

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtminc.org Today's Date: November 8, 2020

Confronting Evil Strongholds

by Dan Trygg

“I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not be superior in power against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth will be having been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be having been loosed in heaven.”

Matthew 16:18-19

“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 authorities, against the world-masters of this darkness, against the spiritual things of evil in the heavenlies.” Ephesians 6:10-12

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful with God for the taking-down of fortresses. ⁵ tearing-down schemes/strategies/misleading-arguments and every lofty thing taken-up against the experiential-knowledge of God, and taking every thought/perception/scheme/stratagem captive to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and having readiness to punish every disobedience...”

2 Corinthians 10:4-6

The church of Jesus Christ is meant to be an invasion force bringing and advancing the kingdom of God, the authority and power God's rule, into an age corrupted, influenced and often held captive by evil spiritual powers. Behind the visible world system that we can see, is an unseen world of spiritual beings. The word, “hades”, literally means “not-seen” or “unseen”. There are unseen spiritual beings who are loyal to God, and there are renegade beings who joined with Satan in rebellion against God. When Adam chose to go along with Satan's insidious suggestion, and betray God's trust, he unwittingly gave himself into Satan's authority and influence. Much like the turning of a feudal-lord in the natural world to align with a different overlord, this decision affected not only himself, but also everything under his authority. Along with his own spiritual death and corruption, ...his separation from the life flow and sustaining power of God within him..., death and corruption spread throughout all the natural world. Eventually, there was war in heaven, and Satan and his rebellious forces were confined to this planet, and will continue their malicious and destructive dominion right up until Christ returns (Rev. 12). Satan has been actively securing and deepening his control and influence over this planet for millennia. He has deeply infiltrated and is entrenched in every aspect of human life: everything from attempting to wound, damage and control individuals, to influencing politics, education, economics, business, entertainment, false religion and mass media.

Jesus Christ defeated the power of Satan by offering Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice, paying for our sin, purchasing our redemption, and uniting *us* with Him in death and new life. He defeated the enemy by paying for and vacating every charge or accusation that could be made against us, by nailing them to the cross. He took every curse associated with us and removed them, by becoming a curse for us and paying the ultimate price for every one, ...and, again, by removing *us* beyond the reach of any curse or charge by putting *us* to death with Him, and making *us* new, through the power of His resurrection. We experience that new life in new birth, and the inworking of the Holy Spirit.

The church is made up of people who have turned their allegiance from selfishness to God through aligning with Jesus Christ by faith. At our new birth, our citizenship was transferred from the evil spiritual kingdom to the kingdom of God's Son, and we legally escaped the authority of Satan. With the transfer of our allegiance and citizenship comes the transfer and dedication of all we have and are to our new overlord, Jesus Christ. Jesus will not just “take” what is ours. He wants us to voluntarily choose to give Him His proper due respect, honor and partnership. We have been called, recruited and incorporated into the “*ekklēsia*”, the called-out gathered-together people of God. We are commissioned as partners with God to bring the message of Christ's victory to the nations, and to join Him in liberating people, places and things from demonic control and setting them apart for God. As you can see, from the passages above, we are at war with the powers of darkness. We were born-again on the battlefield of planet earth, and our place is to join the ranks of God's kingdom-warriors to confront, oppose, root-out and remove the influence of the enemy, and lay claim to the lives and territory God gives to us to liberate and set-apart for Him.

When Jesus first spoke of the *ekklēsia*, He presented it in a word picture that depicted His people as an aggressive, invasion force, laying siege to a fortified place, a place with “gates”. The battle described was between the called-out people of Jesus coming against a fortified castle or walled-city that was built by “hades”, the unseen. This almost exactly the word picture used by Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:4-6. The word there translated as “strongholds” in many translations, also is used for “fortresses, castles, fortified walled-cities.” The word picture describes “taking-down” what was “taken-up”, ...it refers to taking down a wall, bit by bit, stone by stone, brick by brick. The word picture is clearly about laying siege to a walled-city. It describes the clear, purposeful, determined effort to remove every defense, every hiding place and every protection, so that the enemy would be exposed and removed. A siege was not a “once and done” kind of raid. It was typically a protracted, long-term assault that would surround the city,

cut off its supply line, wear down and pick away at its defenses, until its protective wall was breached and the invaders could gain access to those hiding behind the wall, ...or until they surrendered. Then, after the city was conquered, typically the walls were knocked down or removed, so that they could not be easily rebuilt by surviving enemy forces.

In Jesus' first description of His *ekklesia*, He presented its function and purpose in this manner, ...as an assaulting, invading force penetrating into enemy territory, laying siege to the enemy's fortifications, and saying that "the gates of 'the unseen' will not be superior in power against this assault. Those walls will fall, or be breached, or entrance will be gained some other way. When David's men took Jerusalem, which seemed impenetrable, they went up through the water shaft, and gained entrance to the city. When the armies of the Persians came against Babylon, the Babylonians were so confident that they could not scale or breach the incredible walls of the city, that they partied and drank themselves drunk. In the night, the Persians diverted the river, and marched into the city under the wall. The city was easily taken. Direct assault may not be the only way to penetrate the enemy's defenses and defeat him. Jesus said He will give us the keys of the kingdom so that we could bind what we wished and loose what we wished. The "binding" refers to "taking captive" or to "forbid" and stop the activity of the enemy. The "loosing" refers to "liberating what is held captive" or "setting free what is restricted". Note that *we* "bind" something on earth, and Jesus says it will be having been bound in heaven. Our actions *here*, using our physical words and actions, will have ramifications in the spiritual realm. In the same way, what *we* "loose" on earth, using our physical words and actions, will cause things in the spiritual realm to be "let loose". The sword of the Spirit, in Ephesians 6:17, is the *rhēma*-word of God. He may give us some information or instruction that will enable us to quickly defeat the enemy. The apostle Paul says that the weapons of our spiritual warfare are "powerful in/with the God". Their power and effectiveness come in partnership with God. It is not *us*, on our own. *Never!* It is *us with God*. Apart from Him, we can do nothing; *with* Him, we can powerfully tear down the fortifications of the enemy. Note that the building blocks of the fortress are lies, false-messages, schemes, stratagems, and arrogant things that are brought up against the experiential-knowledge of God. Satan desperately does not want us to experience the love of God. He tries to wall us up on every side, so that we don't come to know or experience God's love. We are to tear apart and tear down these thought-constructions, and bring every thought captive to the truth and obedience of Christ. We are to be ready to bring every disobedient thought to the justice and vengeance of God, by appealing to Him and imploring His retribution.

What steps should we take to prepare for engagement with the enemy? **(1.) Know and be assured of the complete victory of Christ.** He took our sins upon Himself, and died on our behalf (1 Pet. 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:14,15,18-21). Every sin or accusation that could be levied against us was nailed to the cross. Thus, Jesus disarmed the enemy and stripped him of his power (Col. 2:12-15). Even the power of death has been broken (Heb. 2:9,14,15; 1 Cor 15). We were removed from Satan's legal power, and now Jesus has given *us* legal power over him (Col. 1:13,14; Lk. 9:1; 10:17-20). **(2.) Get your mind and heart right with God, and be filled with the Spirit.** Ask the Spirit to reveal to you any sin that you need to deal with. Confess, and make right, any sin that He shows to you (1 Jn. 1:9). Yield yourself completely to God, and ask the Spirit to fill you. Worship the Lord, and get your heart filled with love for Him. **(3.) Put on the whole armor of God.** Go through Ephesians 6:14-18, recognizing that all these pieces of the armor are about what Jesus has already done for you, and who He is on your behalf. He is the truth. He is your righteousness. Your readiness to share the gospel is to speak of Him. He is the door-shield behind which you find protection. The salvation He purchased with His blood will protect your mind. The sword of the Spirit which can parry the blows of the enemy is God's instruction to you, ...and the cries of petition and for power bring the defense of God's Presence. **(4.) Pray for protection for yourself, your compatriots in warfare, and for your families, possessions and property.** Sometimes the enemy will try to retaliate or punish you for advancing against him. You can address this up front by asking for God's protection. **(5.) Ask for God's leading, and advance in prayer.** These are the two weapons we are told of in this passage which can be used offensively in the battle. The sword of the Spirit is the *rhēma*-word of God, ...things that God may speak or reveal to you in that encounter. God will direct the battle. Keep these two in balance. Advance *at God's direction*, and *in dependence upon Him* for help and power. **(6.) Do what God shows you to do.** Watch for the activity of God causing the demon to be revealed. Pray much. Confront directly where you see the enemy at work. You *have* the power to bind or forbid the enemy to do things. You are like a traffic cop: *Command him* to do what God tells you. Don't *ask* him, *command* him. Ask the Spirit frequently for further insight and revelation. If there are lies, half-truths, sins or wounds that are revealed, deal with each thing, in turn. Expose the lies and take them captive by replacing them with the truth. Sometimes a person needs to renounce or disavow a lie, a former agreement or covenant, or a previous sin pattern. It is important that they dedicate themselves to Jesus. Follow the leading of the Spirit. Be watchful with thanksgiving for everything God reveals to you. Take time to recognize what He is doing, and praise Him. **(7.) Seal up in prayer what God has done.** Ask for the Spirit to fill the person, or place. Praise and worship Him for victory. **(8.) Follow up.** There is almost always a need to get involved in fellowship, and for follow up counseling, Bible study and ongoing instruction and prayer.