, it says, he presented another parable to them, saying, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.

I think, wow, you know, I thought we'd just done that parable. So here's another parable, identical, at least the illustration to begin with. It's a man and he's sowing good seed in his field.

That was what the first parable was about. The problem is this parable changes. Verse 36, he left the multitude and he went into the house and his disciples came to him saying, explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.

And he answered and said to them, the one who sows the good seed is the son of man. So the sower is the same. It's the king, if you like.

It's the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the son of man. And the field now, notice what it says in verse 38, and the field is the world.

The field is no longer the hearts of men, the various heart conditions that represent various types of soil. The field now is the world. And then it says, and for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom.

The seed is no longer the word of the kingdom. The seed now is the son of the kingdom. So what you have here, you've got two parables about the kingdom.

The first kingdom is the king trying to establish his kingdom in you. It comes into the heart. It changes my heart.

It changes my attitude towards life and so on. Once I become a kingdom-minded believer, I begin to operate on kingdom principles. Then I become kingdom seed.

And now God can take me or you and He can sow me into the world because now He wants to establish His kingdom through us, not in us. But He can't establish His kingdom through us until He establishes His kingdom in us. In other words, there's a progression here.

Now I could ask you, how many of you are kingdom seed? In other words, could God reach into your life right now and throw you out to, you know, Thailand or some other place, and could you establish the kingdom of God? Or would people look at you, look at your marriage and say, you know, they're always bickering, they're always fighting, they don't pay the bills, you know, blah, blah, blah. In other words, is the kingdom represented in my life sufficiently to demonstrate that I'm a child of God? Or do I still need that kingdom work to be done in me? But once we become kingdom seed, once we become kingdom minded, then we become kingdom seed and now God can use us to establish His kingdom through us. So the first parable is the kingdom established in us.

The second parable is God establishing His kingdom through us. And it's important, again, that we get the kingdom in us, first of all. We begin to think with a kingdom mind.

We turn the other cheek, so to speak. We pray for our enemies. All of those things that are listed there in the early chapters of the book of Matthew.

Okay, I wanted to bring that out. Let me go back now to this whole area of deception. Five areas that the Bible mentions is possibly more than this.

These are the five that I recall. Galatians 6 and verse 7. Do not be deceived. God is not mocked.

Whatever a man sows, that will he also reap. In other words, we can be deceived into thinking I can get by with sin in my life. I can get by with disobedience and so on.

There is a law of sowing and reaping. I know many times we use it, you know, in a monetary sense, but the Bible is using it here in the spiritual sense. It says, he that sows to the flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but if we sow to the spirit, we will reap eternal life.

But it says, don't be deceived. In other words, there is a deception that people believe today, that I can sin and get by with it, that it doesn't matter how I live. I'm under the grace of God or whatever all these things, you know, all of that thing is a deception.

If you think, listen, I can sin and it doesn't make any difference. There are no consequences for sin anymore as a believer. And for those who have, you know, bought into this idea that, you know, everything from Genesis to the end of Mark is no longer applicable, then this is Galatians.

All right, so, you know, so let's, I'm just buying into that false concept to prove a point here, you know. Do not be deceived, you know. So the second one, also now in Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 15 verse 33, do not

be deceived.

Bad company corrupts good morals. If you think you can hang around with, you know, a bunch of non-Christians or, you know, spend hours and hours watching non-Christian television type stuff and so on and not have it corrupt you and change your values, you are already deceived. These are the deceptions.

Again, so often when the word deception comes up, we think of some way out, ludicrous sort of a thing that we get involved in, you know, the enemy again in the red suit and so on. No, the Bible says, listen, this also is deception. To think that you can, you know, hang around again with the world and not allow that the world to corrupt you.

It will. And it will change good morals. You will slowly begin to compromise.

You know, that's what the children of Israel did. That's that portion of Scripture here. Let me just turn to it in Psalm 106, I believe it is.

Psalm 106 and verse 34, they did not destroy the people as the Lord commanded them, but they mingled with the nations. They learned their practices. They served their idols, which became a snare to them.

They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, and they shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and the daughters whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with the blood. Thus, they became unclean in their practices, and they played the harlot in their deeds. Notice where it began.

They did not destroy the people as the Lord commanded them, but they mingled. They mingled. Bad company corrupts good morals.

And as a result, pretty soon, when you mingle, you learn, you know, you hang around with a bunch of people smoking weed or whatever, and all their apparatus, and you say, well, how does that work exactly, you know, and so on and so forth, and you get intrigued with it. Well, can I have a, you know, can I have a little puff of that? And, you know, before you know it, you've mingled, but then you want to practice, and all of a sudden, you've turned your back on God. Again, deception.

The third one is in Galatians chapter 6, and verse 3, if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, it comes right after the person that has fallen, and it says, you that are spiritual, restore such one. In other words, you're thinking, that could never happen to me.

I'm immune from that sort of thing. And it's a false pride that comes in because we're trusting in ourselves that we're okay. He thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

We deceive ourselves again into thinking that we are beyond falling into sin or whatever. Paul says, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway. Paul was constantly aware of having to walk circumspectly, redeeming the time, and so on.

When I have preached to others, I could end up the same way. If you think, listen, I'm immune from that. I've been a Christian for so many years, and we begin to think we are something in our own strength.

In other words, we're putting the confidence and the trust in ourselves, instead of being totally relying upon God. We deceive ourselves, and as a result, again, we are going to fall into sin. The next one is in the book of James.

James 1 and verse 22, it says, we are to prove ourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. Boy, if this isn't a big area of deception. In other words, we think knowledge equals, if you like, practice.

We know certain things, but we're not doers. We know we should forgive. We know we should, you know, invite the unsaved in the church.

We know we should betide. We know, in other words, knowledge is not a sign of maturity. It is when we do those things, and we deceive ourselves if we think just because we know something, it equates to the same as being that person.

I know I should be holy. It doesn't mean I'm holy. I know I should separate myself from the world.

It doesn't mean I separate myself from the world. I know I should do this. I know I should do that.

But knowledge in itself, the Bible says that is deception. Now, this is spiritual warfare in a way that maybe many of you have never thought about it, because we tend to think of, you know, demons flying everywhere, and we haven't, you know, we haven't been playing with Ouija boards, and we haven't been, you know, playing with tarot cards, and so on and so forth, and we're not, you know, going to horror movies or whatever it is. This is a whole level of deception that the Bible refers to as deception, and it's where the enemy comes in.

The last one, at least the last one I've got down here, I'm sure there are others that I haven't thought about. 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 9, do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers shall inherit the kingdom of God.

In other words, if we think we can practice any of those things, and I know today, of course, everybody would pick out the homosexual thing and so on, the best way to deal with homosexuality is the way the Bible does it, put it within all the other sins. It is a sin, just like any other form of immorality and adultery and so on and so forth. But it says, if you think that you can practice those things, you've already deceived yourself.

You will not inherit the kingdom of God. So the Bible says, come out from among them, be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing. We have to live a life of separation by the grace of God.

He empowers us to do that, and if we think we can be saved in our sin, we've deceived ourselves. That's a big problem in the church today. People think they want to be saved in their sin.

The Bible says He came to save His people from their sin. God saves us from it. You can't be saved from drowning and still be in the water.

You can't be saved from a burning building and still be in the building. You are saved from. We have to come out of those things.

Otherwise, we deceive ourselves. You know, now we've got whole churches of, you know, the gay community. They've got their own churches, and they have their own Bible, and you know, all of that is deception.

But we too can end up at the same thing. And then finally, one final thing, and that's the area of unforgiveness, which I think to me is a biggie here, and I could go into a whole message on this. I want 2 Corinthians 2 and verse 10.

This is the man, of course, that was involved with his father's wife, and the church was not doing anything about it and so on. But verse 10, but whom you forgive anything, I forgive also. For indeed, what you have forgiven, I have forgiven.

If I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sake in the presence of Christ, in order that no advantage be taken us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes or his devices. There is something about unforgiveness that unless we are prepared to deal with this, again, the enemy has a stronghold in our life. Forgiveness is so important.

I personally believe that the key to revival, at least individual revival, there's a mystery about corporate revival, but individual revival, again, is this whole area of forgiveness. If you have sinned against your brother, you go to your brother and make sure that thing is right. Otherwise, there's an advantage that Satan has over us, Paul says, unless we forgive.

So again, I've wrapped that up. Our time is gone, but those are areas of deception this morning that I'm calling the minor leagues. Tonight, we'll get into a little deeper realm, hopefully just as practical, but most of us are still dealing with that level, and to a degree, maybe we never ever get rid of it, but there is the major league that very few people get into, and that is dealing again with principalities and powers, binding a strongman, and we'll look at binding a strongman over an individual, over a group of individuals, over a city, and then over a nation that the Bible brings out, and then some of the keys to doing that.

Let's just close in prayer. Father, we just thank you this morning, the entrance of your word. Your word says, gives light.

Father, expose again the schemes of the enemy in each and every one of our lives. If anybody's here this morning, and Lord, they have heard something that has just registered in their spirit, and they say, you know, I'm deceived in that area. Father, we thank you for the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses from all sin.

We thank you, Lord, you came to destroy the works of the devil, and Lord, we ask God that you would just set us free from any strategy, any plan, any seduction, Lord, that the enemy may have over our life. Father, we want to walk in newness of life. We want to bear fruit unto God.

Father, as we go back to that parable, Lord, I pray that this would be a fruitful church. Lord, there won't be one single person here that would just simply receive that word and then never produce fruit. Just enjoy coming to church.

Enjoy taking a pew. Enjoy singing the songs, but no real spiritual activity as far as extending your kingdom. Father, bring conviction, bring cleansing, and empower us, Lord, we pray, to see your kingdom come and your will done, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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