

Defeating the Enemy

by Shane Idleman

To defeat the enemy, we must be aware of our vulnerability, put on the armor of God, and take steps to protect ourselves from sin and Satan.

Duration: 58:41

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:14, Ephesians 6:10

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Faith And Prayer"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual warfare and defeating the enemy by focusing on the need to have God at the center of our lives. It highlights the battle against spiritual forces and the loyalty tested in this battle. The sermon delves into the significance of putting on the whole armor of God to withstand the enemy's attacks and the importance of prayer in reinforcing truth, peace, faith, righteousness, salvation, and the Word of God in our lives.

Transcript

As you can see, I'm still on this topic of spiritual warfare, defeating the enemy. And just this week, even the Fort Hood shooting, you know, heavy on my heart, and getting back from a fireman's conference where two local firemen took their own lives, and seeing what's going on in our nation. And folks, I don't know how people live without God at the center of your life.

At the center. Not the parameters. Not the outskirts.

But God at the center. Because there's a spiritual battle that's going on. And it's not something we should take half-heartedly and just kind of jokingly.

But we need to really look at what the Bible says. And this morning, actually, I wrote it down. I was reminded of the quote that Martin Luther gave four or five hundred years ago.

He said, where the battle rages, where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is tested. See, sometimes we forget that. That our faith is tested.

Your faith will stand trial. To see what kind of faith it is. The enemy doesn't like solid faith.

He goes after that. So where the battle rages, spiritually, that's where the loyalty of the soldier will be tested. Our loyalty will be tested in this spiritual battle.

And if you weren't here last week, I would encourage you to go online and listen to part one. Because it's going to make a lot more sense with this being part two. And a lot of times what happens when I'm preaching, I don't get through half the notes.

So I want to make it part two to make sure I get through everything. So go on. It should be on our website now.

It's on our Facebook page. Last week's message. But this one is defeating the enemy.

Defeating the enemy. And something interesting you'll find, is that he goes for areas of importance. I mean, you don't see on the news very much, you know, the battle for Alaska.

Do you? It's a battle for Jerusalem, the Mideast. All these things, these key areas, that seem to be just a haven of violence and destruction. Because the enemy concentrates his efforts on those things that are most important.

So the whole point of that is this. He will hit us in our most vulnerable places. So spiritual warfare, we talked about last week.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood. Our weapons are not carnal. They're here.

Basically, it's here. It's not here. That's old school, and I could do that well when I was in my twenties.

I haven't done that in a long time. But it's not here. We don't fight like this.

I can't tackle somebody and take them down in jiu-jitsu, and all these different things, mixed martial arts. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter.

It's up here. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. So we asked a question last week, and I've took surveys before and I've asked pastors, can the enemy plant thots into our mind? Think about that.

Because if our battle's not out here, it's in here, how does he come and get me? And it's in those vulnerable areas. That's where he concentrates his attack. And the reason I'm telling you this is to be forewarned, is to be forearmed.

See, you could put a whole bunch of pain meds on my counter, and a half a bag of marijuana, and an eight-ball crank or crystal meth, and it'll sit there for years. I'll throw it in the trash. I'll call the police.

But you put ice-cold beer in the refrigerator, and week after week, because that's the area that he knows I had a struggle with in my 20s. And once a struggle, it's always a struggle, right? Anybody who's been there before, you know it. You can't just go play with the serpent again, and he's not going to bite you.

But he looks for those areas that were most vulnerable. So that way you know how to be on guard. And for some people, it's pride.

They weren't built up as a... Their dad beat them down. People beat them down. So they go, look, I've arrived.

Look, look, look at me. And he'll get you in those areas. Or self-esteem, right? If we have real low self-esteem, promiscuity.

We see a lot of young girls going to different guys. Show me, tell me who I am. Tell me I'm loved.

Tell me I'm appreciated. My father didn't give it to me. Would you give it to me? And then this one kicks her to the curb, and it goes to this one, and this one.

And promiscuous. That's what happens. So he goes in those areas that were most vulnerable.

Financial. If God, if the financial area, if the money, the almighty dollar is your God, and that's what you live for, that's where he's going to concentrate his attack. So we also talked about this last week, that he cannot, the devil cannot possess a Christian.

You can't have the Holy Spirit residing in a believer. And Satan together in the same house. But we can tell the Holy Spirit, hey, go sit out in the garage for a night or two.

And as he knocks on the door, we can allow that influence in. Can we not? And I think a lot of times, you know, the Bible isn't real clear how he, you know, can he plant thoughts? Can he orchestrate circumstances? Because remember, we're fighting a lot of different voices, are we not? We've got the Holy Spirit, the still small voice of the Holy Spirit. Then I've got my own flesh, who just wants to be lazy, and wants to eat too much, and drink too much, and get in fights, and tell people off, and send out mean emails.

And now I've got the flesh, and I've got the Holy Spirit, and if the enemy can come in and plant thoughts, now we're fighting this, and what's going on? That's why we can feel oppression. Not demonic possession, but that oppression. And I've noticed it, I've talked to, I mean, when I used to speak at men's conferences, and different churches and denominations, it's interesting.

Where your area of vulnerability is, sometimes you'll do well, right? Weeks go by. I've talked to a member of a men's conference, weeks go by, they're doing good, they haven't went back to the bottle. So it was what they say.

But then a thought comes, or a desire, it's almost like it takes the will of your car, and drives it to the dealer, or to the liquor store. I was doing so good, Lord, what's going on? And there are guys with pornography, they're doing great. Weeks, months even.

And then something hits where it's almost uncontrollable. I often wonder, is that when the enemy's coming in? And he's dropping these bombs in areas of vulnerability? So this is a very important topic. Also, the Bible doesn't talk about a person being possessed.

It's usually he has a demon, or she has a demon, or the influence of a demon. Mary Magdalene, right? Set the feet of Jesus, was there on His crucifixion. He cast out seven demons from this lady that were influencing her.

They gained a stronghold. And we ask the question, how much influence do they have? How much influence does the demonic realm have in our lives? Well, how much influence does sin have? Think about that. We open ourselves up, and what I didn't get to last week is this whole armor of God.

See, it's not like we should go, oh, goodness, Shane, you're scaring the daylights out of me. I talked to one lady who's not here tonight. I don't think she'll be here tomorrow.

She said, that message scared me last week. Number one, it's because she's not living right. Number two is, that's a good thing sometimes, because fear moves us.

See, the more worried I am, and worried's not really a good word, but the more I understand the spiritual battle, the closer I want to go to my Savior. If I fear gravity, I'm not going to jump off a building. So fear, good, God-given fear, well, actually, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge, and understanding.

He told His people, fear Me. Throughout Psalms and Proverbs, the fear of the Lord, fearing God. So it's a very healthy thing there.

And if you want the full sermon notes, everything I'm looking at, this is a good time to remind you that they're online. We put these quotes online, the Scriptures are online, under our video, under full sermon notes. But how does the enemy influence us then? If we put on the whole armor of God, how does the enemy influence us? He looks for the cracks.

Oh, you left off the breastplate of righteousness. You didn't put on the belt of truth. The helmet of salvation's gone.

You're not shod with the Gospel of peace. You don't have the sword. You don't have the shield.

He'll hit in one of those areas. So that's what I didn't get to last week that I have to get to. This week.

And we have to remember something. The power of sin. When you see these Fort Hood shootings, and there'll be more shootings to come, there'll be more school shootings, there'll be more this, there'll be more that, this person was released, this rapist was released.

Yeah, it's not getting any easier, folks. So how do people not live with God at the center of their life? I don't know. And we have to stop playing with sin as if it's a little fun thing that's no big deal.

Because sin destroys, it misleads, it quenches the Spirit of God within us. It grieves the Spirit of God. It leads to depression.

It leads to isolation. It leads to confusion. It leads to divorce.

It leads to angry outbursts. It leads to everything. Sin is to kill, to steal, and to destroy.

And that's why I laugh at some of the churches that say, oh, we don't talk about that. We don't want to upset people. Do you know what put Christ on the cross? Sin.

Do you know what the Bible calls us to? Obedience and to turn from those things. Not perfectly, right? But faithfully. So that's kind of where we left off.

And here's what happens. I like what John Wesley said. Give me a hundred men who fear nothing but sin and who desire nothing but God.

I don't care if they're laity or clergy, and we will storm the gates of hell. That's a very key component there. Fear sin and want nothing more than God.

That's a very healthy balance. If you fear sin, I know my sinful nature. There's something inside of me that wants to take me down.

There's something inside of me that I have to say someday, oh, I had to resign because of this. It's working against me. So I have to stay close to the cross, close to my Savior.

That's the only solution. To fear something that's going to kill, steal, and destroy me, but then gravitate towards what's going to protect me. It's a very healthy balance.

And I'll just tell you, here's how sin works. It likes to get us close to the edge, right? So what I'm calling us to is to be closer to this. I want to live in the book of Matthew.

I want to come to the Monday studies. I want to have worship in my house. I need to stay by those who build me up, not pull me down.

I need to give everything to Christ, everything submitting. I need to follow Him, because what happens? It's getting looking a little better. And that's growing distant, right? Well, it's no big deal.

Come on, Shane, it's no big deal. Once I was far away from, now I'm close to. And we just walk on that, whoops.

You know, we're just right on that. People just love to live on that edge. And then what happens? Oh, that wasn't too bad.

I didn't get caught. Oh, wow. See, no big deal.

God's approving of this. No, He's patient. Don't confuse His approval with His patience.

And then we get to the bottom, and then all hell breaks loose. How did I get here? How did I get here? Because it started one step at a time. One compromise at a time.

One wrong choice at a time. So what we encourage people is, is run back. How far can you get into God's Word? Can you get into that safety net of protection and anointing back? I have to stay close to the Savior because He's pulling me.

And that's how He's going to pull you. And that's how He does it. Through spiritual battle.

So the enemy influence, he wants to pull you to the end of that. Come on, just a little closer. Just a little closer.

Just a little closer. Until we're at the bottom, and we wonder, how did we get here? How did this happen? And that's how sin works. That's the deceptive nature of sin.

It wants us to live close to the edge. And you have to remember, what's a downfall for you or a trigger for you? It won't be for me and somebody else. The enemy knows where he's going to concentrate his attack, and that's where he goes after us.

And that's how we must defeat the enemy, to counteract that. So we left off last week, methods of influence. This is how the enemy will draw you away from God.

Are you creating an environment for the Holy Spirit to reign? Or an environment for Satan to influence? Listen, this is pivotal. Are you creating an environment for the Holy Spirit to reign? Or an environment for Satan to influence us? Because it's through that influence that we get to the edge of the cliff there. That's how he brings us from here to there.

It's through influence. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. He's used those three weapons on Eve.

He used those three weapons on you. When Eve saw that the tree was good for food, pleasant to the eye, and desirable to make one wise, she took of it and ate. That's how he's coming after us.

The lust of the flesh, what our flesh craves, the lust of the eye, what our eye wants, and the pride of life. The boastful pride of life. He says, that will never happen to me.

I've been a Christian 30 years. Those are usually the ones that are living right on the fence. It's the person who says, Lord, I need you.

I need you in that weakness. That's where that strength comes from. I'm going to get to that in a minute.

But let's talk about this. We talked about last week, and I had to hurry through because we were ending the service. But how does the enemy influence us? What are the environments? Well, number one is toxic substances.

He uses, right, alcohol, drugs, these different things to draw us in. That's why Paul said, do not be drunk with the spirit. I mean, I'm sorry, not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit of God.

Medication, you know, this guy that shot people at Fort Hood? You see the news reports? He was on an antidepressant with the side effects of suicide. So we have to be very careful with what we're taking into our body. Alcohol in our culture, especially in the church, it's amazing.

People want to post their favorite beer and wine on Facebook. As if, you know, of course, I'm not against, you know, if you have moderation, one now and then, you know, it's a big debate in the church. But it's simple.

The Bible says, if you're drunk and if these things pull you away from God, and that's how we can open ourselves up to demonic influence. Pharmacia, pharmakia, I believe it's in the Greek, opening ourselves up to these influence. So we have to be careful in this era of toxic substances.

Number two, what about a toxic environment? Is our home a holy sanctuary or a breeding ground for Satan? What environment are we inviting and having the enemy come into our homes? Or are we driving him away? Do you realize if you have things that honor Christ in your home and worship that honors Christ, you can push out that influence, that demonic influence, that oppression, by worship. You think you're in your house singing worthy is the Lamb, worthy is the Lamb, a man of sorrow smitten, beyond recognition, dying on a cross for my sins. You think the enemy's going to come and dwell in that presence? He can't.

He can't dwell in that presence. He has to flee from that presence. So what he tries to do is get you out of that presence so his influence can take hold.

I just went online this week and looked at the top ten videos that young adults are watching. Some of you are watching. This is interesting.

In Lady Gaga's newest video, don't worry, I didn't watch it, her newest video, Guy, I guess that's what it's called, we see the singer start off as a fallen angel who is shot down from the heavens. She then gets reborn as an over-sexualized goddess who uses her powers to create an army of clones using the blood

of Jesus Christ and of Gandhi and of Michael Jackson and those are the three people she resurrects from the dead. You're watching that garbage and you wonder why the Spirit of God is not residing in your heart.

You wonder why you're struggling with darkness and depression. Let's start there. Toxic environment.

Hello, folks. Ring the bell. Sound the alarm.

You cannot, light and darkness cannot dwell in the same house. That's blasphemy. You say, oh Shane, you're over these spiritual pastors obviously coming against the movies.

Read that garbage. That's straight from the pit of hell. And if we allow it into our minds and we create that environment, why are young adults, I've read research where they're thinking that suicide is an epidemic.

Depression, anti-medicine, all these things are on the rise. They're calling it an epidemic. We don't know what to do, they say.

We don't know what to do. When you don't know what to do, run to the one who has the answer. Stop feeding your mind a bunch of garbage and dwell on things that are pure and honest and noble and upright.

That's how you defeat the darkness. You're welcoming it into your house and into your soul. That's toxic environment.

And we see this all the time. Just think about this. What we put in here is who we are.

Do you realize that? What you're putting in here is who you are. Who I am all week is who I will be when I step up to this pulpit. This sermon just didn't come from a quick prayer this morning saying, Okay, Lord, let me put something together.

And who you are all week is who you are when you step into the game of life. Meditating on the Word of God. Living in the Word of God.

Living in books and media and things that build you up spiritually, not pull you down. Because all you have to do is open yourself. You open the door to the enemy.

You say, darkness, come on in. Look at all these horror shows. American Horror Story.

I'm behind somebody at Redbox. It's all the time they're pouring out all this horror stories. You're going to go home and watch that garbage? And expect to just have uplifting thoughts all night and in the morning and this great family life and great marriage and great relationship with your kids? No.

You're putting darkness and depression in. You're getting death out. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

He told the prophet Hosea, told the people, you've become an abomination like the thing you loved. That was to God's people. Hosea, calling God's people back.

You have become an abomination like the thing you loved. Yeah, this is a difficult message, but sometimes we need to bring out the difficult messages again and start shooting people right to the heart because young adults are hanging themselves. I had to pray for that man three weeks ago whose son took his life in a garage and a father had to go and cut his own son down in the garage.

This is not some game, folks. That's serious. I didn't even know how to pray for him.

How do you pray for that? You walk into the garage and you've got to cut your own son down. And we have the audacity to play with darkness as if it's some little toy from Toys R Us that we picked up for our kids. All these things, wizards and warlocks and darkness and the cult and illicit sex and vampires and kids, the Christian kids are just loving it.

And I'm called legalistic and a fundamentalist and narrow because I challenge these things? Do you think Christ or Paul and Peter would just come in our homes and love this stuff? Pull out the popcorn, guys. Good job. Wow, this is interesting.

Good witches, good warlocks, vampires, sucking blood, living off dead people. That's good stuff. I don't know.

Call me stupid, but if you've got a rise in suicide that they're calling an epidemic and depression and medication and all these different things and you have this darkness being glorified and magnified, you think there might be a connection? And then when you get people out of that, you get them into the purity of God's Word and they become a new person in Christ and they want to rebel. They hate that darkness. Where's the connection there? Because light and darkness, good and evil, truth and error cannot coexist.

You are either suppressing the darkness by living in the light or you're allowing your light to be extinguished by allowing the darkness to come in. Paul's crystal clear. We wrestle not against flesh and blood.

Our battle's here. Right here, folks. You can't go old school and beat somebody up.

You can't do jujitsu wrestling and beat somebody up. You can't do cage fighting and win. The enemy doesn't care.

He comes in as an angel of light looking subtle, looking nice and we take the bait. And this is the price that we're paying. I don't apologize for this message.

I wish more churches would preach it and this nation might experience revival. Well, Shane, that's pretty arrogant. No, it's not what I'm saying.

It's what God's Word says. Anytime you call God's people back to Him and they repent and they turn to Him and God revives His people, that's a good thing. That's a prayer we should be praying.

Lord, wilt Thou not revive Your people again so that we can rejoice in You? Nobody's rejoicing in the things of God anymore. We're rejoicing in darkness. We're rejoicing in satanic things.

Our families are being destroyed. Marriages are being broken up. Addiction is on the rise.

Everything is out of control. Then why don't you run to the One who has the answer and turn to Him? Hold the claps for the end of the sermon. Because He gets all the glory and all the credit.

I'm just a spokesman helping to call the church back. I haven't mastered this area. Sometimes I write movies for my kids and I'm like, what is that? Wow! I remember Disney with Old Yeller and now they're casting spells on every single thing.

Toxic emotions. No, I don't apologize. That's for sure.

Toxic emotions. What about this? Toxic emotions. These things are so dangerous that He'll lead you down to the bottom and you'll stay there because of them.

You'll stay in this funk and in this darkness and this depression because of this. Well, let's read it. James 3.14 But if you harbor bitter envy, if you harbor, if you hold bitter envy, are you envious of anybody? You go on Facebook, you'll be envious real quick.

Right? Somebody's always on vacation, always got a new thing, always doing this. You know, they're everywhere. They're doing everything that you can't do.

And me too. So this envy-ness. If you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.

Such wisdom, such thinking does not come down from heaven, but it is earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. So we allow the demonic influences to come in by our thought life. Shane, do you have more verses for that? Oh, absolutely.

Where do you even want to start? Paul told the church in Rome, be not conformed to this world. It's like a lump of clay I have right here. Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

That's it. Don't get a checklist, don't get another Bible, don't get some book on tape, don't go to therapists, don't do this. Let the Word of God saturate your mind and your soul.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are pure and noble and honest and upright, meditate on these things. Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. That's all.

Paul, is there anything else? No, there's nothing else. Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. That you may prove what is that good and acceptable perfect will of God.

Any of you want to know what the will of God is? Get your mind off of the garbage and get your mind into the true light of God's Word. Into things that are pure and honest and noble and upright. And if this message is upsetting you, you need to hear this.

If you want me to hurry up and you want to get out of here, this message is for you. Many people are in here going, amen, yeah, I agree. But some of you are going, this guy is really irritating me.

How dare he say these things? And I say, no, how dare you sir, continue to run from the very thing you need. That's how important this is. Conviction is a wonderful gift from God.

It's a conviction that says, you're wrong. Turn around. You're wrong.

Turn around. I'm knocking at your door. Open it.

Would you turn around? What do we say? No! I love the darkness. Get away from me. That's why this is so important.

Toxic environment. Toxic emotions. According to Ephesians 4.7, Satan tries to gain a foothold and exert his influence over the lives of Christians through uncontrolled anger.

Every domestic call out there, ask any sheriff worth their salt, they'll tell you. Where does it start? With anger? Or was it with the husband saying, I'm so sorry. I was wrong.

Can we talk this over tonight? No. Uncontrolled anger. Domestic violence.

Abuse. All these things happen because of anger. The enemy, you open that up and that enemy comes in and he just works on that anger and that driving us away from Christ as well as falsehood, lies, stealing, unwholesome talk, indeed any conduct that is characteristic of the old way of life.

So anytime I embrace or you embrace the characteristics of the world and our attitudes and our emotions, that's what the enemy is going to use to draw us away. It's not rocket science. Right? You know I say this often.

This is very simple. What comes in here goes out here. What comes in here goes out here.

For out of the abundance of my heart my mouth is going to speak. Jesus said. I should have checked that.

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak. Toxic thoughts. Those are the same as emotions.

Romans 8.6 in the NIV. The mind that is governed by the flesh is death but the mind that is governed by the spirit is life and peace. You know that word governed, right? Controlled.

The mind that is controlled by the flesh is death. So if your mind if your flesh is controlling your mind you love to just sit and dwell in darkness you love to just sit and get upset and bitter and gossip if your mind is sitting on that, that's what's governing it, controlling it that's where it's going to go. But the mind that is governed by the spirit is life and peace.

So you have a distinction there. It's all up here. We don't realize how how masterfully this is made.

How God created us to absorb and to retain and to memorize and then to assimilate that information and make decisions based on it. It's amazing. So the battlefield is right here.

Before adultery happens, guess what happens? Before a church splits guess what happens? Falsehood, lies, doubts. Before something happens, it's all right here. This is where the enemy comes in.

And you will not win this battle with willpower or manipulation. Let me say that again. You will not win this battle with the enemy with willpower.

Have you ever done that? I'm just going to never again. I'm just going to hunker down. It's willpower.

You know what happens in a few days? Right? He just takes you down again because willpower is enough. So what's enough? Well, I'm glad you asked. This is where I wanted to get to last week, but I didn't get to it.

So I wanted to do it this week. The whole armor of God. We have to put on the whole armor of God.

Ephesians 6.10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God.

Not little pieces. Right? Oh, I got this, but I'm going to neglect everything else. Oh, I've got this, but I'm going to neglect everything else.

I've got my belt of truth, but that's it. 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 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 stand in the evil day and having done all, stand. See, that's the interesting thing about the armor of God. He doesn't necessarily fight and do this.

He says, having done all, stand. Having done everything, just stand. Stand, therefore, with your loins girded about with truth.

Does that sound familiar? He told Moses, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Joshua, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Hezekiah, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

King David, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Elisha, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. I will judge those prophets of Baal.

Just stand still. It's in a standing position that's how we wage war. Remember, it's standing.

It's holding that ground versus getting a little closer to that edge. Getting a little closer and here I go. That's how it works.

Verse 14, stand, therefore, having gird your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. Wow.

Whew. What does that mean? Anybody asking that question? That's a lot of armor. It is, but really it's not.

It all is joined together. Think about that. You can't just have the belt of truth.

I know the truth, but I'm not going to apply it. I'm not going to put on the breastplate of righteousness. I'm not going to have the shield.

It's everything together. Let me work through this, but let me talk about the first thing. Put on.

Believers do not empower themselves. Paul says, put on the whole armor of God. You've got to ask God, Lord, I need you to put on this armor.

I need to put this on. I can't empower myself. I can't save myself.

I can't fight myself. Lord, this is your battle. And the whole armor of God, everything.

The enemy looks for cracks or missing pieces. I know many people who know this very well, but they're modern day Pharisees. They have truth, but they don't have the breastplate of righteousness.

They don't have the shield of faith. They have an arrogant faith. And as we know, an arrogant faith is no faith at all.

So we have to be careful in this area. Stand against the wiles of the devil. So we're putting this on.

It's the whole armor, not just pieces. And we're standing against the wiles. You know what wiles is? Trickery.

It's deceit. He's tricking us. He's going to come in and trick somehow.

Like fishing, right? You just put a nice big worm on that hook. Throw it out there. Oh, look at that nice worm.

Ow! What happened? Every year my kids like to throw out just the hook. They've never caught a fish yet. I don't want to put any bait on, Dad.

I don't want to touch a worm. Just let me throw out a hook. Okay, go for it.

That's fine. You've got four poles out there with just hooks only. But why aren't they catching anything? The hook's there.

The hook's right there. Just fish swim right by it. They don't catch anything because they can see the hook.

They see that metal. It doesn't look too enticing. That looks hard and sharp and I'm not going to bite it.

So that's why you put nice purple stuff around it that smells the smell that fish like and worms and all the stuff. Put little lures that go through the water like this and they sparkle and then they bite it and then they're hooked. So that's what the wiles of the devil are.

It looks pretty good. But Shana, look good. Yeah.

He's an angel of light. He transforms himself into an angel of light to deceive. He doesn't come in holding a pitchfork with little horns and a tail.

He comes in as everything you want. Ask people who the marriage has ended from adultery. But this other person made me feel so loved and appreciated.

They just looked good. Shame. How can something be so good be so wrong? How? Because that's the hook.

You don't take the bait unless you like the hook. I want to just before I get into the points on this, I want to read 2 Corinthians 12 7. This is Paul. He was taken up to heaven, had received a vision from the Lord.

And then he said this, So to keep me from being conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in my flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me and to keep me from becoming conceited. Can you believe that? A messenger of Satan was sent to Paul to harass him and to keep him from being conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this.

He said, no, my grace is sufficient for you. For my power, here's the key, my power is made perfect in your weakness. Therefore, Paul says, I will boast all the more gladly of my weakness so that the power of Christ might rest upon me.

See, the way in Christianity to go up is to go down. The way to be strengthened is to be weakened. Because it's in that weakened state that you say, Lord, I need you.

I can't do this. That's when the filling of the Spirit comes in. That's when the empowerment of the Spirit comes in.

It's in that weakness. It reminds me of my little one-year-old. She's barely starting to walk and I'll bring home some groceries and she'll just grab the bag and she can't pull it anywhere.

There's nothing. She's not strong enough. But what I say is let me hold you.

I lift you up and I lift up the bag of groceries. Now let's go in the kitchen. See, in her submission into that weakness, as she allowed the loving arms of a father to carry her, that's where the strength came from.

In the same way with you guys, it's in that weakness of saying, Lord, I can't overcome this. Lord, I have an addiction. Lord, I have a problem with anger, with lust.

Whatever it is, Lord, in my weakness that's where you are strong. And in the power of Christ, when we cry out and say, I can't do this, Lord. I need you.

That's weakness. Weakness. In a good way though, it's also meekness.

It's being meek and understanding that, Lord, I need you. This is why fasting is so beneficial. We've talked about fasting sometimes.

Fasting is when you starve the flesh and you fill up the Spirit of God. It's a weakness, Lord. I love food.

I'm craving food. But in this weakness, Lord, would you fill me with your Spirit? Would you allow your Spirit to penetrate my heart and my soul? Lord, I can't make it through this, but you can. Would you strengthen me? So it's an interesting concept.

As we weaken ourselves, he strengthens us. That's what Paul says here too. God's grace is sufficient for my power is made perfect in weakness.

Because when I have my own strength, God's power doesn't resign. Because I'm going to do it my way. This is my schedule.

This is the way I do things. Pride gets in there. No, I can handle this.

I don't need you, God, right now. I'll call you when I need you, but I don't need you right now. That's false strength.

That's insecurity also. So let's look at the first thing before we have to leave. Gird with truth.

Truth holds everything together, does it not? So if you want to overcome the enemy, you better live in this like a fish lives in the sea. You better know what the Word of God says because this is the truth that holds everything together. Truth is a hill on which we must die.

You can't compromise this. It's not negotiable. This holds everything together.

So one way to keep the enemy at bay is this is the truth. The belt of truth. That's how you hold it together.

And then he goes into the gospel of peace. It's interesting. He says to shod your feet.

Cover your feet. Roman soldiers would cover their feet on the bottom. They would have nails.

They would hold their feet in for positioning. So they can fight with their swords and all these things. They can hold their ground better.

And that's what the gospel does. The gospel of peace. And I would just tell some of you right now, if you don't have peace tonight, it might be because you're distant from God.

You don't know Him. You've never repented of your sin. Acknowledge Him.

The Bible says if you confess that Christ is Lord and that God had raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. That's the gospel. It's not well this and God do this.

If you cry in your weakness, in your weakness, that's when his strength will be manifest. The weakness says Lord, I'm a sinner and I need a savior. Would you save me tonight? This guy up there is a little loud.

He's a little radical, but I'm not looking to him. I'm looking to you. I'm just supposed to point you to him and get out of the way.

So if you don't have that peace, you can leave here with that peace, that forgiveness. I see it all the time. People come depressed and they come fearful and they say, I need God.

And when they finally submit and surrender their life to God, there's this overwhelming peace, this overwhelming joy. They can't keep back tears. Where does that come from? Because it's a spiritual battle and you've been playing with Satan too long.

It's time to come to the Father. It's time to come home. So to have the truth of God's Word, then you must have the gospel of peace.

You must be a believer. But contextually, it's talking about holding, having the gospel. The gospel holds you in place.

But also, I look at this as an outlet. You are called and I'm called to bring the gospel of peace to others, to live it out, to be ministering. What's the old saying? Idle hands are the devil's playground, devil's tool, you know, whatever you want to call it.

Idle hands are not good. The devil loves when you're idle. Right? Most guys, when I interview guys and talk to guys about pornography, this huge epidemic, it's during idle times.

Idle times. You're sitting at home, nothing to do, and the devil just comes in. Bam! Or same thing with lust or anger or women.

Same issues, right? He comes in, he looks for those times when we're idle hands. So as we're bringing the gospel of peace to others, as we're ministering to others, as we're keeping busy about the Lord's Word, that's an area of protection. We weren't just called to receive it all, and I'm just going to hold all this truth in.

We're called to minister to others. That's where the power of the Spirit comes into us. We're ministering to others as we're helping.

You don't know what to do? Talk to the ushers or the elders. They'll plant you in somewhere easily. Because we have too many people needing help and not enough people to help.

And that's one of the ways the enemy stays at bay when you're serving others. I don't know how exactly it works, but as you're serving others, you're embracing truth, the gospel of peace is controlling your life. There's safety and protection there.

And the next thing is the shield of faith. Arrows are coming. You realize that, right? Arrows are coming.

The enemy is bringing arrows. He's shooting arrows. Most commentators would say that those are temptations.

He's shooting temptations at you. And it's the shield of faith. It's that protection.

I hide underneath the shield of faith. My faith will be tested. Faith is so important that Jesus told Peter, He said, Peter, I'm praying for you.

Why, Lord? Because Satan has called you by name and he desires to sift you as wheat. I don't like that verse. Mike, Chris, Bob, Linda, Bill, put your name in there.

Jesus says he's praying for you. Because Satan has called for you. He wants to sift you like wheat.

And Jesus said, but I pray that your faith fail thee not. Having done all, stand. Stand there.

Stand therefore with your loins girded about with truth, all the weapons on, and the shield of faith blocking the fiery darts of the enemy. You must understand something. Faith is either built up or it's in digression.

It's like sin. Sin never stands still, right? Sin is either growing or it's withering, depending on whether you feed or starve it. Same thing with faith.

Your faith is either building and building and being encouraged or it's being weakened and weakened and weakened by everything we've just been talking about. What about the breastplate of righteousness? The breastplate of righteousness. If you have your Bibles, turn to 2 Corinthians.

Hope I can find it real quick. Or I can just read it for you. 2 Corinthians 6.14. On this issue of righteousness.

Here's how important righteousness is. Verse 14. Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

Now this is not just marriage. This is in general. Partnerships.

Who do you spend your time with? He's saying here should Christ be joined together with Satan? Of course the principle is primarily marriage but applies to other areas as well. Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. And that's a good word for young adults.

Do you have friendships with those who draw you away from Christ? That's not a good thing. Well, I'm ministering to them. Well, no you're not.

If you're being drawn away from Christ, they're pulling you down. There's a big difference there. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Baal? Or what part of a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you yourself are the temple of the living God.

And God has said I will dwell in them and walk among them and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Therefore, Paul says, therefore come out from among them and be separate says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean and I will receive you.

I will be a father to you and you shall be my sons and my daughters says the Lord Almighty. Therefore having these promises beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God. See holiness is something we don't want to talk about in the church anymore.

But holiness is vital. This isn't me like with some big robe on and a little hat like the Pope you see. That's not holiness.

Holiness is being set apart for God in our lifestyle. How we live, how we act. Come out from among them, be separate.

Be separate from what you watch and what you view, who you associate with, how you spend your time. There's a distinction. There's a difference.

If there's no distinction, if we look just like the world, this is a call to come out from among them, be separate. That's a breastplate of righteousness. It guards the heart.

It guards the mind. It guards everything that holiness because holiness is being set apart for God. I'm going to live back here.

I'm going to live in such a way that my life is set apart. Though I drift, he'll pull me back. Though I want to go forward, that holy standard will keep me back.

That's what holiness is all about. Serving God with all of our mind, with all of our soul, with all of our heart. And that's what the breastplate of righteousness is.

So when he calls us to truth, he calls us to this, he calls us to put on the breastplate of righteousness. How many of us have things in our lives right now that God is dealing with us saying get rid of that, get away, get that out of your life. It's taking you down.

End that relationship. End that friendship. Stop doing that.

You need to put on the breastplate of righteousness because you're giving the enemy grounds and room for attack. That's how important this is. This area of holiness.

And it's not an arrogant holiness. It's a broken, humble holiness. Because some people take pride in how holy they are.

And the enemy says, oh I love that one. I'm setting him up for a biggie. Is he not? That's how important this area of holiness and submission is.

The next point, the helmet of salvation. The helmet of salvation. When we repent and we believe on the only name that saves and we are saved, that helmet of salvation covers our mind from fear and doubt, anxiety.

Doesn't mean we don't struggle with those things now and then, right? Who doesn't? Many people do. But that helmet of salvation keeps everything together, keeps our mind in perfect peace. Who's steadfast on Christ.

In the Scripture we looked at last week with Jesus. When he got out of the boat to the city of the Gadarenes and this demonic man came to him and ran to him and said Jesus, what have I got to do with you? You son of the most high God. And Jesus says, what is your name? The man said, my name is Legion.

Because I have many demons within me. What'd Jesus say? Oh, darn it. Uh oh.

I opened up a can of worms on this one. Let's get back in the boat. Is that what we would do? Wow.

If you went up to somebody and they said, my name is Legion. I'm possessed by seven devils. What would you do? Several devils.

Because it happens. You think he just backed up? He came towards the man and he said, leave. Leave.

That simple. Leave. That's why when people can be released of these shackles of demonic oppression or possession or whatever you want to call it.

One name. The name of Jesus Christ. Demons have to flee.

They can't negotiate. They can't bark. Sometimes there's difficulty there.

But not with Jesus. He just said, out of that man. Well, Master, don't throw us into the abyss.

Can we just go into the herd of swine and run them over the cliff? Sure. Go for it. So, I guess demons can possess animals, apparently.

I'm not saying that, okay? Don't you come up and say anything. It's just interesting how they flee into the swine. They run off the side of the cliff.

The people say, oh my God, who's this guy? And then they ask Jesus to leave. You know that hasn't changed? Some of people, even in this room, might be saying, Jesus, leave. Get out of here.

I don't like what this guy is saying. I don't want him to disturb my darkness because I love it. And we can embrace that ungodly influence.

And Christ can have no ground. But the whole point I was getting on with this area of peace, after Jesus spoke, he's just powerful. Leave that man.

This is the same Jesus who told Lazarus, Lazarus, come forth. A little girl, get up and rise. She's dead.

They're mocking the Savior. Jesus says, she's not dead. She's just sleeping.

And they mocked Him. Talith haKumai, arise, little girl. And she woke.

She got up out of death. That's the Christ you serve, people. This isn't some lukewarm social club where we come to say hello.

This is where we come and we worship the risen Savior. After the man met Christ, the Bible records that he was sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in His right mind. That's how powerful Christ is.

Can you believe it? Absolutely. With every soul of my being. Wherever Jesus goes.

And He said, the same power that resides in Christ resides in you. Well, why don't I raise people from the dead or people get healed? Well, because we're not perfect. We have this sinful, fallen nature.

We don't know the sovereignty of God. But don't let that discount the power of Christ in your life. This is spiritual battle.

And the enemy hates it. It's like I shared last week. People said, you know, there's witches hexing your church and going out and doing pagan practices in the desert.

Cursing West Side Christian fellowship. I don't lose any sleep about that. I want to say, yeah, exactly right.

The kingdom suffered violence and the violent taken by force. It's a disruption there of the spiritual realm. They're not going to like this kind of stuff.

They need salvation. The very thing they need is the very thing they're mocking. Satan has to sit under Christ's control.

Satan can't do whatever he wants. He cannot curse what God has blessed. If God is doing a blessed work, Satan cannot curse it.

So what he'll come and do, he'll influence. He'll try to pull you away from God. But he says, I can't curse what God has blessed.

But I will take the blessed people and remove them from the blessed place. Doctrine of Balaam through sexual immorality and idolatry. See, he just pulls them away from God.

Let me pull them away from God. I can't curse them. They're blessed as long as they stay in that blessed place.

But let me curse. Let me have them curse themselves. And they'll pull him back into whatever that was.

And he'll just keep. Let me get. Come on.

You know, remember that game patty cake? Come on. See, come on. That wasn't too bad.

That's how he does it. We remove ourselves from that blessed place. As a nation, they're a sanctity in the marriage of a man and a woman.

Now we're wanting to legalize what God calls an abomination. Oh, Shane, come on. No, I'm serious.

Any time you move that safety and that covering of what God designed it, you're opening yourself up for deception. That's how he works. This isn't difficult.

And you guys know, what's wonderful about preaching is the Holy Spirit is preaching a different sermon to each of you. Somebody over here needs to get off pills. Somebody over here needs to get off pornography.

Somebody over here needs to get off this. And somebody else this. But you know, God's working you in different ways.

He's calling you back to the area of holiness and relying on the only name that saves you. It's okay to say, Jesus, I need you. Christ, I need you.

I'm going through so much fear and anxiety and depression. Lord, I need you. That's a very healthy thing.

And then, of course, we're to pick up the sword of the Spirit. This is interesting. This is the only weapon you're called to fight back with.

Your lamp. Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. This is how I do battle.

Everything else is protection. But this is how I do battle. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church.

Wives, respect your husbands. Kids, honor your parents. If we do things according to the Word of God, that's where the sword is.

The enemy can't do that. He can't come against God's Word. He can only try to.

But it's up to us to keep that standard there. And again, I don't want anybody to leave here thinking I'm talking about being perfect and never blowing it. You know, life is difficult.

Life is challenging. But there's a big difference between a lifestyle and a struggle. There's a big difference between perfection and being faithful and calling on God.

That's why genuine repentance, if genuine repentance was taking place, during worship tonight, you would be turned around and in your chairs. You would be crying out to God. You would be worshiping Him.

You would be running to the back prayer area to get prayer. Because that's how important the area of getting our heart right with God is. But then the interesting thing is He doesn't end there.

What's the last thing He says? In praying always. I've noticed this in the Christian community especially. The thing we need the most is the thing we do the least.

The least. If I said I'll meet people here at 6 in the morning tomorrow for a prayer meeting, how many people do you think would be here? Let's just be honest. That's it.

Prayer is the most important thing you can do. Here's why. Prayer brings it all in together.

This is where the truth is reinforced in the prayer closet. This is where peace is present when you pray. This is where faith is exercised when I pray.

This is where righteousness is sought when I pray because repentance takes place. Salvation is reinforced when I pray. The sword of the Spirit is sharpened when I pray.

You see how all this comes together? Paul says to put on all this but at the end of the day, having done all stand and pray. John Wesley, that quote earlier, give me a hundred men or women of course who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God and we will storm the gates of hell. Can I add to that? Give me

a hundred men or women who pray as if their lives depended on it.

Who prayed as if their families depended on it. Because it does. This should be the most important time in the service.

I'm going to have the worship team come up right now. But this should be the most important part of the service right now. Because you can leave here, look at the powerpoint oh look at those songs and lyrics blah blah yeah Shane that's interesting now what's for dinner? And nothing's going to change.

Nothing's going to change. This is the most important area that we can do. I've seen it many times, you know I've shared this before, I've talked to people who struggle with fear depression all these things and I ask them tell me about your prayer life.

They don't have one. There's no prayer life. Marriages that are falling apart.

You think they have a strong prayer life? People that are succumbing to temptation and demonic influence and their lives being ruined, you think they have a strong prayer life? Young adults that are walking away from Christ, you think they have a strong prayer life? Everything ties in right here. People, if you pray better you would live better, if you live better you would pray better. Prayer moves the hand of God.

Prayer moves the hand of God. Everything I just talked about in the heart would say Lord I need that or some of you might need salvation, some of you need to get back in right relationship with God some of you need to repent of wrong attitude. This is where it happens, it doesn't just happen thinking about it, oh that's a good idea, I think I better consider that.

No, it happens when the men and women finally submit and surrender and pray and allow God to change their heart. This is the most important service, this isn't well let's just throw in a few songs and we'll be done. True praying we would be here till 9 or 10 tonight.

True praying, where God's reviving and breaking the heart. But because we're so hurry, worried about what's for dinner and getting out of here, we got plans and we always miss what God wants to do in our lives. Take 2 or 3 hours in the morning and nothing but God, you'll be radically changed.

But most people say I'm too busy. That's the number one excuse, I'm too busy. If you're too busy for God, you're too busy.

Something needs to change.

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