

Detailed Notes: COV014 30.10.20
Kingdom building and spiritual warfare 2

Dear brethren,

Today I intend to continue sharing with you on the theme:
Kingdom building and spiritual warfare 2

In the **last message**, we looked at the **biblical, theological perspective of spiritual warfare and its relationship to the advancement of God's kingdom.**

We have seen '**Your kingdom come**' is part of the core centre of prayer and aspiration of all who love God and are committed to Him.

We've seen **God's kingdom** is in the spiritual realm
- not in the visible, temporal realm, not of this world.

We saw the advancement of God's kingdom **directly involves spiritual warfare.**

In true service, it is **vital to know how to fight the good fight of faith.**

We need to **understand the biblical revelation on this subject.**

When the gospel is preached and people respond in true repentance and faith in Christ, there is a turning from darkness to light, receiving forgiveness of sins, being rescued from the domain of darkness and transference to the kingdom of God, from the dominion of Satan to God - a release from being held captive by the evil one.

Man has a vital part in God's plan for the advancement of His kingdom – which involves spiritual warfare and the defeat and obliteration of the kingdom of darkness and resolution of the rebellion of the forces of darkness.

‘Your kingdom come’ is the dynamic coming of God’s kingdom - an integral part of God’s salvation plan and the fulfilment of God’s purposes.

The O.T. prophecies of the coming Messiah have been fulfilled by the Lord Jesus – the King of kings (Rev. 19:16) who suffered for our sins – whose greatness extends to the end of the earth, whose kingdom of justice and righteousness endures forever.

What was accomplished at the Cross includes **decisive victory over the forces of darkness.**

The way is now open for all to enter God’s kingdom through repentance and faith in Christ - and **be set free from bondage to the forces of darkness and sin** – and there will be ultimate triumph of Christ and His kingdom – which will last forever – the eternal kingdom of God.

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus can set us free from the law of sin and death.

Being in God's kingdom, we can enjoy righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Nothing and no one can separate us from the love of Christ and God, and we can overwhelmingly conquer through Christ who loves us.

Today I want to consider further with you how God wants us to live out our lives meaningfully in this fallen world after we become His children - in the context of spiritual warfare.

We enter the kingdom of God through the new birth

- what the Lord Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3
- through repentance and faith in Christ and what He has accomplished at the Cross.

But entry into God's kingdom is not the end but the **beginning of our journey with the Lord** and with all who love Him

- **God's intention is that we be increasingly conformed to the image of Christ**

Romans 8:29

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

The **process of spiritual growth** and the outworking of God's purposes is meant to take place in the context of the healthy expression of **body-life** as revealed in the Scriptures:

Ephesians 4:11–16

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, **12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

God's kingdom is meant to grow in quality, power and glory until the Second Coming of Christ.

How?

The dynamic advancement of God's kingdom takes place in the context of the expression of **God's children submitting themselves to God's reign** in their lives,

**manifesting God's power, wisdom and glory,
overcoming the forces of darkness,**
through **conversions** of non-believers being delivered from
the domain of darkness into the kingdom of light,
and **believers experiencing the unfathomable riches in
Christ in increasing measure, and living overcoming lives
on the basis of the victory of the Cross,**
in fellowship of Christ's sufferings,
guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit
bringing to completion what Christ accomplished on the Cross
in the fulfilment of God's purposes

- **believers functioning according to God's revelation and power**
- through expression of body life, prayer, fellowship, mutual upbuilding
- **each one growing unto maturity and learning how to fight the good fight of faith.**

To live well, it is important to know our situation/context

- **know the God we believe in and His provisions for us and how He wants us to live out our lives**
- **know our enemy and his wiles and devices and how to counter them.**

We need to see that spiritual warfare is an integral part of effective Christian living - for ourselves and others

- because it is vitally linked to kingdom building
- the need to overcome the opposition of the forces of darkness to the fulfilment of God's purposes and the advancement of God's kingdom
- and to set the captives free
- through overcoming the works of the forces of darkness.

It is **important not to be ignorant of the wiles and schemes of the evil one** – so that he will not be able to take advantage of our ignorance in his attacks on us

- on-going all the time → detrimental to believers and hindrance to the advancement of God's kingdom.

2 Corinthians 2:11

11 so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

Qn: If there is little awareness and understanding of spiritual warfare and how to fight the good fight of faith, how can God's children participate effectively in the advancement of God's kingdom?

Imagine a war scenario where the enemy forces are attacking all over and yet the people are not aware of it

- chemical, bacteria warfare going on,
- enemy agents have infiltrated the population and extensive acts of sabotage are going on
- destroying, deceiving and stirring up dissension and strife amongst the people.

This is the situation we are in.

Paul tells us our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the forces of darkness

- we must be strong in the Lord and put on the full armour of God
- Paul is addressing all believers.

It is **not optional**

- we are all soldiers in God's army

The moment we are converted, we are in God's army. Ephesians 6:10–12

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

We must not live and war according to the flesh and our weapons must be divinely powerful for the destruction of the fortresses of the enemy.

2 Corinthians 10:3–4

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,

4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

The enemy forces are actively at work all the time

- in all kinds of situations.

Are we discerning to see their working and **learning to counter** them – in the way God desires of us?

If we do, we will keep growing in moral and spiritual stature even as we learn more about the realities in the spiritual realm, deal with the negative aspects and deficiencies in our lives, and nurture the positive qualities and growing in spiritual strength and stamina.

Note 2 points

1. Whether we like it, realise it, we are in the battle

- and also under attack
- cannot avoid
- foolish to ignore → unnecessarily hindered and defenceless target
- many believers suffer, hindered unnecessarily.

Note

We must not try to avoid spiritual attacks that come upon us because of faithfulness to God but we should minimise unnecessary spiritual attacks and suffering e.g. because of ignorance of the wiles and attacks of the evil one and failure to take our stand and counter his attacks, or failure

and wrongdoing that render us unnecessarily vulnerable to his attacks, or placing ourselves in contexts not the Lord's will for us to be in.

2. All aspects of our lives can come under attack by the forces of darkness

- different forms and degree of intensity
- awake or asleep, day or night, every area of life
- **but subject to what God allows and moral/spiritual principles involved**
- the forces of darkness cannot do as they please.

Briefly consider some areas of attack

- interrelated - often more than one area at the same time
- one area not functioning well affects other areas

Body

sickness, don't feel well, not sleeping well, tired, injuries

- many do not recognise the attacks/counter them

Mind

thought life: planting thoughts, temptations, distracting thoughts, mind not functioning effectively

provoke strife, bitterness, misunderstandings, misconceptions, disruption in fellowship

- many not aware/fail to counter

deception: wrong doctrines, wrong teaching/understanding of the Scriptures, including over emphasis and unbalanced views can → serious errors

- significant issue throughout church history
- including prosperity gospel; pray in faith will receive what you pray for; wrong understanding of dependence on God and not properly exercising our faculties → passivity/evil one exploiting the situation/difficulty controlling thought life

- need to be firmly grounded in the truths revealed in the Scriptures.

Emotion and mood

irritability, discouragement, fear, worry, anxiety, depression

- many unnecessarily negatively affected/fail to counter.

Will

weaken our ability to exercise our will to choose what is right e.g. through discouraging circumstances/thoughts,

worry, anxiety, overtaxed

→ detrimental, ineffective/fail to counter

- exercising our will crucial for choosing what is right.

Spirit

Spirit can **feel oppressed, heavy**

- together with attacks on the mind and other faculties → hindered from receiving truth/relationship with God and countering the attacks/ need to counter such attacks.

The flesh

work through the flesh

by **arousing base appetites** that cries for indulgence

or **walk our own way**, the ways of the world, rather than God's ways

- evil one often succeeds in attacks on the flesh/need to counter/reject.

The world

through worldly temptations, pleasures, distractions,

wasting time/idling/very busy, many things to attend to

- forces of darkness often attack believers through the temptations in the fallen world and exploiting the weakness of the flesh/need to learn to counter/reject effectively.

Affairs of this life

- in the course of fulfilling legitimate responsibilities we can become **distracted, hindered** from walking well with God, and being faithful in fulfilling what God desires of us, **compromising**
- family...studies/career...hobbies
- need to learn to discern, take stand: submit to God and His guidance/will and reject the negative influences.

Sometimes more direct attacks of **direct spiritual pressure on our mind, spirit, emotion, will, body**, that can be felt, visible forms, bad dreams

- one objective is to **frighten us**
- reject their attacks in the name of Jesus.

Concluding remark

Our basic posture (in our heart and mind): submission to God (in everything), and resisting/rejecting (all) the works of the forces of darkness: James 4:7 – in the name of Jesus, on the basis of the victory of the Cross, in reliance on God and the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord willing, in my next sharing I will elaborate further on our response.

In fellowship,
Kou