**Slide 1] What is Spiritual Warfare?**

We are in a day of unprecedented spiritual warfare.

* Rebellion is pronounced and blatant.
  + Home…Church…against God
* Conflict and Offense
  + We are very guarded, very “on-edge”…looking for reasons to be offended.
  + This leads to disconnection and isolation.
* Confusion is running rampant in our society.
  + Identity…defining ourselves, instead of being defined by our Creator.
  + Morality…Rejecting the Bible as THE STANDARD, so that we can create our own.
  + Scripture
    - This is the greatest danger, and the root cause.
    - Not just disregarding sin for personal comfort, but disregarding truth for personal gain.
* ***Slide 2] 2 Timothy 4:3-4: For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.***

They will *heap up…accumulate* teachers who suit their own passions. Purposefully developing an argument, a defense for one’s position and stance that is contrary to God’s Word.

Exodus 32, and then cited by the Apostle Stephen in Acts 7…in the absence of Moses, the people of Israel…”Make us gods who will go before us.”

Whatever you believe about sin, in the present day, you can find someone, somewhere who will tickle your ears, and do it “in the name of the Lord.”

This leads to a culture where church is no longer for the purpose of being challenged by God’s Word, of being convicted of sin…but of being affirmed in our present state, and justified, not by the righteousness of God, but by our own self-belief.

**Slide 3]** Scripture warns of this epidemic: ***2 Timothy 2:16-17: But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene.***

This is the only time this word for gangrene has been used in scripture. The Lord wants to get our attention. False Gospel will spiritually end you…and leave a path of destruction in the body of Christ.

The devil is waging war against families, against churches, trying to break down unity and fellowship and love.

Spiritual apathy is not just tiredness. We’ve got plenty of time for I…but not much time for the I AM. The bondage of sin is not just a sickness. One’s lust for money and attention is not just “living your best life.” These are tactics of the enemy to distract, discourage, and disassemble the body of Christ.

The devil is often trivialized, made a cartoon character…but he wants to destroy. That is the only thing he knows how to do is to kill and steal and destroy.

Spiritual gangrene is so difficult to stop. It runs deep, to the core of one’s soul. It has blended the lines of cognitive and emotional reasoning:

* How dare you question my beliefs, the way that I interpret truth?
* I know this may not be accurate to the Bible, but this is just how I feel about it. I have to be true to myself.

What do we do?

**Slide 4] *Titus 1:9: He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.***

We declare war, with the Sword of the Spirit in our hands, our hearts, and our minds. It’s time to bind up the enemy, by the authority of God’s Word.

**Slide 5]** Some may consider this a losing battle, a lost cause. May I remind them of ***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.***

There is a weapon. Not meant for destruction, but for redemption. The mighty sword of the Spirit, that pierces deep into the soul and spirit. This is our weapon in battle. This is our means of victory. In His Word, there is Freedom…and in this battle, there is victory.

We look at Luke 11, spoken from the mouth of Jesus. In it, we read of the provision God has made, to fight this spiritual warfare:

* Leaning upon His authority
* Leaning upon His Name
* Leaning upon the power of the Holy Spirit

In leaning upon the Lord, we take an approach that is not defeated, but victorious. Let this message be a reminder that God has provided for us divine resources, that we can stand up and stand out against the forces of hell.

God is calling the church, his disciples, to advance as soldiers of Jesus Christ, moving in His authority and in His Name, clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit.

***Slide 6] Luke 11:14-23: Now he was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the people marveled. 15 But some of them said, “He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons,” 16 while others, to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven.***

***Slide 7] 17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. 18 And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. 19 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.***

***Slide 8] 20 But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. 21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; 22 but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil. 23 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.***

I want us to look at what transpired, for Jesus to set this great example of overcoming the power of Satan. He comes to a man who has a spirit that is possessing his life. This evil spirit has caused the man not to be able to speak. He is mute because of the binding force of this spirit.

**Slide 9]** First, let us recognize the means by which Jesus waged warfare against the power of Satan. Not with any kind of satanic spirit, even though that is what they accused Him of. People will try all kinds of means to cure themselves, to rid this world of evil…but there is only ONE answer that will remain. Jesus came and He cast out this demonic spirit out of this man. Then the man was able to speak.

Consider the condition of this man…We don’t know how long he had been bound, but imagine how horrible it was for him not to talk? For him not to express himself? For him not to be able to carry on a conversation with people? He could not glorify God with his mouth. He could not speak with his friends because of his bondage.

There are a lot of people who are bound up. Spiritually bound. They may not be bound exactly like this man, but they are hindered from worshipping God and giving honor to God. Bound by the clutches of sin and evil, they are not their own masters. They may think that they are in charge of their own lives, but they are controlled by the trappings of this life. By the expectations of this world.

It is a helpless feeling, that feeling of life being out of control. There are so many who believe they’re calling the shots, they’re doing what they want, living life how they want. But in reality, deception has taken root in their life. Deception has grasped hold of their heart and their mind, and they simply are along for the ride. Spiritual oppression and attacks have taken their toll, so that life has become a never-ending tailspin, continuously teetering on the brink of chaos and mental breakdown. To an extreme, this leads to complete rebellion against God.

But this morning, I declare that there is divine victory and power over the forces of evil. There is divine authority, and the grace of the Almighty God that can come to the lives of people who trust God and stand on the Word and who are full of the Holy Spirit!

This is not a losing battle. Don’t believe for a second that you are a lost cause. Beyond the scope of God’s grace. A life forgotten, too far gone. And don’t stop praying and believing for the prodigal to come home!

**Slide 10]** And so we read in verse 15, that they accused Jesus of casting out this devil by the power of Beelzebub. That is an unusual name given to what is referred to as “the prince of devils.” It comes from the old Hebrew word ‘Baal’ the god Baal which means ‘lord.’ The other word ‘zebub’ which means ‘flies.’ They are accusing him of being under the control and influence of the lord of flies, this prince of devils.

When they called him that, when they accused him of that, they are heaping upon him one of the greatest indignities that could ever be cast at a person. Here in this connotation of Beelzebub, “lord of flies”, lies the imagery of dung heaps covered in flies. Here, this so-called god of satan reigns upon dung heaps where flies are thronged and made. And in their accusations of Jesus, they are bringing down the Lord of Lords, and the King of Kings, to such a low place as the lord of the flies…lord of the dung heap.

This seems alarming, and grotesque to us. But then, there are people every day, whose lives and whose mouths are filled with such corruption and such vulgarity, to the point that they despise the grace of God, and they despise the Lord Jesus Christ. They don’t care to desecrate anything that is holy and pure. The thought and sight of this can be discouraging, if not disturbing.

But be encouraged…The Lord God Almighty in His sovereign power still has the authority and power to override these forces, and His Word will stand the test of time!

**Slide 11]** Others were tempting Him in verse 16. They said, “Why don’t you show us a sign from heaven? If you are what you claim to be, if you are what people say you are, why don’t you show us a sign?”

What a ridiculous request. Here they are, standing in his presence and they’ve just seen a man delivered from an unclean spirit. And now he can talk and can speak clearly and give glory and honor to God, and *they’re wanting a sign*?

Church, let us not be ignorant of the moving of God. Let us have hearts that are open to His move. That when God is moving, when He is speaking…we recognize His move, His hand at work.

If we’re not careful, we can sit right beside a miracle and never see it. Some people can sit in the presence of God and not realize what God is really doing and what He is saying. Some people live in this world, some can sit in the church, and never understand, and never recognize what God is doing.

Oh, but let it be said of you and I…that we are hungry for the presence of God. Let it be said of us, that we are His bride, we are His people, and that His truth is marching on. He is still the sovereign almighty God. He is still able to put down under his feet all powers and all forces and all dominions. He still reigns!

I’m reminded of John 6, after Jesus had fed the five thousand. The next day, the people sought Jesus out, probably still picking their teeth from eating fish and bread the day before.

***Slide 12] John 6:30: So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?***

They were looking for a sign, but their bellies were so full of a sign, they could hardly breathe. They understood the physical infilling of the bread and the fish, but were still blind to the spiritual bread…the Bread of Life, that they so desperately needed.

The blindness of this world is so severe, and it is time that this world sees the divine manifestation of God’s grace and His glory and power at work. That the Lord would open blinded eyes and deaf ears, to hear His Word, and receive the glory of His presence.

**Slide 13]** Jesus saw the blindness in Luke 11, of these people accusing Him, tempting Him. And so, in verse 17-20, He responds.

‘You can accuse me, but a divided house won’t stand when it is divided against itself.’ And if I were working for Beelzebub or through his power, I would be dividing the house of Satan. This man was clearly possessed by an evil spirit, and so if I just cast out this evil spirit, and I did it by the power of the Beelzebub, the prince of demons, then I would be undoing his own work. That’s not the way it works.

Jesus is making the point…It is not by any demonic power, but through the hand of God. I am casting out devils by the finger of God – meaning I am casting out devils by the anointing of the Holy Spirit of God.’

**Slide 14] *Matthew 12:28: But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.***

That reminds me of a beautiful passage in I Corinthians 12, where Paul speaks of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

That word ‘manifestation’ is a powerful word. When you look at its meaning, especially in the Latin from which it comes, the first part of that word is ‘manus’, meaning *hand*. You get a mani-cure. You get your hands and fingernails taken care of. It has to do with the hand.

The rest of that word comes from the Latin, ‘festus’, meaning to be seized, to be grabbed. So the word manifestation in a spiritual sense, means to be seized, to be grabbed, to be apprehended by the hand of God.

How wonderful it is, when the hand of God moves upon His people, and we are seized, we are apprehended, by His glorious Spirit and power.

***Slide 15] 1 Corinthians 12:7: To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.***

That He would move upon us, and within us, in such a way, that we are able to show His glory and power far beyond our ability to even express it.

One rendition of the meaning of manifestation is that not only is it to be seized by the hand of God, but it is the dancing hand of God. The hand of God that dances, that moves among us. That the Holy Spirit touches down on the lives of people and anoints one with one gift and anoints another with another gift. That He moves upon us with gifts of grace here and there.

I’m thankful for the moving, dancing hand of Almighty God, that is able to reach down and touch every life. And that through His glorious Spirit and power, there are spiritual gifts that enable us to wage successful, effective warfare against the power of Satan and sin.

Jesus, then proceeds in verse 21 and 22 of our text, Luke 11 to explain spiritual warfare…this is the way it works.

**Slide 16]** A strong man, like Satan, wants to control and guard his kingdom, his house, his goods and all of his possessions, and the people that he thinks he governs and possesses. He controls it until a stronger man binds him. But once that stronger man arrives on the scene, He is able to go in and plunder all his house, and take authority and control of the situation. Any grip that satan has, can be loosened and removed, once the stronger man, once the Spirit of God steps in.

See, this is redemption in action. It is deliverance in action. It is the mighty power of God in action. When the Lord Jesus Himself, in Luke 4, looked at this strong man Satan in the wilderness of the temptation, He was binding him then. He was not yielding at all to his power or to his temptation.

And what He is saying here, in our text, is that He has the authority and the power that when He comes in and He speaks to a person who is possessed of an evil spirit and He tells that evil spirit to go, that evil spirit has to go! It has to go, because He has the power to bind the force and bind the spirit and bind the power of the strong man, Satan.

Satan is no match for Jesus Christ. Satan is no match, even, for any angel of God.

**Slide 17]** Look at ***Revelation 20:1-3: Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. 2 And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him.***

This is the case for not only the angel of God, but any child of God standing on the Word, filled with faith, filled with the Holy Ghost, is more than a match for the power of satan.

Know this today, we have been given ‘Spoiling’ power. We have been given the authority through Jesus Christ, and the power through the Holy Spirit, to spoil Satan’s kingdom, to walk right in take from his grasp loved ones and friends.

Paul the apostle did it. When he started the church in that corrupt city of Corinth, a city full of sin and perversion and idolatry. But he walked in and said “I’ve come in the power and demonstration of the Spirit, and I depend, not on man’s wisdom, but on the power of God.” As the book of Isaiah, chapter 60 declares, I believe that God is ready for His church to *rise and shine for the light has come and the glory of God has risen upon us.*

See, spiritual authority comes because we’ve been washed in His cleansing blood, filled with the Holy Spirit, and we stand on the Word of God. It takes away fears. It takes away worries. It takes away doubts. It takes away delusions.

**Slide 18]** This is the authority with which we can echo the words of Isaiah 61, and the words of Jesus in ***Luke 4:18-19: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”***

This is the authority by which we clearly see the hand of God. We hear clearly, the voice of God. We move quickly in obedience in the leading of the Spirit, and that brings victory. It brings power. It brings deliverance and it brings triumph of the church.

What is Spiritual Warfare, you might ask? Some might say that this world is a lost cause…but I would say that our cause is the lost. Our cause is seeing the bound, set free. The lost, found.

Spiritual Warfare is a war that has already been won!

We are victorious, because the strong man is bound by the power of Almighty God. Let us wage war, not with weapons of our creation, but with the Sword of the Spirit, walking under the power and anointing of Almighty God. We declare war, and we declare victory over the enemy, in the mighty name of Jesus!