

## I. Introduction

## A. [The Christian in Complete Armor]

B. I have good news for you today.

C. No matter what spiritual burden you carry with you today, I have really good news for you today.

1. If you're BORED because you've heard it all and done it all.
2. If you're FRUSTRATED because your Christianity doesn't work.
3. If you're COMPLACENT because there's no mission to challenge you.
4. If you're ON FIRE because you know you have so much to give.
5. If you're CONFUSED because faith doesn't make sense.
6. If you're AFRAID because you think you're in trouble with God.
7. If you're HUNGRY for a deeper walk with God.
8. If you're SAD because life for you is harder than it should be.
9. If you're SEARCHING because you're not finding the answers you need.
10. If you're BEATEN DOWN by all the rules and duties of being a Christian.
  - a) If you're any of those things and more, I have great news for you today.

D. The Word of God makes this epic announcement.

1. **"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;" (Ephesians 6:17)**

E. I invite you to think with me on the Sword of the Spirit, just as we did last time.

F. This is part 15 of our series on Spiritual Warfare called the Christian in Complete Armor.

G. And my message today is

1. **The Sword of the Spirit, part 2.**

## II. The Sword of the Spirit

## A. Dominion

1. If I could focus down the whole mass of Scriptural teaching on spiritual warfare — if I could boil it down to one epic battle between God and the Devil, angels and demons, truth and deception, heaven and hell... the word word that I would use is this:
  - a) **OUR OBJECTIVE: Every Christian is a warrior in a cosmic battle to get back one primary thing: your God-given dominion.**
2. In the Garden of Eden, God gave Adam and Eve dominion. Dominion means the right to rule. It means the power and the authority to rule the realm of your life. It means freedom. It means the complete absence of domination.
  - a) So no addiction. No dysfunction. No depression. No anxiety. No PTSD because no T... no trauma. No poverty. No conflict. No sorrow, sadness, or pain.
3. The realm over which Adam and Eve enjoyed dominion was the Paradise of God, the Garden of Eden, the vast realm of beauty, and pleasure, and goodness, and love, and peace.
4. It was safe there.
5. They held the scepter of the realm, and no sorrows intruded into it at all.
6. We have no idea how long this lasted.
7. Until...
8. Until it all collapsed in a burning heap of smoldering rubble on one terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day... a day of catastrophe and ruin, the day that, in theology, is called the Fall.
9. If you know the story, you know Satan egged them on. Satan questioned God's Word. He tempted Eve. Eve tempted Adam. They sinned, the devil laughed, the demons cackled, the angels watched, God handed down righteous curses on the whole created realm...
10. And in one hideous moment, this beautiful, lush, gorgeous world was utterly ruined. So now we say...
  - a) This fallen world is a morally-broken Pain Machine.
11. So the Bible says:
  - a) *"For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one..."* (Romans 5:17)
12. The one man is Adam. When sin galloped into the world, death came riding on its back. In that moment, the human race was broken and corrupted. In that moment, by one man's disobedience, the whole race was made sinners (Romans 5:19).
13. And the worst and most consequential part of entire disaster is this:

**a) DEFEAT: When sin entered the human race, the scepter of dominion was transferred from mankind to Satan.**

14. This fallen realm is his. The kingdoms of earth are his.
15. In the temptations of Jesus, the devil offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. He could offer those things because he reigns over those things.
16. Three times, Jesus called him the Ruler of this World (John 12:31).
17. And Paul called him the God of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4).
18. The whole world-system lies under his sway, says the Bible, because the whole world-system is his. (1 John 5:19).
19. So the devil influences all the systems of the world — arts, education, media, culture, government, even religion — the devil is constantly reinforcing a philosophy that cement his dominion over our world.

**a) 3. SATAN'S OBJECTIVE: In this great cosmic conflict of the ages, the Devil's grand objective is the moral and psychological entrapment of humans.**

**B. The Fiery Furnace**

1. I want to mash in another place in the Bible here, because it will help make sense.
2. Rewind in time back to the days of Daniel the prophet. We are talking six hundred years before Christ. Twenty eight hundred years ago.
3. The world at that time was under the boot of the Babylonian Empire. The king was a psychopath named Nebuchadnezzar, who worshipped demonic deities and made himself a deity.
4. When he destroyed Jerusalem and enslaved the Jews, King Nebuchadnezzar kidnapped four teenagers, and brought them to Babylon for brainwashing. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. You might know them as Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego — but those were Babylonian names the king gave them as part of their indoctrination.
  - a) *"Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans."* (Daniel 1:3-4)
5. That's fine, right? The literature and language of the Chaldeans (Babylonians)... that's harmless.
6. Well it's not harmless because their literature and language is saturated with idol worship, and the Jews knew that Idols are demons in disguise.
7. Even their meals were, let's just say, not what Jews should eat.
8. But they were well treated. They were even given the royal cafeteria.
9. But don't you know that well-treated captives are still captives and well treated slaves are still slaves.
10. And captives can be brainwashed into making captivity their new normal.
  - a) And this is the devil's goal.
  - b) In this great cosmic conflict of the ages, the Devil's grand objective is the moral and psychological entrapment of humans.

**C. Back to Dominion**

1. If he can't put chains on your wrists, he'll put them on your heart.
  - a) *"and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."* (2 Timothy 2:26)
  - b) *"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage."* (2 Peter 2:19)
  - c) *"[Jesus became human so that] through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."* (Hebrews 2:14-15)
2. Bondage. Overcome. Slaves. Snare. Taken captive.
3. All of this is subjugation. All of this is the Enemy of Our Souls, smiling and laughing as he luxuriates in his dominion over the souls of this fallen world.

**D. Salvation**

1. Because of the Fall, the power of Satan was now greater than the combined might of the whole human race. We could not break his chains. We could not end his dominion.
2. Only a greater power could set us free.
3. And I'm here to tell you about that greater power.

- a) I'm here to tell you who he is. I'm here magnify his name above every name. And I'm here to tell you that the power he used to destroy the power of Satan was the last thing Satan could ever imagine.
- 4. That greater power is the Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 5. And the power by which he vaporized the chains and prison bars Satan had forged, and the power by which Jesus broke the devil's hypnotic trance was not the power of overwhelming force but of substitutionary death.
  - a) "[Jesus became human so that] through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Hebrews 2:14-15)
- 6. The satanic reign of terror is finished in Jesus Christ crucified and risen again.
- 7. All your lifetime, you've been subject to bondage. All your lifetime, you've been Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego in some variation... captured by alien forces, and being persuaded to make captivity your new normal.
  - a) But you've been released. You've been set free. You've been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.
- 8. If you have received Jesus as your Savior, nod your head.
  - a) I want you to know something about yourself.
  - b) 4. VICTORY: On the day of your salvation, you got your dominion back.**
    - (1) You reign, Satan doesn't. You reign, sin doesn't. You reign, hell doesn't. You reign, fear doesn't. You reign, addiction doesn't. You reign, temptation doesn't. You reign, anxiety doesn't. You reign, anger doesn't. You reign, your past doesn't. You reign, the horoscope doesn't. You reign, illness doesn't. You reign, DNA doesn't. You reign, trauma doesn't. You reign, victimhood doesn't. You reign, failure doesn't. You reign, uncertainty doesn't. You reign, debt doesn't. You reign, depression doesn't. You reign, death doesn't.
      - (a) In all these things, we are more than conquerors. In all these things, his grace is sufficient. In all these things, nothing shall separate us from the love of God.
- 9. Come hell or high water. You got your dominion back. I'm not making it up.
- E. *"For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."* (Romans 5:17)
  - 1. One man's sin, Adam, was enough to plunge the world into the reign of death.
  - 2. One man's Person and Work, Jesus, is enough to elevate the every believer in Jesus back to the throne of your own soul and enable you to reign in life.
  - 3. You get your dominion back. You reign. You rule. You reign in life.
    - a) You've received not just grace but the abundance of grace.
    - b) You've received the gift of righteousness.
      - (1) And that means you reign in life.
  - 4. Jesus grasped the scepter from the gnarly hand of Satan, washed it in his blood, and gave it back to you.
  - 5. This is the victory and the triumph and the glory of our salvation.
  - 6. That's a fact. That's a truth. That's a reality. That's what salvation does for you.
    - a) Aren't you glad you're saved? Aren't you thankful for Jesus?

### III. From Theology to Psychology

- A. Now this is all biblical theology. The theology of salvation, called Soteriology. The theology of human nature, called Biblical Anthropology.
- B. BUT... But there is a massive disconnect going on.
- C. For many many many believers in Jesus, there is a missing link in a crucial chain. Might this include you? Think hard about this...
- D. This is the chain that connects...
  - 1. 5. STRUGGLE: Our new struggle is to forge a link between the THEOLOGY of our dominion and the PSYCHOLOGY of our souls.**
- E. This is the massive problem that I'm trying to preach today. This is the missing link.
- F. Because what I'm saying is that the missing link is the **ARMOR OF GOD**.
- G. God put this armor in the Bible because the devil has not given up on you.
  - 1. He lost his throne, yes.
  - 2. He lost his crown.
  - 3. He lost his scepter and his dominion.
- H. But the devil still has his wiles. He's still a roaring lion. He's still spewing doctrines of demons across the sidewalk of your life. You have to step around it every single day.

1. He's still brainwashing. Still mind-controlling.
2. Still coming alongside you as an angel of light.
- I. The devil has lost his bite but still has his bark.
  1. And he's still barking orders at you like he's still in charge. But he's not in charge. You are in charge, reigning in life, under the Lordship of Christ. You are in charge.
  2. But what does that matter if your soul still jumps at his commands and bites at his shiny allurements?
- J. What does it matter if the devil's psychological operations are in full force and most Christians clip along blissfully unaware?
  1. **6. NEED: You, Christian, have been set free. But your soul, Christian, still needs rehab.**
- K. Welcome to Church. And welcome to the Armor of God. Here's your rehab.
- L. I say this because I've been watching you. Not really. But I've been watching Christians long enough to wonder why...
  1. Satan, sin, hell, fear, addiction, temptation, anxiety, anger, your past, the horoscope, predisposition, trauma, victimhood, failure, uncertainty, debt, depression, and fear of death...
- M. Why do these forces still dominate Christians who've been set free from domination?
- N. What's going on? What's going on is that God says to put on your armor, and within that, he says to take up the Sword of the Spirit, and most Christians don't do either one.
  1. Most Christians don't know the Bible. Most churches don't teach the Bible. So most believers limp beneath their troubles rather than mount up with wings like eagles. They have the Spirit, because they're saved. But they don't have the Sword.
    - a) Any Christian who lays down their sword is disarmed against the wiles of the devil.
- O. But that's not you... that doesn't have to be you.
  1. So I say to you to take up the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God... because by that Word will slay the strongholds of deceit still rooted in your own soul... that war against your dominion.
- IV. Back to Babylon
  - A. The psychotic king grows in power and glory year after year. He is the mightiest king on earth. He becomes grandiose in his thinking... That can't be good.
  - B. The king builds a massive statue of gold. It's an image of himself. Ninety feet high. Glistening in the sunlight.
  - C. And glistening also in the light of the blazing fiery furnace which he has built to spotlight his majesty and glory.
  - D. He sends out messengers to all the nations of the empire, commanding all the rulers of all the kingdoms of the known world to come. They will gather before his golden image. They will bow. Or they will burn.
  - E. Picture the scene. The vast flatlands called the plains of Shinar. The teeming multitudes of dignitaries from all the earth. In their robes and turbans and crowns. The blue sky and hot sun blaze down on the smells of food vendors. The cacophony of the crowds. And the roar of the furnace of fire.
  - F. The military might of Babylon ready to enforce the king's decree.
  - G. The golden idol, visible from miles away, shining with the radiance of the all glorious King Nebuchadnezzar.
  - H. And next to it is the royal orchestra with horns and strings and choirs.
  - I. It is one of the greatest displays of the world's pomp in all of human history. It is the *cosmos diabolicus* at its best on full display. (That's the devil's world.)
  - J. The time has come. The king's heralds decree that when the orchestra plays, all the rulers of earth will bow and worship the king's image.
  - K. The King processes to his elevated throne. The cue is given. The orchestra plays. And all across the plain, kings and queens and magi and wise men and judges and governors and treasurers and dignitaries drop to their knees and bury their faces in the dirt and worship the king.
  - L. What would you have done?
  - M. Everyone. Everyone. Everyone bows.
  - N. Thousands and thousands kiss the dirt. Thousands and thousands worship the self-deified king, an ambassador of Satan, and preview of the Antichrist.
  - O. Everyone bows. Except...
    1. ... we'll come back to this.
- V. The Sword of the Spirit
  - A. Take a look again at our verse, this time in both English and it's original language which is Greek.
    1. **And take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.**

- B. Here it is in Greek:
  - 1. ...και..δέξασθε την μάχαιραν του Πνεύματος, ὅ ἐστιν ῥῆμα Θεοῦ.
  - 2. The Word of God.
- C. This does not use the normal Greek word for word. The normal Greek word is LOGOS. It can mean word, or message, or truth. But this word isn't *logos*, it's *rhema*.
- D. *Rhema* just means to speak out, or say, or express the Word of God and the truth of grace.
  - 1. Say. It.
- E. You wield the sword by saying God's truth, by speaking God's Word, by declaring God's grace.
- F. And this is something that's becoming more and more important to me.
- G. For many years, you have heard me teach the power of faith. You have to believe. You have to keep faith with God.
- H. And that is true, and I will go on teaching it till I die.
  - 1. We live by faith. We walk by faith. We please God by faith. Faith is the victory. Yes.
- I. But now, I'm seeing in Scripture another layer to this.
  - 1. **7. WEAPONS: The strongest weapon to rehab your soul is by hearing AND SAYING the truth of God's grace into every situation you face.**
- J. Do you know who your number one audience is? Do you know who is always listening to the words you say? Don't say God. Don't say angels. Don't say demons. That's all true.
- K. But the deepest truth is that your own soul, your own heart, your own psychology is listening to the words you say all day long all life long.
- L. Your tender heart is a captive audience.
  - 1. What messages are you preaching to your own heart? What neural pathways are you reinforcing by your words?
- M. Because if you have made your mouth a conduit for defeat, you will be defeated. If you have made your mouth a conduit for messages of victimization, you will be a victim. You will be stuck in a prison with the doors wide open.
- N. If you have made your mouth a continual stream of fear and loathing, your whole psychological state will bow and kiss the dirt before the idols you have made.
- O. You will join the ranks of thousands and thousands of men and women who should be rulers, but are bowing to the dominion of a psychopath king.
  - 1. And you will do this BECAUSE the words, the sentences, the exclamations, the whininess, the pronouncements, the declarations of your mouth are out of alignment with the revealed truth that comes from God in the Word of God, the Bible.
  - 2. To speak words of bitterness, and anger, and hatred, and self-pity, and defeat, and self-absorption... and on and on... to speak those toxic words is to shape a toxic psychology, and it will condition you and groom you back into the same emotional subjugation that Jesus died to free you from.
- P. And you can bow to any king you want... fentanyl, alcohol, pornography, debt, bad luck, rage, bitterness, grandiosity, materialism, money, sex, power, philanthropy, authority, comfort, pleasure, or the betterment of all mankind.
- Q. Or you can bow to Nebuchadnezzar, which is all a long way of saying, the devil in disguise.

#### VI. The Three Men

- A. When Nebuchadnezzar's orchestra played, and when thousands bowed and kissed the earth, there were three men standing.
- B. Three men who said, I'm not going to bow to your idols. No.
- C. Oh what a scene the king created! He lost it. He was furious, spitting mad, out of control.
- D. He sent his guards to drag Shadrach, Mechech, and Abednego before. He was shocked when he saw them, because he knew them. He respected them.
- E. But he couldn't lose face, and he gave them one more chance.
- F. And just watch how three teenagers in a life or death situation wield the sword of the Spirit.
- G. When the demonized King Nebuchadnezzar threatened them with the furnace of roaring fire, commanding... Worship me or burn! They said...
  - 1. "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." (Daniel 3:17-18)
- H. They spoke the truth of God into the situation, and God walked with them through the fire. They can imprison your body. They can destroy your body, but they cannot touch your soul, and they cannot diminish your rewards in heaven.

- I. These men of faith wielded the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.
  - 1. And the devil couldn't touch them.
  - 2. And not even the mightiest king with the mightiest armies on earth had dominion over them.
    - a) They were masters of their fate, and masters of their own realm, because they spoke the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

VII. The Sword of the Spirit

- A. I know that's a really extreme case.
- B. But I invite you to make confession with your mouth of the goodness and grace of God.
- C. Here is wisdom, if you have ears to hear it:
  - 1. *"A wholesome [healing] tongue is a tree of life, But perverseness in it breaks the spirit."* (Proverbs 15:4)
- D. Even if you don't feel it, say it... The strongest way to rehab your soul is by hearing AND SAYING the truth of God's grace into every situation you face.
- E. Say it...
  - 1. I am the righteousness of God in Christ. No weapon formed against me shall prosper. In all these things, I am more than a conqueror. You come to me with a sword and a spear, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts. The Battle is the Lord's. God causes all things to work together for good.
    - a) Say it.
    - b) Say...
  - 2. Faith is the victory. Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Nothing shall separate me from the Love of God. I am secure forever. I am saved, and I can never lose it. I am forgiven. I am redeemed. I am blessed. I am beloved. I am a child of Love.
    - a) Say it.
    - b) Say...
  - 3. It's going to be okay. I have a destiny. I have provision. I have protection. I have abundance. I have grace because... I have Jesus.
    - a) Say it. Utter it. Mutter it. Mumble it. Shout it. Pray it. Sing it. Say it.
- F. There is one King in all Creation who needs nothing from you. He will take nothing and give everything. He will bless. He will provide.
- G. And his greatest delight is to see you filled with the abundance of grace, standing in his gift of righteousness... and rising to your full stature as a child of heaven... reigning in life because Jesus got your dominion back.
- H. Preach that sermon to your heart a dozen times a day.
- I. And you will reign in life.