

Sam Rodriguez: It's Time to Stop Cowering and Start Waging War Against Spiritual Darkness

Perhaps one of the most memorable moments in the history of cinema is the scene in *The Wizard of Oz* when Dorothy wakes in the magical Land of Oz. Dorothy, played by the one and only Judy Garland, and her dog Toto find themselves in a strange new place after being flown away from their home by a tornado. Dorothy turns to her companion and says, "Toto, I've a feeling we are not in Kansas anymore."

Eighty years after *The Wizard of Oz* first came out, people still remember and quote this particular line. I'm one of those people who quotes Dorothy's famous line because I believe it reminds us of a truth the church needs to hear today.

The days of passively following Jesus are long over. Over the past few decades, our culture has changed drastically, transforming America into a land of moral relativism, and if we are honest with ourselves, the church has largely been asleep as this has taken place.

We have forgotten we are engaged in a real spiritual battle against real spiritual forces. The spirit of Pharaoh is pulling people into the captivity of destructive vices and addictions, while the spirit of Jezebel puts them under bondage to sexual depravity and perversion. The spirit of Herod is murdering our children through abortion and selling them into sexual trafficking and exploitation. And the spirit of Goliath is intimidating God's people with religious persecution and prosecution.

The church, caught in the middle of this spiritual war, at times has neglected its prophetic calling in culture. We are tempted to sacrifice biblical truth at the altar of political expediency. Too many times have we failed to call out the lies of the enemy due to fear of losing people and followers.

If we don't recognize the gravity of the situation, we will lose our ability to be salt and light in our culture. Remember: We are what we tolerate. Today's complacency is tomorrow's captivity. Moral stagnation always leads to spiritual atrophy.

It's amid this darkness that God speaks the same words He spoke in Genesis 1:3: "Let there be light."

God always begins by turning the lights on. He did it in Genesis 1 when He spoke light into the dark void, and He is still speaking light into our darkness. He is calling us to be light, because when light stands next to darkness, light always wins.

"You are the light of the world," Jesus told His disciples in the Gospel of Matthew. "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a basket, but on a candlestick. And it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16).

God wants us to turn the lights on in this darkness we are living in. We may live in dark times, but we are not defined by darkness, nor are we overcome by it.

John 1:5 says, "The light shines in darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it."

And while there may be real, dark spiritual powers at work against us, there's a spirit that is alive and more powerful than any other: the Holy Spirit of Almighty God.

According to the prophet Zechariah, “‘Not by might nor by power, but by My spirit,’ says the Lord of Hosts” (Zech. 4:6b).

In the middle of this seemingly impenetrable darkness surrounding us, God is raising an army filled with His Spirit, people of every age, tongue and race who will be salt and light in this world.

For every Pharaoh holding people spiritually captive, God is raising a Moses to free them and lead them to God’s promised land. For every Jezebel who is leading men and women down into the pit of sexual depravity, God is calling an Elijah to speak prophetic truth. For every Herod who is advancing the murderous agenda of abortion, God is sending forth a John the Baptist to make a way for His kingdom of life. And for every Goliath who is intimidating God’s people, God is anointing a David who will not allow God’s name to be taken in vain.

Scripture says that were the gates of hell itself to swing open against the church, they would not overcome God’s people. Do we believe this, church?

There is a revival coming, an awakening that will make the Azusa Street Revival seem like the opening act of what God is about to do. It’s time for the church to stand up and join God in His work.

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