

Fight The Spirit Of The Antichrist And Find Joy

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon delves into the struggles of dealing with difficult emotions, enduring pain, and feeling stuck, emphasizing the importance of not suppressing feelings but finding a balance in surrendering them to Jesus. It explores the concept of Jesus as the Word made flesh, contrasting stoicism with the compassionate nature of Christ who understands our temptations and struggles. The message encourages finding joy in knowing our names are recorded in heaven, expressing gratitude amidst unresolved challenges, and trusting in God's provision despite uncertainties.

Scripture: John 1:14, Hebrews 4:15, Luke 19:33, 1 Peter 5:5, Luke 17:15, Luke 10:20, Mark 6:41, Ephesians 2:6

Topics: "Emotional Struggles", "Trusting God's Provision"

Description

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Transcript

Welcome, everybody. I wanted to share a few thoughts to also add on to what we heard last week about dealing with dry times in a situation like COVID, where we are cloistered and stuck inside. The lack of normalcy and the lack of human interactions can have us feeling a lot of different kinds of feelings, especially as it goes longer than it is.

Our children can respond in different ways that we're not usually seeing them. The situation may feel longer than theirs. There could be different circumstances that take longer to resolve than we would like them to resolve.

The dealings of enduring pain, feelings of feeling stuck, hurts that don't seem to resolve, no matter how you try. As we keep forgiving them, forgiving them, but the feelings of hurt still remain. One word that is in the English language that we use a lot is the word stoic.

And it's an expression that I've wondered about. Am I supposed to be stoic? And a stoic says to not care about feelings, not to worry about my feelings at all. And we've sung songs about that.

Feelings, feelings can be deceptive. Warrant is the word of God that nothing else is worth believing. And the stoics believed that everything came from a word that proceeded, not necessarily from God, but it proceeded from just a word.

And they believed in that word. The Greeks came up with that. And it was all about that word.

The Greek word for that was logos. And everything was about the logos that initiated everything. And I've seen that Hinduism also, different religions have different points on that.

Hinduism has a very similar idea that the word or the sound that created everything was the sound om, which is what if you go to any yogic, they'll tell you to say that sound om, because they say that's the sound that created everything on this earth. And so the Hindus are saying it's om. The stoics are saying it's logos.

And John chapter one, verse one says, in the beginning was logos, and logos was with God, and logos was God. And so we may not understand the difference quite yet. And so John comes into that and says, yes, there's a logos that creates everything.

But then that's where Christianity diverges in John chapter one, verse 14. And that becomes the triumph of the Christian faith that the logos became flesh. It wasn't far away.

It wasn't an impersonal word that proceeds from the mouth of God that was far away. God came close. God took on flesh and became one of us.

And meditating on the word becoming flesh is something that is also separates us from just being stoic and saying, stifling our feelings or dismissing our feelings and just squelching our emotions as if they didn't, they're bad because God created emotions. It didn't come from the devil. And so to find that right balance in which we don't live our lives by our feelings, but don't become such stoics, feelingless people is the journey that we're on.

And that's the journey that I've also seen in trying to deal with hurts and difficulties that sometimes take a lot longer to resolve. Prayers don't get answered like the way we should. Temptations keep coming at us like waves and they don't seem to stop.

And God told us to love the Lord our God with our heart, our soul, and our mind, and our strength, all parts of our beings. The word becoming flesh is where I find the source of an answer for me for that. I wanna explain what that means for me.

I wrote about this, but I also wanna repeat it. In 1 John chapter five, or is it 1 John chapter four? Yeah, 1 John chapter four. The difference between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the antichrist.

There's a lot of conversations, a lot of discussions about the antichrist coming. Is it in COVID? Is it in the vaccine? Is it in a political system? Is it in an authoritarian government? Is it in a public school policy? Is the spirit of the antichrist coming? And all these different theories that are out there. But the word of God is much simpler.

He talks about the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the antichrist being this, the spirit of the antichrist is denying that Jesus came in the flesh. The spirit of the antichrist is saying the logos did not become flesh. So what's the implication for me? Here's where I draw it in and make it extremely powerful for me.

The spirit of the antichrist doesn't want me to believe that Jesus was tempted just like I was. That's the meaning of Christ coming in the flesh. John wrote this at a time when everybody knew Jesus had existed.

He wrote it just a few years, relatively speaking. There was no debate. There was a man called Jesus.

Well, John felt him, touched him. There's no debate whether Jesus came in the flesh. Physically, he was a human being.

They knew that. But the spirit of the antichrist is to say Jesus doesn't understand exactly what I'm going through. That's where the spirit of the antichrist can come in.

It's the antichrist, as opposed to the spirit of Christ. And I see that that's a spirit that can so easily come into my life. Because in the dealings with all the hurts that nobody else seems to have gone through, where I can't find anybody to relate with me, the way my relatives are talking to me, the way my coworkers are dealing with me, the way my neighbors are dealing with me, the great spirit of the antichrist is to make me feel you're different.

You have a sex drive like everybody else. You have enemies unlike everybody else. You have a makeup or a situation set that is very different.

And it is possibly true. Maybe none of us, nobody else understands what I'm going through. It is possible.

But the spirit of the antichrist is to say, and Jesus doesn't understand it either. And it's not Jesus sitting up in God, as God who understands it. It's Jesus coming in the flesh, coming in a body that could be tempted just like I was, is where I find the beginning of the solution.

To say, nobody in the world may be able to understand it, but there is one person who went through it to the dotted I and the crossed T of what I'm going through. And that's a very difficult thing for me to do it because I'm surrounded in these feelings and emotions to be dragged into self-pity, to be dragged into discouragement and despondency and despair. And God's saying, that's the spirit of the antichrist because you're giving into these feelings as nobody understands what I've gone through.

And there's no blog that I can read, no verse I can read of anybody in the Bible who is affected just quite like I am. And that's where the spirit of the antichrist is trying to seep in saying, Christ doesn't understand it either. Christ didn't come in quite the same flesh as yours did.

He doesn't understand the tug towards temptation and sin that you did. He was tempted in all points. So 1 John chapter four, when the spirit of the antichrist says, Christ didn't come in the flesh, I connect that with Hebrews 4.15, which says that Jesus, we can turn to Hebrews 4.15, where it says he was tempted in all points and yet did not sin.

What is the response of somebody who was tempted in all points and yet did not sin? What is the response of a man who went to play cricket and hit every ball for a six? What is the response of a man who was playing football and every time he got the ball, no matter what the defenders did to him, he's always scored the goal. The response of such people typically is, come on guys, it's super easy. Let's just do it like I'm doing it.

That's not the response of Jesus. And that's the beauty of true perfection. Jesus was tempted in all points as we are yet without sin.

And this is true, beautiful holiness. He says, because I did it perfectly, I sympathize with you. I understand what you're going through.

I understand the depth of the feelings that you're going through. 1 Peter chapter, when we think of humility, 1 Peter chapter one, sorry, 1 Peter chapter five, we know these verses on humility. 1 Peter chapter five verse, we know 1 Peter 5.5, God is opposed to the proud, but gives his grace to the humble.

Clothe yourself with humility. 1 Peter 5.5 says, put on the whole garment, put it on like you're putting on your clothes every morning, put on humility. And then he says in verse six, therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you at the proper time.

And it's so easy to stop there, even though that's not the end of the sentence. Therefore humble yourself under the mighty hand of God so that he may exalt you at the proper time. That's not the end of the sentence.

I usually think that's the end of the sentence, not. I have to keep going because here's how I humble myself. Here's the proof that I am truly humbling myself is I cast all my cares and anxieties on him.

That's the proof of my humility. So humility is not putting my head down. Humility is not having a particular emotion.

Humility is a very action-oriented word in this context, which is I humble myself by casting all my anxieties upon him. And you know, I looked up that word casting and there's only one of the time that word comes. I used to always think that casting is like the fishermen casting its nests.

They cast it into the nest, just fling it on. They're like a fisherman flings it. But it's a different word that is used for that kind of casting.

The one time that other word, that word is used is in Luke chapter 19. And I just want to show you one verse in there. It's the story of Jesus when he was riding a donkey.

And I thought that was a good picture for me to think about how we cast our cares upon God. We know this Luke chapter 19, verse 33. He says, he saw the owners of the colt and the colt asked him, why are you untying the colt? The owners asked and the disciples said, the Lord is need of it.

And they brought it to Jesus and they cast their colts on the colt and Jesus sat on it. And I was thinking about that's a good picture for me to think about my cares. I cast it and I get Jesus to sit on top of it.

Lord Jesus, you sit on top of all of my cares. I'm going to cast all of my cares onto the donkey and you sit on top of it. You rule over all of that.

That's the humility of the donkey that I am. That's the humility that I have. Here's how I prove my humility in these feelings of anxiety and care and hurt or whatever it may be going through that don't seem to end when I think they should end.

A prayer doesn't help. Fasting doesn't help. Reading God's word doesn't help.

And day after day, week after week, these feelings persist. I don't have to be a stoic. I can recognize that Jesus was tempted exactly like I was down to the teeth.

And I cast it on him and say, Jesus, sit on top of it. You sat on top of it when you lived on this earth. I can sit on top of it.

You can sit on top of it in my life. Very practically for me to say, Lord, I want to cast it. And I want you to sit on top of these feelings.

I'm not going to tell you that they need to go away, but these are my garments. You gave me these garments. You gave me these cares.

You gave me my emotional makeup that gets more easily worried about it. What should I do? Just shut it up and shut it down, act like it doesn't exist? No, Lord Jesus, I'm going to come to you knowing that you faced exactly what I faced to the same emotional makeup that I am. He was not tested less in lust of the eyes than I am.

He had the same sexual drive that I did, or any of us did. He had the same struggles with anxiety that we do, but he always overcame because he constantly went to the Father. And the spirit of Christ was that he was tempted in all points that I was.

And that's what I want to hold on to. That's the point. That was my first point.

The second point that I also want to say is I have to find joy. I have to find joy. And I want to explain what that means.

In Luke chapter 10, I have to find it. I have to find it. And it's not something that I experienced, but I have to look and find it.

But it's something that I can practically do when the 70 returned from casting out demons, what did the disciples? We're all rejoicing as we would. Imagine if maybe about 70 of us here, imagine if all of 70 of us went and started casting out demons. Imagine the euphoria, not joy.

Imagine the euphoria. We would come back into this room. We were casting out demons.

Can't blame them. We would too. And Jesus was very clear about that.

He says, don't rejoice. Like that. But it is interesting what he said, where I do find joy in.

Find joy that your names are recorded in heaven. Now that happened when I just accepted the Lord's free offer. Sorry, it was a very expensive offer.

It cost him everything. But I hadn't done anything yet, except accept it. I had repented, turned away.

And I said, Lord, you're facing me. I'm turning away from my sin. I'm gonna receive it.

I turn to face you now. And he did all the work. And that was the time when he said, that's when your name was recorded in heaven.

Find your joy in that. And so it's going all the way back before you did anything except repent and receive. And I wanted to tell you a story that I heard.

It's one of the oldest stories I believe about a sermon illustration. So I think you children can also follow me. I wanna tell you the story.

There was a man who had a very hideous face and he had some handicaps. So he had a hunched back and he walked around and everybody in his class made fun of him because he was hunched over. And he had a distorted face because of the way he was born.

And he grew up and people made fun of him everywhere. And he went to middle school, elementary school, high school, college, university and working. And then finally he said, I'm sick of this.

I'm gonna go end my life. And at the end of the town, there was a huge cliff where he could walk up to the top of the cliff. And he was gonna jump off that because he was just sick of everybody making fun of him.

And he started up that mountain and he was joined by another, it was a beautiful woman. And she was also walking up the cliff and they started talking and she was walking up the cliff with the same purpose but for a very different reason. She had gotten lots of attention and she was married to a wonderful man and she had wonderful children, but she could never have enough.

She always wanted more. She was not happy with a good husband. She was not happy with her wonderful children.

She was not happy with the home that she had and the things that she was given. She just quit and it started eating at her and all these feelings kept dominating. And so finally she said, I'm gonna end my life too.

One who had nothing, had been given not much in life and had been teased and another woman had been affirmed a lot, but still at the end of the rope and they were both walking up the mountain to end their lives, to jump off the cliff. Then they were met by a third person who was a policeman. And the policeman said, I'm walking up the cliff for a different reason.

I'm looking for a criminal. This man has murdered and killed a lot of people in his lifetime and I'm looking for him. I've looked everywhere, I haven't found him in the city.

Last place I need to look is near the top of the cliff. I wonder if he's hiding there. So I'm gonna go look there, but I'm confident I'm gonna know who the person is because that man has six fingers on both his hands.

I'll immediately know who he is because he has six fingers on both his hands. So all three of them are walking up the top of the cliff and they come to the top of the cliff. And at the top of the cliff, there's a little home that has been built.

And this home has been built by a man who was, walking, living for himself many years, but had recently reformed his life and had built a home at the top of the cliff. And he was a saint, man of God. And he built his house near the top of the cliff to stop people who were going over that cliff.

And they all wanted to see this man before they jumped off the cliff. So they all stopped over there. In the front room, as they were standing there, they saw all these names written of people who were about to end their lives, but had met that saint.

And that so had turned around their lives and walked back. Names of different people from different cities who were all going to end that life, but had stopped right then. And that man had said, write your name before you leave.

And he had saved so many men from jumping off. And as this man finally came to meet these three people, and you could sense that they were in the presence of a saint, you could sense that this was a man of God, that they were in the presence of. And the woman came up first to meet the saint, and she bent down to kiss his hand, and she noticed that he had six fingers.

And that's where the story ends. And the point of that story is, we don't like the story ending there. We want to know what happened to the man with six fingers? What happened to the man with the hunchback? What happened to the beautiful woman? Did the policeman catch the man, and take him, and punish him, and hang him? Did the policeman forgive him? We want to know to resolve the story.

But the beauty about the story is that the beauty is there already. A sinner became a saint. The man who murdered many people has now been saving many people.

He's the one with the six fingers, but you could sense that he was in the presence of God. What matters after that? Well, I want to know what happens to the princess. I want to know what happens to him.

And all our fairy tales wants us to resolve our stories. The reality is, in life, our stories don't resolve. Hurts don't always go away.

Broken relationships don't always get healed. People die before the time that we think they should have died at. People go from being mean to being even more mean.

People don't rehabilitate or reset. And we want to resolve these stories. We want to resolve all these feelings, and they don't.

But the beauty of the story is, is a sinner became a saint. The proof is there. The names are there on the walls.

Doesn't really matter what happens afterwards. What happens now? So many situations in our life, dear brothers and sisters, we're waiting for it to resolve. We're waiting for us to cast out demons in our circumstances.

And Jesus says, don't rejoice over those things. Rejoice that your name has been written down in heaven and find your joy there. And that's a very instructive word for us in our cares and our feelings that are constantly bothering us like waves of an ocean, like winds that don't seem to abate or slow down.

The sinner has become a saint. Has our names been recorded in heaven? Then let us make that our source of rejoicing. The leper who was saved were not all 10 lepers.

It was only one leper who was saved. 10 lepers were healed. One leper was saved.

And the one leper who was saved did just one thing to begin with. He decided to come back and say thank you, to glorify God with a loud voice. I was talking to our brother Solomon Asfahar, and he was saying it almost seems like this leper had to disobey the command of Jesus in order to say thank you.

Jesus told him, go show yourself to the priest. He almost had to be like, no, I have to first say thank you to God. He was not bound by the letter of the law.

He was bound by the spirit that had gripped him in the healing of Jesus and said, I gotta say thank you. And so he shouted the thank you louder than the voices that said, but what about your family? You can go

see them. If you get the sign off from the priest saying you're no longer a leper.

And all the voices that were in our head saying you need to resolve those first. Don't let resolve any of these situations in our lives, all of the challenges in our lives. What we first need to do is to say thank you to the Lord for what he has already done for us and to shout that over everything else.

That's what I love about in Luke chapter 17. It says that he came back with a loud voice falling on his feet, glorifying God. And Jesus says, where are the other nine? Weren't there 10 who were healed? Only one came back.

And we have to shout our gratitude even if we're hanging on with six fingers and we see our murderers and all our challenges and all our past failures in front of our life. Lord, you've written your name in the book of life. Before I cast all my cares upon you, you sit on top of them, but Lord Jesus, I wanna shout my thank you to you.

Thanksgiving is in a few days here in America. It's a good season for us to be reminded even in our culture, but let us be reminded of where we have everything to be thankful for, to shout out over all of the feelings that have not gone away, over the problems that have not been resolved. Let us say thank you.

One final story that has blessed me. You know how many, if I'm not mistaken, you know how many loaves, children, you know how many loaves of bread and fish? How many loaves of bread and how much fish did the boy have? Who can tell me that? Go ahead, David Jr., the fourth. Five loaves of bread and two fish.

And do you know how long they were there before they ate? Anybody know? No. Anybody says, yes, they know? I think it was three days. They've gone three days without eating.

Here's what I was thinking. Maybe the boy started with 15 loaves and six fish. That's how much his daddy, mommy packed for them.

And you know what he did on the first day? He ate five loaves and two fish and didn't share it with anybody. And then on the second day, he ate five loaves and two fish and didn't share it with anybody. And then on the third day, he said, I want to do it differently.

I'm going to give it all to Jesus. But what about me? I'll go hungry. I'll give it to him.

And that's what we have to do in front of us today, dear brothers and sisters. We may not have given all our cares to him like we should have. We may not have resolved.

We may have been fighting with God to please resolve all the stories and he hasn't. Today's the third day. We can do it differently.

Today's the day of salvation. Let's give it all to Jesus. Let's give all of our cares.

And let's shout over all of our cares, Lord Jesus, you have done all things well. And let us set up, as C.D. Studds said, a rescue shop on the edge of hell. And let us be that people to give that story of salvation to others.

That's what God wants us to do. We don't need to resolve all our stories. We don't need to know how our stories may end in all of our relationships and our challenges and the reasons why we have the limitations we have right now.

If only if my dad had done this, if only my mom had done that, if only my brothers hadn't or my sisters hadn't, if only my boss had just done this instead of that, if only society had been different and on and on. They may never resolve. I'm not saying they're not legitimate.

They may be 100% legitimate, but they may not resolve. But God has resolved the fact that a sinner can become a saint. And he's placed us in the heavenlies with Christ.

And he says, get up off your feet and sit on my lap. That story is resolved. And we can shout with a loud voice, glorifying God.

May God help us.

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