

Detailed Notes: COV015 13.11.20

Kingdom building and spiritual warfare 3

Dear brethren,

Today I intend to continue sharing with you on the theme:

Kingdom building and spiritual warfare 3

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 – the advancement of God's kingdom.

We have considered the **biblical, theological perspective of spiritual warfare and its relationship with the advancement of God's kingdom.**

The advancement of God's kingdom involves spiritual warfare

- and it is **vital for God's children to know how to fight the good fight of faith.**

I have briefly considered with you some areas of attack, including our faculties – our body, mind, emotion, will, spirit – and how the forces of darkness attack the weakness of the flesh through temptations, pleasures in the fallen world – and even in the course of fulfilling legitimate responsibilities in the affairs of this life, we can become distracted and hindered from walking well with God and doing what the Lord desires of us. We need to be alert and discerning, recognising the wiles of the forces of darkness, and know how to take our stand and counter them.

Today I wish to **continue with how we ought to respond and how we can fare well in our walk with the Lord and participate effectively in the advancement of God's kingdom in the context of spiritual warfare.**

In this concluding message on the subject Kingdom building and spiritual warfare, **I will highlight and summarise some related points to bear in mind.**

Not going into details on the subject of spiritual warfare here

- not intending to cover the whole subject

- for fuller treatment of the subject, please refer to the messages on **Overcoming the evil one and the powers of darkness: AR202-217**
- a subsection of Reflections on the death of Christ in the message series Appearance and Reality
- what was accomplished at the Cross provides the foundational basis for overcoming the evil one and the powers of darkness.

1. '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.

2. It is God's will His kingdom continues to grow in quality, power and glory until the Second Coming of Christ.

3. A major aspect is the expression of God's children increasingly submitting themselves to God's reign in their lives, **manifesting God's power, wisdom and glory**, in the context of **overcoming the forces of darkness.**

4. It includes conversion of non-believers being delivered from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of light, and **believers living overcoming lives on the basis of the victory of the Cross**

- **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.**

5. 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?

6. 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.

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

- **know the God we believe in and His provisions for us** - beyond mental recognition – experiential knowledge, spiritual insight
- **know our enemy and his wiles and how to counter them.** 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 (**2 Cor. 4:11**).

8. On the one hand, **do not over anticipate, be overimaginative of spiritual attacks and overattribute what is taking place** to attacks of the forces of darkness. On the other hand, we **need to be alert and discerning.**

9. **We must not try to avoid spiritual attacks that come upon us because of faithfulness to God - and as a result fail to live and do as God desires of us. 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.

10. **The forces of darkness want to attack us on all areas of life** - in any way they can hinder or destroy believers and kingdom building.

11. All aspects of our lives can come under attack

- **but they are limited beings - and limited by what God allows, and moral, spiritual principles involved**
- **the forces of darkness cannot do as they please**
- or all of us would have been destroyed.

12. Learn to be discerning and know their wiles/devices:

- **how they operate and how to counter them** and learn to resist/overcome in the name of Jesus and on the basis of the victory of the Lord Jesus at the Cross.

13. Do not assume all pain, suffering and difficulties are directly the result of attacks by the evil one

- we are living in a fallen world
- circumstances we go through, natural calamities, the conduct of men – others and ourselves - can contribute to the difficulties and suffering
- but the forces of darkness often try to take advantage of such situations and aggravate the difficulties.

14. Constantly sober, alert

The apostle Peter exhorts us to be sober, alert – he warns us **the evil one prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour...**

1 Peter 5:8–9

8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

The apostle Paul tells us **Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light: 2 Cor. 11:14**

15. Important: Purity of heart and life: heart

washed/cleansed, pure in motivation, life consecrated to God

- repentant, contrite spirit
- no ground given

Eph. 4:27: do not give the devil an opportunity (margin NASB: lit. a place) – and put on the full armour of God: **Eph. 6:10-18.**

16. Affirm basic posture in our heart and mind of consecration and submission to God and resisting/rejecting all the works and influences of the forces of darkness (even when not clear about attack)

- **general affirmation** of submission and resisting/rejection and **on specific occasions/issues**

→ **facilitates freedom of God to work and hinders forces of darkness working in our lives.**

James 4:7

Submit therefore to God.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Need to **bear in mind natural causes and aspects – and appropriate steps we ought to take**

(attacks take advantage of and magnify natural causes)

e.g. look after health, careful, prayerful, pay attention to safety;

e.g. headache; poor concentration/sleepy/lack of sleep;

take necessary steps and means for spiritual development and fellowship.

Do not blame everything on the forces of darkness when things are not going on well – when we have failed to take appropriate steps and respond well.

17. What appears to be may not be the reality

It is **not always easy to understand what is taking place in the spiritual realm** – be slow to conclude

e.g. seeming defeat may be victory: e.g. **the Cross.**

While Christ hung on the Cross He may appear to be totally defeated by the forces of darkness and His ministry a total failure – but what took place at the Cross was in reality the greatest victory over the forces of darkness and laid the foundation for the advancement of God's kingdom.

Likewise, **what appears to be significant manifestations of God's power in overcoming the forces of darkness may not be so** – the forces of darkness may be deceiving believers into taking an approach to spiritual warfare that draws them into spiritual difficulties and bondage.

18. We must humbly recognise our limitations and know there is much to learn about the spiritual realm

- to use the words of Paul in **2 Cor. 2:16**: And who is adequate for these things?
- especially in the midst of intensity and complexity of spiritual attacks.

At the same time, we **need not be fearful or pessimistic**

- again, in the words of Paul: our adequacy is from God: **2 Cor 3:5** – God's provisions for us in Christ
- feasible for us to overcome in Christ.

In fellowship,
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