

How You Can Join Jesus in Invading Hell's Gates

When discussing spiritual warfare, our minds recall a host of personal experiences and deep-seated ideas that shape the way we think about the topic. We reflect on times we experienced oppressive fears or tormenting temptations. We remember seasons in which we endured unusual loss, confusion and pain. When we consider how we engage spiritual warfare, our mind pulls out files on topics such as: intercessory prayer, fasting, worship and repentance.

Reference points of personal experiences and spiritual practices shape the way we think about this important topic.

Still, I have to wonder: is this how the apostles would have understood spiritual warfare? Would Peter, James and John have viewed this topic in terms of protecting themselves from the assault of the evil one? Would they have viewed their role in warfare as a reaction to the devil? Would the apostles have thought only in terms of defense?

The apostles' view of spiritual warfare would have been shaped by the words of Jesus which they heard with their own ears:

"I will build My church, and the gates of Hades [hell] shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

Did you notice the word picture Jesus made? It wasn't a picture of the church hunkering down and simply enduring the assault of the enemy (although there may be times for that). The word picture Jesus gave was of Him building a church that would invade the gates of hell. Last time I checked, gates are not offensive weapons; they are defensive mechanisms designed to keep the bad guys out!

Please don't miss this.

Jesus is building a church who will invade hell's gates!

When they heard these words, the apostles would have immediately connected this word picture to their own personal experience with Jesus. They would have recalled the countless physical healings he performed. They would have thought of all the times He cast out demons with a word. They would have pondered the times He raised the dead to life. They would have remembered the many ways they witnessed Jesus invading hell's gates during His earthly ministry. These experiences would have shaped their understanding of the church and of spiritual warfare.

For the apostles, spiritual warfare was not merely defensive, but an offensive reality of the church.

Jesus is building a church who will invade hell's gates. The question is, do we know how?

Tune in to the episode of *Jesus Movement Now* on the Charisma Podcast Network, titled *Most Aggressive Spiritual Warfare*, and learn 5 practical steps you can take in 2021 to join Jesus in His work of invading hell's gates. {eo}

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