

Warring Against the Schemes of the Devil

Some weeks ago, as I was praying about the heaviness I see so many believers carrying, the Lord downloaded the following into my spirit. This is war—not a time for slumber or malaise. Eternal destinies are at stake. Time to stare down fatigue and deny it a place. Time to seize upon our hope and move in it. Time to find a sense of holy wrath deep in the heart and rise up, sword of the Spirit in hand, to deny the powers of darkness any form of power over self or over those we've been called to walk with. Time to awaken the sleeping giant in the hearts of those who love the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul and strength. Let walls fall down and obstacles be overcome to the glory of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We're often too gentle, caught up in an incomplete understanding of who the Father and Jesus really are, focused on the warm fuzzies to the exclusion of a tougher side of our Father's heart. God is love, but love is more than hugs and tears. It's more than a gentle squeeze. It's more than comfort. It's more than the laid-back restful romance with the God we know and love, and it's more than God falling on us with affirmations of how deeply He feels for us.

There's another side to that love—an aggressive side, a warfare side, a tough side, even an angry side. That side of His love is just as much an expression of love as all the gentle, warm fuzzies we love to experience. We are at war, and we will need this tougher side of the Father's heart flowing through us and incorporated into our own character if we expect to win. It has many facets and manifests differently according to the different parts of the world in which it is waged.

The war in Ukraine, for instance, is an attempt of the enemy

to silence the voices of powerful Christian leaders arising there. Having ministered in Ukraine for seven consecutive years, I've watched some of the finest men and women of God I have ever known grow in anointing, maturity and authority. Now their churches are under pressure, and some have closed due to the violence perpetrated by the separatists.

In the Arab and Muslim worlds, Christians are being slaughtered in record numbers, and whole regions have been emptied of believers as they are driven from their villages, told to convert or die. Pakistani Christians live in danger every day, often forced to live in ghettos where open sewers flow. Entire Christian neighborhoods have been burned down.

In the Western nations, as opposed to living under threat of death, we are being labeled bigots—dangerous hate-filled enemies of tolerance. Laws are being passed and fought through in the courts that would force us to violate our biblical conscience. In nearly every nation of the world, opposition rises to silence the voice of believers and stop the end-time revival the Lord has decreed.

For you and me, living in nations that once were Christian, the attack generally takes more subtle forms than physical threats and legal challenges. If it were open and blatant, you'd stand up in defiance and refuse to be silent, but it's more subtle than that. It manifests when life crises, hurts and disappointments begin to pile up. The enemy wants to silence your voice by taking your heart and sucking the hope out of you. This brings a sense of malaise and the feeling that God isn't doing anything, that He's way off somewhere in the distance and not truly with you.

You don't see what you want to see happening in your faith or in your ministry. Health problems—your own and those of your friends—wear you down. Problems at work create stress and exhaustion. Your children suffer setbacks and tragedies until you begin to cry out, "What are You doing, God?!" and you

surrender your fire and fall silent and ineffective.

If I've described you, know that this is all part of a coordinated strategy of the enemy of our soul to silence your voice, whether by physical threats or by more subtle pressures. By immobilizing you, the devil thinks to shut up the end-time outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will bring in a harvest of the lost even in the midst of darkness and trouble.

In Ephesians 6:11 Paul identified it as, "the schemes of the devil," and in verse 12 he wrote, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." He spoke of carefully laid plans devised and carried out by highly placed and well-organized demonic powers.

There comes a time when we must rise up in the warrior spirit that expresses a neglected side of the loving nature of our Father and our Savior and, in holy wrath, shout, "I will not be silenced! I will not surrender to this malaise and oppression! I will walk in power. I will do all, and having done all, I will stand!" We get to win!

(This is a radical condensation of a message I preached at New Song on Aug. 10. View it in its entirety by clicking [HERE](#). You can scroll through the worship to get to the message if you wish.)

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