



## Dealing with Spiritual Warfare

Message Notes, April 2, 2017

Romans 6:10, Ephesians 2:6-7

Jae and Kaci Lesley shared about God's call on them to plant a church in Angel Fire, New Mexico. This stirs a mixture of emotions in our church community, especially in light of the other transitions before us: The Prices leaving sometime this year and the Cowarts leaving in two years.

We want to give people permission to express feelings and process questions, but we want to do this in healthy ways. In your small groups, create space for such conversations, but let's honor these principles:

- Don't speculate beyond the truths that are openly expressed by our leadership.
- Don't gossip.
- Don't make negative "agreements" about what we think is going on (e.g., thoughts such as, "CCC is imploding.")
- Devote ourselves to prayer – trusting God and yielding to what He is doing in us as a church.
- "Lean in" and engage more fully in the life of our church (rather than pulling back).
- Joyfully affirm:
  - CCC belongs to the Lord, not us.
  - The kingdom of God is bigger than CCC.
  - We were always meant to be a sending church.
  - We are healthy and committed to keeping things in the light.
  - God wants to do things in/through us that we have not yet seen.
  - Our best days are ahead of us.

### Dealing with Spiritual Warfare

We have explored how our enemy focuses on our points of weakness and brokenness, attacking us through sins, mistakes, hurts, family histories, deceptions and agreements. As we pursue wholeness, Satan will not lay down without a fight; he will not easily abandon ground he has already taken.

But our enemy will also attack us when we are doing well and feeling strong. We must be aware and alert, for "our enemy, the devil, roams about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

How do we battle him?

1. Be saved! Make the conscious decision to surrender my life to the grace and Lordship of Jesus. Apart from Him, we have nothing with which to fight our enemy. We are utterly powerless and vulnerable.
2. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. There may be a powerful initial experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit, but the call in Ephesians 5:18 is not a "once and done" experience, but rather a life pattern of being continually filled. I must daily surrender my life to Him – to be filled, empowered and led by His Spirit. This is a life-long posture.
3. Be armed for battle. Ephesians 6:10-18 is the familiar passage about the armor of God. It reminds us that we are in a battle, and it calls us to put on the armor, to stand, to pray and to intercede for each other.
4. Understand we are fighting *from* victory, not *for* victory. The war is already won! Jesus has conquered sin, death and Satan through the cross and resurrection. Our enemy is defeated. He



is still waging desperation skirmishes, but the war is over. It's just like in WWII – there was the deciding victory of D-Day, but the war did not formally end until the signing of V-Day.

5. Confront the enemy. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 expresses how we confront our enemy. Our weapons are truth and power (that is, God's truth, His Word and the power of the Holy Spirit that indwells us). This is the same power that raised Jesus from the grave! See Ephesians 1:19-20.

Keith shared a simple illustration to help us understand how we battle our enemy. There are three realms, but (many only recognize the first two and ignore the third).

1. The Realm of God: Where God, in the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), reigns completely, unchallenged.
2. The Physical Realm: The world we humans live in – believers and unbelievers alike.
3. The Spiritual Realm: The realm of angels, Satan and his demons, and the Holy Spirit operates here.
  - Angels minister and give messages.
  - The Holy Spirit guides, comforts and empowers believers, and convicts and draws unbelievers.
  - Satan and demons do what they do – they “demonize” (deceive, oppress, gain strongholds, and they can possess unbelievers, but they cannot possess believers, for we belong to God.

If we try to battle Satan and demons directly, out of our own strength and determination, we will lose. But Ephesians 2:6-7 reveals to us that we “are seated with Christ in the heavenly realm.” We face and battle our enemy from our position in Christ. We battle with His authority and power. In Him, with His truth, by His power, we overcome our enemy.

#### **Reflection Questions**

- Do you have any questions about this message, especially in regards to the three realms that exist in and around our lives?
- Is there a particular truth/principle in this message that has been especially encouraging /strengthening for you?
- Is there any specific way you are being attacked by the enemy? What dimensions of engaging our enemy are most helpful to you in this fight?