

DEMONS, THE DEVIL, DELIVERANCE, AND THE CHILDREN OF GOD Part oneSunday, July 3rd, 2016, 6:00 p.m. - Teaching #1899

Pastor Don Horban - Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket, ON

Ephesians 6:10-20 - "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. [13] Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. [14] Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [15] and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. [16] In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; [17] and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, [18] praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, [19] and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, [20] for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak."

I want to say right up front that I believe in spiritual warfare. You can't read the New Testament at all without recognizing the nature of the conflict we all face as believers. Paul's words in Ephesians chapter 6 are merely representative - perhaps the best known summary - of what the rest of the Bible teaches on the subject.

The stance Paul takes in this passage is one of "**withstanding**" the devil - "**Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.**" (13). This is an important verb to note. As believers, we take our stand, in the power of the gospel, to **withstand** the work of the Devil in our lives. We don't **expel** the enemy. We **withstand** the enemy.

This, of course, is absolutely consistent with another well known passage dealing with spiritual warfare in the New Testament - **James 4:7** - "**Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**"

Through the centuries, Christians have always believed this to be true. The historic stance of the Christian church has always been to **recognize** the reality of the Devil and to **resist** his plans and efforts to thwart God's high purpose in our lives. We've already studied many of the ways the Devil does this in the series "**Learning to Resist the Devil.**"

But something has begun to change in the thinking of much of the spiritual warfare movement in the church. Believer's have actually been taught, and, in many cases, have come to believe that demons actually work **inside** the soul of the believer. Christians are being taught that there is a need to **speak directly to the demons inside their own beings** (The speaking out loud is said to be necessary because, unlike God, the Devil and his demons can't read our thoughts. Hence, if you want to communicate anything to demons, you must do so out loud.)

I want to start in this first teaching by looking at the **background** behind spiritual warfare doctrine. There is a certain **framework** that makes the rest of their teaching possible. So, to really grasp how spiritual warfare theology works, you need to start farther back. I know this is a little heavier going than a typical Sunday teaching, but believe me, it's of crucial importance for getting at the **foundation** of much of the teaching that is being carelessly embraced by so much of the church.

In other words, as is always the case, practical errors always start farther back. Practical spiritual errors always stem from an inadequate appreciation of doctrinal truth. These errors have crept into warfare theology because the doctrinal base didn't seem nearly as exciting as the battle with the Devil and his demons. But while the doctrinal study isn't as exciting, it is more important if we want to get the rest of our thinking right.

1) **THE FOUNDATION OF MUCH OF THE MODERN EMPHASIS ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE AGAINST THE DEMONIC FORCES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIES IN A DISTORTED DESCRIPTION OF THE MAKE-UP OF HUMAN BEINGS**

We're going to spend most of this first teaching session on this one point because I believe it is the single misinterpretation that makes room for other errors in the spiritual warfare movement.

Let me explain. Warfare theology is based on the assumption that Christian people can be, and frequently are, **demonized** by the agents of the Devil. That is, they teach that Christians not only wrestle with **external** forces of darkness, but **internal**

demonic beings. In other words, ***even though Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, they are also indwelt by demonic strongholds at the very same time but in a different part of our being.***

How is this possible? Here's the explanation. Your personhood, they say, is comprised of ***three distinct parts***. First, you have your ***physical body***. Second, you have a ***soul*** (usually said to be made up of your mind, your will, and your emotions). And third, you have a ***spirit*** (the part of your being that relates to God and His kingdom).

When you were saved, the Holy Spirit came into your ***spirit*** - and your spirit ***only***. That part of your being was instantly set apart for God and made holy in every respect. This is where the Holy Spirit now dwells, deep in the core of your being. This is His temple - His dwelling place. This is where you cry out to God and relate to His presence.

But your soul is not yet totally redeemed. The soul is where you think and feel and plan and respond to much of the world around you. You have experienced past hurts and wounds. You may remember all of these and you may not. But this is the territory of ***demonic strongholds***. This is where the Devil pulls the hooks and strings that keep Christians in bondage against their will. Demonic strongholds must be ***ejected*** from the soul.

So it is this view - called the ***trichotomist*** (3 part) view of human persons - that allows and makes room for the possibility of Christians being indwelt by the Holy Spirit and indwelt by demons at the same time.

2) **PASSAGES USED TO SUPPORT THE TRICHOTOMIST VIEW OF PERSONS**

I want to say right off the bat that certainly the Bible ***does*** use all of those terms in describing human personhood. In other words, the Bible ***does*** talk about our bodies, our souls, and our spirits. Several times each of these terms is used in the very same verse. Here are some of the best known and most frequently cited verses in defending this trichotomist view of human beings:

1 Thessalonians 5:23 - "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Hebrews 4:12 - "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

So the Bible does talk about our bodies, our souls and our spirits. There is no argument at all at this point. But there is a problem. While the Bible mentions our bodies, our souls, and our spirits, it uses the last two of those terms (soul and spirit) absolutely interchangeably.

In other words, everything the Bible says about the ***soul*** it says about the ***spirit***. And everything it says about the ***spirit*** it says about the ***soul***. Those two terms are used as synonyms in the New Testament to describe the ***inward person*** - the ***invisible part*** inside the body.

Actually, the Bible recognizes ***two parts*** to human personhood. There is the ***outward, visible, material*** part, and there's an ***inward, invisible*** part. And the inward, invisible part is described by as many as three or four different names. I know this can sound a bit technical, but it ***is*** of great importance, so try to follow along:

Trichotomists say the ***soul*** is made up of ***three distinct components***: Your ***thoughts***, your ***emotions***, and your ***will***. Those things make up what your soul is. They ***define*** the components of your soul. But the Bible won't let you describe things quite that precisely. Consider Jesus' words describing the inward person and its relation to God:

Mark 12:30 - "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

Now this is getting confusing. Here are all the parts Trichotomists say make up the soul - mind, heart and will - but Jesus lists the soul ***in addition*** to all of them - "***love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.***" Does that mean the soul is something ***over and above*** those other parts? If you take these words of Jesus as describing the ***number of components*** in the human person then just how many parts are there? Jesus lists ***four*** here. And if you throw in the spirit and the body, you end up with ***six!***

And what about Scriptures that seem to get even the *parts* of the soul confused? Sometimes the *heart* is used as a synonym for the *mind*:

Proverbs 6:18 - "...a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil..."

Proverbs 15:28 - "The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things."

In both these cases (for the righteous and the wicked) the heart and the mind are defined as the same thing. The heart is the part that "*devises*" and "*ponders*" plans. Here the heart does what the mind does.

But even this is not always the way the heart is defined:

Proverbs 15:15 - "All the days of the afflicted are evil, but the cheerful of heart has a continual feast."

Now the heart is where emotions are felt. It's the part that experiences joy (and just as often in the Scriptures, sorrow). So here, the heart is used to describe the seat of the emotions.

Also, and this is very important, everything that is said about the *soul* in the Scriptures is said about the *spirit*, and vice-versa. Warfare theology make much of the teaching that the *spirit* is instantly saved at conversion. This is where the Holy Spirit instantly enters and rules. But the *soul* is entirely different. The soul is *not* saved at conversion. The soul has demonic strongholds that need to be cast down. So it's very important - in fact, *it's crucial* for warfare theology to maintain this distinction between the *soul* and the *spirit*.

But the Scriptures don't make this distinction. The spirit is said to be the seat of human emotions just like the soul:

Acts 17:16 - "Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols."

Proverbs 17:22 - "A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

So human emotions - like anger and sorrow - are said to be experienced in the spirit just as they are in the soul. Also, the spirit is said to need *cleansing* and *purification* just as the soul:

2 Corinthians 7:1 - "Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God."

Clearly, Paul is writing to Christians (the lost aren't interested in having holiness perfected in their lives). And he says their spirits and their bodies *both* stand in need of ongoing cleansing and purifying. So the spirit *isn't* some sacred spot that is instantly converted and cleansed at conversion. Both terms - *soul* and *spirit* - are used to describe the inward part of all of us that needs ongoing sanctification and growth.

Here's my point in all of this. The Bible uses *many* different terms to describe the inward invisible part of the human person. The Bible *doesn't* use precise terms to *number* the parts of the inward person. Rather, it uses *several different terms* to describe the same thing.

Sometimes it uses many terms *right in the same verse*. But just as Jesus wasn't *numbering* the parts of the inward person when He said, "*you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength*," Paul wasn't *numbering* the parts when he said, "*Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Thess. 5:23).

These are just different ways, through repetition of different terms, of emphasizing the need for being *totally clean - totally dedicated* to the Lord - right to the core of our beings - with all we are and have.

And the writer of Hebrews wasn't numbering the inward parts when he said, "*For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning*

the thoughts and intentions of the heart”(Hebrews 4:12).

The context makes this very clear. Just as *thoughts* and *intentions* are different words for the very same thing, so are *soul* and *spirit*. In fact, nowhere in this verse does the writer say the Word pierces *between* the spirit and the soul. The word *between* never occurs in the text. Rather, the writer, just like Jesus, is using different words to describe the *inward work of the Word* and to show the *depth to which it can penetrate*. It lays open even what is hidden to everyone else. It doesn't just work on the surface. It lays the inner person open to the scrutiny and power of the Spirit of God.

While all this might *seem* like dry, irrelevant nit-picking, it isn't. This point is absolutely *crucial* to the spiritual warfare movement. Virtually *all* prominent teaching materials and spokespersons hold tenaciously to the *trichotomist* view of mankind. And they *have* to hold on to it.

Here's why. Everyone knows that the Holy Spirit and demonic spirits can't and won't dwell together in the same temple. That's why the spiritual warfare movement *must* isolate the location of each in the human person. The Holy Spirit dwells and rules *only* in the *spirit*. Demonic strongholds take place in the *soul*.

This artificial division is the only way to make room for the rest of warfare theology. You *have* to find some place for demonic strongholds if you're going to cast them out or renounce their activity. And if they don't dwell with the Holy Spirit in the human spirit, you simply must find them another residence. The soul is the only choice they have.

But as we've already seen, the Bible uses those terms interchangeably to describe *the same inner part* of the person. These are not *two separate parts* but the *very same part*. And if the Holy Spirit is present there, then demons can't possibly be.

There certainly *is* still spiritual warfare. And I'm going to spend a lot of time in the next teaching describing exactly what *kind* of warfare that is. But the battle is *not* to get the demonic influence out of the soul of the Christian.

I have two more points I want to make in this teaching:

3) **THERE IS NO CASE OF DEMONS BEING CAST OUT OF CHRISTIANS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

There is something every thinking reader of the New Testament needs to be able to explain. The Gospels are loaded with confrontations with the demonic from beginning to end. Jesus and His disciples are constantly confronting and expelling demons. Then you come to the portion of the New Testament specifically written to the Christian Church *after* the death and resurrection of Jesus. Demons are not mentioned once. *Satan* is mentioned in his tempting work over and over. But not one specific mention of *demons*.

We need to honor the Lord for this clear distinction. There certainly are cases of demons being cast out of people in the New Testament. Jesus cast out demons repeatedly and made it a sign of the power and entrance of His kingdom.

Luke 11:20 - “But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

Jesus also commissioned His disciples to make the casting of the demons a part of their ministry as they preached the gospel to the lost and dying of this world:

Mark 16:15-20 - “And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. [16] Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. [17] And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; [18] they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.” [19] So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. [20] And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.”

But notice please that in each of these cases we are dealing with the power of the gospel to reach the lost. It will tear down any obstacle. Jesus' disciples needn't be stymied by demonic strongholds as they evangelized the lost.

And there *are* hosts of people around this world who *are* demonized. They are under the control and bondage of demonic

strongholds. But the gospel can still reach them. Jesus commissioned His disciples to this ministry ***among the lost***, not the ***redeemed***.

Now, what the spiritual warfare movement has done is taken the passages from the gospels that refer to the work of demons in the ***unsaved*** and ***applied that scenario to any references to spiritual warfare in the epistles with the redeemed***. But you can't do that. The epistles deal with instruction to the ***church and ministry to believers***. The gospels deal with the coming of the kingdom into conflict with the ***lost and unevangelized***. That's why the instruction about casting out demons is located where it is - ***in the mission of reaching the lost for Christ***.

So the ***nature of spiritual warfare*** is different in each of those arenas - vastly and intentionally different. We are meant ***not*** to confuse the two at all.

4) **WHY I NEVER THINK ABOUT DEMONS IN MY QUEST FOR HOLINESS**

I really mean that. I am sixty-one years old. I've been following Jesus for fifty-four years. I have not given two minutes pondering or worrying about demonic intrusion into my life. I mean, I ***never*** think about it. No - it's not because I'm a super-strong Christian. I have the conviction that this is the way ***all*** Christians are to live each day.

Let me wrap this session up this way. I take these promises and statements from God's Word more seriously than anything else I know:

Colossians 1:12-13 - "...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. [13] He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son...."

There are hosts of people living under the dominion and sway of that kingdom of darkness. But not me. My Bible tells me God ***transferred*** - actually ***moved me out of that whole realm*** - a long time ago. I live in another kingdom entirely. I used to live in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Then one day, 34 years ago, I packed up everything we owned and we moved away from there. It was a complete change.

Ephesians 2:1-6 - "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— [3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— [6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...."

That's as plain as God Himself can make it. You ***used*** to walk, like all children of disobedience (the unsaved) according to the ***"prince of the power of the air"*** (2). In fact, that same spirit (singular) still rules ***"the sons of disobedience"*** (2). But that's not where I live anymore. Something very powerful has happened. It came when I received the gospel and made Jesus my Lord. Paul says God has actually ***"seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus"*** (6).

Listen, I believe Paul ***means*** that statement to be taken very seriously. That's where I live now. And now my favorite verse of all:

1 John 5:18 - "We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and ***the evil one does not touch him.***"

How could the beloved apostle John do more to take away my concern with the demonic. God keeps His children. They don't have to worry about demons. There ***is*** a real spiritual warfare of a particular kind, and I'm going to talk about it at length. But the battle isn't with demons in my soul. My New Testament says ***they don't touch me***. I love that verse.

1 John 4:2-4 - "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, [3] and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. [4] Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

I'm so glad John didn't say, "**Greater is he that is in you than the other ones who are in you.**" There is only **one** in me. And the rest are in the **world**. And because the one in me is greater, that's the way it's going to stay.

Next Questions:

- a) ***If Christians aren't in a battle with the demonic, what is the spiritual warfare that Paul and James talk so much about?*** How am I to fight this battle and how can I be sure of victory?
- b) ***What about groups that teach Christians to speak out loud to demons in order to rid their own souls of demonic influence?*** Is this practice necessary? Is it Scriptural?
- c) ***Is it necessary for me to go back into my distant past to uncover forgotten experiences in order to be free from the demonic stronghold those experiences established in my soul?*** Is that where bondage actually comes from? How can I be sure I've dealt with absolutely everything that has gone wrong in my past?
- d) ***What about spirits that seem to have some names in the Scriptures?***
Is there a demon who is the "spirit of fear", etc?
- e) ***If this kind of spiritual warfare isn't Scriptural, what about people who report their lives changed after going through such a "cleansing"?*** Are those changes real? How are they to be explained?