

What Is Spiritual Warfare

by Stephen Kaung

Stephen Kaung's sermon on spiritual warfare emphasizes the reality of the unseen spiritual realm and the believer's need for God's armor to engage in this ongoing battle against evil forces.

Duration: 1:10:26

Scripture: Genesis 1:3, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Ephesians 6:10-19

Topics: "Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by discussing the spiritual warfare that believers face. He emphasizes that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces. The preacher highlights the power of God's weapons in this warfare, which can overthrow strongholds and bring every thought into obedience to Christ. He then moves on to discuss the creation of the earth and the restoration that God brought about after it was covered in darkness and water. The preacher emphasizes that everything physical is controlled by the spiritual, and that the unseen reality is more important than what is visible. He concludes by urging believers to be watchful and to recognize that the real battle is fought in the heavenly realms.

Transcript

Will you please turn to Ephesians, the letter to the Ephesians, chapter 6, we'll read from verse 10 to verse 19. Ephesians, chapter 6, verse 10. For the rest, brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the might of his strength.

Put on the panoply of God, the complete armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the artifice of the devil, because our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against principalities, against authorities, against the universal lords of the darkness, against spiritual power of weakness in the heavenlies. For this reason, take to you the panoply of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having accomplished all things, to stand. Stand, therefore, having girt about your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and shod your feet with the preparation of the glad tidings of peace.

Besides all these, having taken the shield of faith, with which ye will be able to quench all the inflamed darts of the wicked one. Have also the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word. Praying at all seasons, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching unto this very thing with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, and for me, in order that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the glad tidings.

Second Corinthians, chapter ten. We begin with verse three. Verse three through verse five.

For walking in flesh, we do not walk according to flesh. For the arms of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful according to God. To the overthrow of strongholds, overthrowing reasonings and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God, and leading captive every thought unto the obedience of the Christ.

Let's have a further word of prayer. Dear Lord, as we gather together unto thy name, we have the assurance that thou art in our midst. We praise and thank thee, even though these are evil days.

And yet, thou art on the throne. We do come and ask that thou will give us spiritual intelligence, that we may know our time, that we may know thy will. Lord, it is our prayer that thou will take us up and make us vessels and instruments in thy own hand.

We pray that thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And may thy name be hallowed. Lord, we commit this time into thy hands.

Our sufficiency is in thee. We ask thee that thou will grant us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of God. We ask in thy precious name.

Amen. The theme of this time is spiritual warfare. Now in order to understand spiritual warfare, I think first of all, we need to recognize that there is a spiritual world.

You know, we are accustomed to our physical world, to the things that are seen. And in a sense, we take it for granted that this is all that is about. We live in this physical world, we touch physical things, and sometimes we think that that's all.

I think this is one of the greatest deceptions in the world. Because there is a spiritual world, a world that is unseen, and yet it is very real. We can say that it is more real than the physical.

Everything that is physical is in a sense being controlled by that which is spiritual. What you can see is just appearance, but the reality is the unseen. You know, to the people of this world, because their eyes are blinded by the God of this world.

So all they can see is the physical world. They live in it, they seek it, they think that they can live according to what they desire. But the scripture says, in Ephesians chapter 2 verse 1, it says you, dead, in iniquity and in sin, who once walked according to the age of this world, according to the rule of authority in the air.

The spirit that works in the heart of the sons of disobedience. So outwardly you will find people are walking in this world according to the age of this world. That is according to the fashion, the current of this cosmos, this world.

Outwardly it seems that everybody is able to do whatever he or she wants to do. And yet the word tells us that actually it is walking according to the rule of the authority in the air. The evil spirits that work in the hearts of the disobedient ones.

So brothers and sisters, once we were sons of disobedience, once we thought that we live according to what we desire, and yet unknowingly we are actually under the control of the evil spirits. And we do not know that. But thank God, being under that kind of rulership, we suffer so much, until we cry out for deliverance.

You know, just like the children of Israel. They live in Egypt, they were under the rulership of Pharaoh, and they were put under hard labors. And more than that, they were even deprived of the hope of living.

And only under that kind of oppression, they cry out for deliverance. And that is exactly what happened to each one of us. And thank God he heard the cry of our hearts.

He saved us. He forgave us our sins. But brothers and sisters, when we are saved, it is more than just a matter of having our sins being forgiven.

And that's great, once we were so burdened with our sins. And yet, as we look at the Lord Jesus, that burden rolled away. It's a happy day.

But dear brothers and sisters, you find that the Lord has done much more than that. Because not only he has forgiven our sins, but actually he has delivered us out of the power of darkness. And translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.

Now, often times we do not realize that. We only think of what happened to us. How we feel about it.

Once we were so laid down with sins, and yet he has freed us. Forgetting that there is something much more that has happened. Actually, the Lord, at the moment when we believe in the Lord Jesus, he has delivered us out of the power of darkness.

Before that we were in darkness. We were under the power of darkness. But he has delivered us.

And not only that, he has actually translated us, transported us out of darkness, out of that power, into the kingdom of the Son of his love. We not only live in a physical world, but we also live in a spiritual world. We not only live in the world that is seen, but also in the world that is unseen.

Now in this world, on this earth, you have many kingdoms. But in the spiritual world, it is only divided into two kingdoms. One is the power of darkness.

The other is the kingdom of the Son of God's love. One is the satanic kingdom. And the other is God's kingdom.

And though these two kingdoms are at war, this war is fought on the earth. This war is centered upon human beings such as we are. Now in order to understand this spiritual war, I think it is important for us to know the history of it.

So bear with me, those who have known, you need to be reminded. And those who do not know, you need to know. You know, as you open the Bible, in Genesis 1 verse 1 it is said, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

In this creation, the highest of God's created beings are the angels. They might be the first created, because when you read Job 38, it is said, when God lays the foundation of the earth, the morning stars sing together, and the sons of God shout for joy. Now the angels are called morning stars.

Why? Because they may be the first created. They are called the sons of God, because they are created by God. Sons by creation, not sons by birth.

So maybe in the first creation, the angels are the first created and they are the highest in that creation. The angels are ministering servants. They are created to minister unto God.

They are to worship God. They are to serve God's will. And we believe, when God created, it must be perfect.

So in that creation, you find that the angels led the whole creation in worship and in praising God. There was peace, there was harmony, and God was glorified in all things. Now we do not know how long this situation, conditions, continue on.

But we do know, in Genesis chapter 1 verse 2, the earth became waste and empty. When God created, it must be perfect. God created for habitation, not for chaos, not for emptiness.

But somehow you find, one day, the earth became a waste, ruined, empty, without purpose. We find some hints in the word of God. Now God does not tell us the details, because He does not want to satisfy our curiosity.

He just tells us what we need to know. But somehow you find, from Isaiah chapter 14 verse 12 to verse 15, and then Ezekiel chapter 28 verse 12 to verse 29, you do find some hints of what had happened in the first world. Now among the created beings, the first and the foremost is Lucifer, the brilliant star.

Lucifer is an archangel. He was created with such beauty and perfection. He was endowed by God with such talents, and he was placed in such high position.

He was an anointed covering cherub. That is, he was a cherub that covers the throne of God. He was very musical, and probably he led the angelic host to sing praises unto God.

And the day when he was created, he was perfect. But unfortunately, as his trade, that is, his work began to increase, unrighteousness was found in him. There rose in his heart a pride.

He was not contented to be above all and under one. He wanted to be equal with God. And in Isaiah 14, five times he mentioned the word, I. In other words, he should be conscious only of God, of his Creator, and be thankful.

And yet, he turned his eyes upon himself, upon his own beauty, forgetting who adorned him with such beauty. He began to look at his own talent, forgetting who gave him the talents. He began to look at his own position and power, forgetting who put him there.

He turned to himself. Brothers and sisters, that is the origin of sin. When that angel turned away from God and unto himself, he wanted to be equal.

There was violence, there was unrighteousness, and because of that, he was banished from the mountain. And while he was banished from heaven, one third of the enchanted beings followed him in rebellion against God. And the dominion that God had put under his rule was judged and entered into waste and emptiness.

So we feel that probably our universe was put under the dominion of this archangel. And when he was judged, all that was under his dominion entered into judgment. So you find that our earth was filled, covered with waters and darkness over the whole earth.

Then in Genesis chapter 1 verse 3, thank God, he would not allow this situation to last forever. In his love and mercy, you find the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the deep. The Spirit of God is like a hen brooded over the eggs, put its womb upon the eggs, and try to bring forth a birth.

So brothers and sisters, we find that out of the great love of God, he began to restore, repair this ruined earth into a habitable. And that's what you find in Genesis chapter 1 verse 3 onward. And in this creation, God decided to create man.

Man was not created in the first creation. Man was created in the second one. And on the sixth day, in other words, God has repaired, recovered this earth to be habitable.

For whom? For man. That he was going to create. So God created man in his own image, according to his likeness.

And God gave dominion to man, to rule over the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field and the fishes of the sea. Brothers and sisters, do you know that God created you according to his image and in his likeness? And did you ever inquire why should God do that? When God created angels, he did not create them according to his image. Man is the only one that God created according to his own image and after his own likeness.

And God gave dominion. In other words, God took away that which was given to Lucifer in the ages before. Take away that dominion and put it in the hands of man.

Man was to rule this earth. Man was to bring the all created beings back to God. That is our mission.

You know, it is very easy for God. He can destroy Satan by his breath. But that will not bring glory to God.

You know, for a grown up man to beat a baby, that's ugly. So for the glory of God, he created man who is lower, a little lower than the angels. Now he creates the order.

We are lower than the angels. Why the spirit? The angels are spirits. They can be everywhere.

But we have a body. We are confined. We are limited.

And we are not as intellectual as the spirits, as the angels. We are made a little inferior than the angels. And yet, God can use the inferior to defeat the superior.

Now that is the wisdom of God. You know, in heaven there was no war. Well, in the air, yes.

But not in heaven, in the third heaven. Even when Lucifer and his angels rebelled, there was no war. He was just dismissed, banished.

And judged. The real spiritual war began with man. And then brothers and sisters, God put Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden.

God gave him command to watch and to kill. To subdue all things. That is to bring everything back to the feet of God.

That is man's responsibility. And Satan knew about it. So you'll find the war began.

Unfortunately, Adam and Eve were not watchful. So Satan slipped in, in the form of a serpent. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve should be together.

But somehow they were separated. And the enemy got the chance to tempt Eve. And eventually you'll find Adam and Eve fell into the trap of Satan.

Instead of obeying God, they followed the footsteps of the fallen angel. They thought of themselves. If I take the forbidden tree, I will be as God.

I will have my eyes open. I will be so intelligent. I do not need God anymore.

I'm God myself. The same principle of sin. And in doing that, not only man fell into rebellion and fell into sin.

But man lost his dominion. He handed over what God had entrusted him to the adversary of God. Brothers and sisters, it is more than a matter of man's sin.

In sinning, man lost his dominion. And gave that dominion that God has given to him. Handed it over to the one whom God had taken away from.

Satan by deception deceived Eve. And got hold of the dominion of this world. Therefore you'll find he is called the ruler of this world.

The prince of this world. Not by right, but by deception. He becomes a usurper of this world.

And he organized this created world into a system, a cosmos. Using that system to oppose God. And unfortunately, man became his helper.

So in Adam, that dominion was lost. I think it is very clear. When a lion comes to you and you say, sit.

It won't listen to you. It jumps on you. You have lost your dominion.

But thank God. God did not give up. You may think that in the Garden of Eden, God lost the battle.

But God still wins the war. He was patient. He was working.

Until at the fullness of time, he brings in the last Adam. The second man. The second man came to the fight.

God's own son became man. Took upon himself the form of a man. He lived on this earth as a man.

Satan tried to tempt him to act as God. If you are the son of God. Of course he is.

You can turn the stone into bread. Because you are hungry. And yet our Lord Jesus stood as a man.

As a man. The second man. He defeated the enemy.

On Calvary's cross. Satan felt that he has won the victory. He has put this man away.

Not knowing that. On Calvary's cross. His head.

It is finished. The victory is won. And by this man.

And those who are in him. God's will. Will be done.

We do not yet see all things being brought under his feet. But we see Jesus. So dear brothers and sisters.

The victory. Was won. And yet the war goes on.

So actually the spiritual warfare. That we are in is the mopping up business. Now as we mentioned.

Before we believe in the Lord Jesus. There was no spiritual warfare to talk about. We were so blinded.

We saw only the physical. The earthly. And we are all in the grip.

Of the enemy. He could do whatever he liked with us. We thought we are free.

That is the greatest deception. We were not free. We were under the rulership.

Of the authority of the air. The power of darkness. There was no war.

But once we are saved. That war begins. In Christ.

There is victory. But in Adam. There is defeat.

So what the enemy has been trying to do is. We who have been translated. Into Christ.

He tried to draw us out of Christ. And back to Adam. Because whenever he is able to entice us.

To go back. To Adam. That is to live according to our flesh.

And not according to the spirit. He has every ground. Over us.

And that is the way he tried to fight. Abiding in Christ. Is the secret.

Of victory. Now in this war. You know when you have the first world war.

And the second world war. You have countries. That claim neutrality.

But in this spiritual warfare. There is no neutrality. You are either.

On this side. Or on the other side. You are either with the Lord.

Or you are with the enemy. If we love the world. We are in enmity.

With God. James chapter 4 verse 4. Love not the world. Nor the things of this world.

Because if you love the world. The love of the Father is not in you. First John chapter 2. There is no neutrality.

Brothers and sisters. Do you know that we are. On a war.

Our lives is. On war footing. Are we watchful.

And alert. Now I think. In order to.

Understand this spiritual warfare. Maybe we will. Use the children of Israel.

As an illustration. Because. What was.
What is written. Is for. Our admonition.
For us who live. At the end of the time. When God delivered the children of Israel.
Out of Egypt. In Exodus chapter 13. You find.
God does not lead them. Into Canaan. By the way of the Philistines.
Which is the shorter way. The direct way. But instead.
He led them out. By a roundabout way. Through the Red Sea.
Why. Because. God knew his people.
God said if. They go by the way of the Philistines. Which is.
The land. When they met. Conflict.
War. They will be so discouraged. They can go back to Egypt.
So God does not lead them that way. But instead God let them throw. The Red Sea.
Into the wilderness. And brothers and sisters. You find this is exactly.
In principle. The way that God is leading us. When you first believe in the Lord Jesus.
When you are first saved. You will go through a period. As if there is no conflict.
And thank God. You know in our first love. There is no conflict.
You are just saved. You are full of gratitude. You love the Lord.
You love the brothers and sisters. You do not know them too well yet. No conflict.
You love to read. You love to read the word of God. You love to pray.
You love to witness for the Lord. You love to meet with the brothers and sisters. Seek the Lord together.
There seems to be nothing too hard. Then. You go through the wilderness.
You know the wilderness experience. So far as the word of God shows us. The children of Israel.
God led them through the wilderness. To Mount Sinai. Give them the law.
And the tabernacle. And then lead them on. From Mount Sinai.
To the border. Southern border. Of the promised land is only 11 days journey.
So in other words. Two years. Will be enough.
To walk 40 years. Because of their unbelief. Now what is the wilderness experience.

To us. You find in Deuteronomy chapter 8. God.

Revealed. To the children of Israel. What the wilderness experience.

Means. He said in the wilderness. I test you.

I prove you. To know what is in your heart. Whether you really.

Keep the commandment of God or not. There I humble you. I make you hungry.

And give you the manner. So that you know that man does not live by bread alone. But by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

There I chasten you. As a father chasten as his son. So that you may fear me.

Now that is the wilderness. Brothers and sisters. After we believe in the Lord Jesus.

After it seems as if the first. Moment. Of first love.

Begins to win. We begin to enter into a wilderness experience. It is the experience of exposing.

Our flesh. We think that now we are saved. So we are perfect.

But not knowing. The old flesh is still there. And is as fleshly as it was before.

God knows. So he tests us. He brings it out.

From us. That we may know too. He chastens us.

Disciplines us. Like his own sons. Now in the wilderness.

There was conflict. But mainly the conflict is between the spirit. And.

The flesh. The old man and the new man. That which is natural.

And that which is supernatural. There are fighting. In Galatians chapter.

Five. It says. The spirit lusts after the flesh.

And the flesh lusts after the spirit. They are fighting death. There was death.

And in a. General sense. We can say. This is.

This can be considered as part of the spiritual warfare. But actually. Strictly speaking.

These are just skirmishes. Probing. Of the enemy.

You know. Now we are on the other side. So the enemy just try to prove.

And try to find a weak spot. That he can penetrate. Now to us.

It's a tremendous fight. The fight against the spirit. Against the flesh.

And the flesh against the spirit. To us it's very real. And.

It is a spiritual warfare. But actually. These are just skirmishes.
Testing the ground. As it were. You know.
The only real battle. In the wilderness. Is in chapter 17.
Of Exodus. The Amalek. You know.
They fought against the children of Israel. And. Joshua led the army.
But in that fight. It was. It was really strange.
Because. The fight did not depend upon. Joshua.
Or the strength of the Amalek. You know. Actually.
It all depends upon. The hands of Moses. When his hands are lifted.
Joshua overcame. When his hands were weary. And let down.
Then the Amalek. Overcame. Now Amalek.
In the scripture. Represents the flesh. How do you fight against the flesh? Lifting your arms.
By praying. Connecting yourself. With heaven.
Abide in Christ. Until the name of the Amalek. Was completely.
Destroyed. So in a sense. You find.
When you really come. Into this matter of spiritual warfare. What we had experienced.
Are just skirmishes. Testing of grounds. Trying to find a weak spot.
You know. Or whenever the enemy. Can try to find.
The flesh. He can attack. The real warfare.
With the children of Israel. Did not begin. Until they enter.
Into the Canaan land. Canaan. Inhabited by seven tribes.
Of the Canaanites. They were so wicked. That God decided.
To wipe them out. Children of Israel. Into Canaan.
On the one hand. To wipe out the enemies. That occupied the land.
On the other hand. To inherit the promised land. A land flowing.
With milk and honey. So there you'll find in the book of Joshua. The real.
That spiritual warfare. You know as you read. Efficiency.

You will find. In Efficiency. As our brother Watchman E. Says.

In sit, walk and stand. First of all you need to sit. And then you need to walk.

And only after you walk. You go to war. To stand.

Put it this way. Unless we know how to sit. To rest.

In the finished work of Christ. We will not be able to walk. As we should.

To be like him. And if we are not in that kind of position yet. We are not really.

In the center. Of the fight. That is the reason why.

We feel. Spiritual warfare is something. Very very few.

God's people know. We heard about it. But how much.

We have really. Enter into it. It needs some preparation.

It needs to know how. To abide in Christ. How to walk.

According to the spirit. And then. The battle.

Will be very fierce. Why? Because it is a matter. Of dislodging.

The enemy. And of inheriting. Our inheritance.

What is. The issue. Of this spiritual warfare.

What is this spiritual warfare all about? Why? This warfare. Now brothers and sisters you find that. You go back to the very center.

Of God's purpose. This warfare is fought. Between.

God. And his arch enemy. Satan.

It is fought over man. It is fought over the issue. Who is.

To be worshipped. Who is to be served. You know when our Lord was tempted.

In the wilderness. His declaration to. The tempter is.

Thou shall. Worship the Lord thy God. And.

Him alone. That's the issue. Who is in control.

Who has the worship. The service. And it hinges upon man.

Because man is now supposed to lead. All the creative things. To worship.

Men are supposed. To serve. God.

To bring everything back. To the service of God. So that's why you find.

Man becomes the target. In this spiritual warfare. We are to inherit.
All the spiritual blessings. In the heavenlies. Has been given to us.
And Christ is to inherit us. As his inheritance. So it is all in this matter of inheritance.
Who is to inherit. Who is to fulfill the will of God. Who.
Will bring worship. And service. That's the issue.
And even though you find the battle seems to be. On earth. Actually it is fought.
In the heavenlies. You know when you read. Ephesians.
You find a number of places. The heavenlies being mentioned. Or the heavenly realm.
Now it is not a physical realm. Something that you can locate. At a certain location.
But it is a realm. A heavenly realm. It is typified by Canaan.
This heavenly realm. Is the place. When God has blessed us.
With every spiritual blessing. In the heavenlies. In Christ Jesus.
It is like. Canaan flowing with milk. And honey.
In chapter 1 verse 3. And then in. Chapter 1 verse 20. You find.
When our Lord Jesus was raised from the dead. He. Was risen.
To the throne of God. Seated. In the heavenlies.
That is where our Lord Jesus. Now is. And then when you read.
Chapter 2 verse 6. You find we who have been quickened. We are also being raised from the dead. And
are being seated with Christ.
Where? In the heavenlies. We are in the heavenlies. But when you come to chapter 3 verse 10.
You find. It is the will of God. That.
At this time. The church. Is to teach.
The principalities and authorities. The all meaningful wisdom. Now who are these principalities and
authorities? In the heavenlies.
We believe these are the good angels. These are the angels. That serve God.
And even the angels will learn something. From us. The meaningful wisdom.
Then you come to chapter 6 verse 12. Our warfare is not against flesh and blood. But against principalities
and authorities.
Power. Universal Lord of darkness. Power of evil spirit.

In the air. These are the rebellious angels. So here you will find in the heavenlies.

It is quite crowded. Isn't it? You find Christ there. All the riches of Christ there.

The angels are there. The good angels. That were served.

The redeemed. That they may arise. Arrive at the purpose of God.

And the wicked angels were there. Standing in the way. Trying to stand against us.

In order to prevent us to fulfill our responsibility. And that's the fight. That's the battle.

The battle is in the heavenlies. What you find on earth is just a shadow. The real battle is fought in the heavenlies.

So dear brothers and sisters. Unless we live in the heavenlies. We cannot fight.

So that's how important it is. Brothers and sisters. By the grace of God.

That we be completely delivered. From the sin. From the world.

From our flesh. That we may really live in the heavenlies. With Christ Jesus.

So that. We may be engaged. By God.

In the spiritual. I think probably this morning. That's enough.

In other words. Just brothers and sisters. Together we want to learn.

What spiritual warfare really is. And why is it so important. Because the eternal purpose of God.

Hangs upon this warfare. Now even though we know the outcome already. But how long.

This warfare will continue. I think that has something to do with us. You know what happened recently.

In New York. I feel what the Lord is trying to say to me is. Why this thing should happen.

Maybe. It's because we. As the church of God.

Fail. To restrain. The evil.

We are here to restrain the evil. But this is not to be fought on earth. It is to be fought in the heavenlies.

But somehow we are not watchful. And that's what happened. What happened on earth is the aftermath.

Of what happened in the heavenlies. These are only. The effects.

But the real. Battle. Is to be fought in the heavenlies.

And. What a responsibility. We have.

So may the Lord help us. Shall we pray. Dear Lord how we praise and thank Thee.

Because Thou has overcome. Thou already seated. With God in.

The heavenlies. On the throne. The victory.
Was won. And Thou has left with us. The finishing job.
Lord we do. Confess. Our failures.
How we prolong. This battle. Lord wake up Thy church.
Wake us up. That we may. Be in a position.
That can be used by Thee. To restrain. The evil.
Until. It's time. To be finished.
Do keep us. Do stir us. Do use us.
For Thy glory. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus.

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