

SPIRITUAL BATTLE: WHAT IS IT? HOW DO I RESPOND?

Biblical text: Ephesians 6:10-20

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL BATTLE?

- Spiritual battle is attacks initiated by spiritual darkness.
 - Spiritual darkness—Satan and all who aligned with him.
 - There is profound reality that is unseen. It has two parts:
 - God and all aligned with him.
 - Satan and all aligned with him.
- We are responsible to respond to these attacks.
 - Jesus teaches us how in discipleship to him.

HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN IT IS A SPIRITUAL ATTACK?

- Satan tries to attack God by attacking God's image bearers—humans.
 - Satan has already been defeated—when God's Son died on the cross.
 - He will do as much damage as he can until his final defeat.
 - He attacks God's image bearers using violence:
 - murder, anger, contempt, hateful speech, broken relationships, wars, hostility, betrayal, etc.
- Satan is deceitful
 - He is not all that smart; he keeps doing the same things.
 - We know what he will try to do. We don't know when or how.
 - But he is very deceitful. We must be ever watchful and discerning.
- Satan especially targets relationships in the family and church.
 - God is a community of persons. He is relational.
 - We are created like him. Our well-being requires loving relationships.
 - Our two primary relational contexts: family and church.
 - Disintegration of relationships in family and church damage people.

HOW DO I RESPOND?

- I stand! I let God do the fighting.
 - Satan is no match for God.
 - But for me to try to fight with him directly can be very dangerous.
 - (In prayer, I personally am very careful to speak only to the Trinity.)
- I prepare my defense—Be strong in THE LORD!
 - A key component in spiritual battle: protection.
 - We find protection by bringing ourselves under the Trinity's authority.
- I put on the whole armor of God.

THREE WEAPONS OF SPIRITUAL BATTLE

- Breastplate of righteousness
 - I mature in righteousness by living as a disciple of Jesus.
 - The Christian life is about the kind of person I am becoming.
 - Maturing toward Christlikeness, I become a person who loves.
 - I become a person who loves by choosing to walk the way of the cross.
 - The way of the cross deals with the self-life—the enemy of love.
 - Teresa of Avila—“The beauty of the human soul in grace.”

- Shield of faith
 - Faith is not the ability to believe; it is the decision to believe.
 - Faith is choosing to rely upon God in spite of what my senses tell me.

- Pray always

