

Audio Transcript of Sermon
September 3, 2022
Our Common Enemy

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Within the Church of God are many different groups and congregations, with many holding their distance from the other groups and congregations having fixed in their mind that they are being pure to the faith with other groups and congregations being apostate. Is your group one of these groups? In a quest to be “pure to the faith,” some have allowed envying, strife, and divisions to develop amongst us. Even though many of us think of ourselves as somehow being more advanced than the people of Paul’s time, we need to consider if it is our spiritual maturity or technology that has us feeling that we are more advanced. Could it be in our quest to preserve truth we have allowed ourselves to devolve from what is spiritual to what is physical? First Corinthians three verse one.

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

- 1. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.**
- 2. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.**
- 3. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?**
- 4. For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?**

As we examine where we are in the faith and the myriad of congregations and churches that all claim hold to the name Church of God, we need to examine if this division is of God or is of Satan. Beyond the different groups, churches and congregations within the Church of God which all exist in this physical realm we all live in and understand there is also a spiritual realm, and it is within this spiritual realm that we find our common spiritual enemy, that can be found within Satan and the demons. Ephesians six verse ten.

Ephesians 6:10-12

- 10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.**

11. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

The Bible is full of examples of our common enemy who wages a spiritual battle against the people of God. From the earliest chapters of the Bible to the end of the Bible are multiple accounts of spiritual warfare. It should come as no surprise to us that the battles we face today that attack our faith and access to eternal life are spiritual battles.

Even Jesus faced spiritual battles, and an account of the temptation of Jesus is shared with us in the gospels. When we read this account, we see that Satan didn't just debate theology with Jesus, we see that Satan spiritually attacked Jesus through what is physical. While debating Jesus using words from scripture in a theological debate, Satan spiritually attacked Jesus through what is physical. So we need to keep that in mind in our own lives. Whatever spiritual attack Satan brings to us will have that same mix, because Satan knows we live in the physical realm.

With Jesus, Jesus had fasted for forty day and nights and the Bible provides a huge understatement that afterwards Jesus was hungry. I could not even begin to comprehend how I would feel if I fasted for forty days, but I would believe I would be much weaker than I am now. Satan is smart enough to know the human condition because Satan is our common enemy who seeks to spiritually destroy us through physical means.

With the case of Jesus, Satan told Jesus that He should command stones to be turned to bread, playing on the hunger Jesus had. Jesus did not take the bait and quoted a verse in response to Satan. When that didn't work, Satan was allowed to bring Jesus to the top of the temple of God, where Satan told Jesus to throw Himself off the temple with the devil quoting scripture. When Satan told Jesus to turn the stones to bread, Jesus quoted scripture, and Satan knows scripture too, and this time led with it, and again Satan's spiritual warfare had this physical component to it, jumping from the temple to prove God. Again, Jesus rejected this temptation once again by quoting scripture explaining we are not to tempt

God. Having not been successful quoting scripture, Satan took Jesus up to a very high mountain and offered him all of the land Jesus could see, again using what is physical to wage spiritual warfare. Once again, Jesus quoted scripture to respond to this temptation. Matthew four verse one.

Matthew 4:1-11

- 1. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.**
- 2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.**
- 3. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.**
- 4. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**
- 5. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,**
- 6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.**
- 7. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.**
- 8. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;**
- 9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.**
- 10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.**
- 11. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.**

Daniel was once visited by an angel who told him that the angels visit was delayed because of spiritual warfare. From Daniel's perspective, he made a request of God and for twenty-one days, three weeks, no action on the part of God was evident to Daniel. What Daniel couldn't see was that with the spiritual realm, a demon of the prince of Persia kept this angel from coming to Daniel, and it took intervention from the archangel Michael for this angel to eventually connect with

Daniel so that Daniel could understand what would happen at the end of time.
Daniel ten verse ten.

Daniel 10:10-14

10. And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.

11. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

12. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

13. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

14. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.

Elisha, a prophet of God, found himself to be a person of interest with the King of Syria who had been told that it was Elisha who advised the King of Israel. The King of Syria sent men to capture Elisha, and that plan seemed to work, even bringing concern with the people immediately around Elisha. Seeing this huge foreign army on the hunt for him, Elisha shared with those near him that those who were with them were greater than those who were with the enemy. Elisha prayed and a young servant of Elisha was able to see the spiritual army that was with them. When Elisha was attacked physically, there was a spiritual warfare component to it, and in the end those who were with God won. The soldiers of Syria found themselves suddenly blinded and marched until they were in the hands of the King of Israel. Sensing an opportunity to kill the enemy, the king had to be reminded by Elisha that this enemy was not to be killed but to be treated with compassion. Through spiritual warfare, an attempt was made to destroy Israel and instead it was through spiritual warfare that an enemy of Israel was brought to nothing to the point Syria no longer bothered Israel. Second Kings six verse eight.

2 Kings 6:8-23

8. Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.

9. And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

10. And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?

12. And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

13. And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.

14. Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16. And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

17. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

18. And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

19. And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.

20. And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

21. And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?

22. And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.

23. And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

When the army of Israel under King Saul quaked when they saw the Philistine giants led by Goliath, it was David who saw through all of this knowing that even though Goliath came to fight him with military weapons, David would fight in the name of the God of Israel. David knew without any doubt that Goliath would be delivered in defeat into his hand. When David faced a warrior with physical weapons of war, David knew there was a spiritual battle behind it that centered on faith. For David to know victory would be his through the God of Israel, David was acknowledging not only his faith but an understanding that spiritual warfare is fought in this physical realm. First Samuel seventeen verse forty-one.

1 Samuel 17:41-51

41. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.

42. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.

48. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

51. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

It's easy to forget that we are fighting a spiritual battle against a common enemy. Years later, Satan would challenge David to complete a census of military fighters. Somehow, between Goliath and this point in time, David had lost focus of the spiritual warfare we all face and how it manifests itself through the world in which we live. First Chronicles twenty-one verse one.

1 Chronicles 21:1-8

1. And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

2. And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.

3. And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?

4. Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.

5. And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword.

6. But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to Joab.

7. And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel.

8. And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

The apostle Paul had wanted to visit the church in Thessaloniki and was hindered by Satan. Traveling from one location to another is done within this physical realm, and however Satan hindered Paul and his entourage, it had a physical connection to it. We can't tell what that hinderance was from Paul's writing. Maybe the weather was bad, or maybe they missed a ship. Why Paul and his group couldn't get to Thessaloniki, we do not know. But we do know that Paul and his group was hindered. Take note of bad things that happen to you. It could be just time and chance, but it could also be Satan's attempts to hinder you. Knowing that God is not the author of confusion, when chaos erupts around you, never underestimate that it is Satan who is trying to hinder you. First Thessalonians two verse seventeen.

1 Thessalonians 2:17-20

17. But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

18. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

19. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

20. For ye are our glory and joy.

Through faith we are engaged in spiritual warfare with our common enemy by people who are around us. If given the opportunity to engage us in spiritual warfare using people on the other side of this planet or using people in closer physical proximity to us, Satan will go with what is easier. When Paul encountered difficulties in his journeys, it was with people closer to him. Paul was able to discern that behind these troubles was spiritual warfare. When he encountered Elymas the sorcerer, a real person in this life, Paul knew that it was Satan who was the source of the spiritual warfare. Acts thirteen verse four.

Acts 13:4-12

4. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

- 6. And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:**
- 7. Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.**
- 8. But Elymas the sorcerer, for so is his name by interpretation, withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.**
- 9. Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,**
- 10. And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?**
- 11. And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.**
- 12. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.**

James reminds us of the need in our spiritual warfare to resist Satan, and Satan will flee from us showing that humility is one way to resist Satan. James four verse seven.

James 4:7-10

- 7. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**
- 8. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.**
- 9. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.**
- 10. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.**

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul wrote that our battles are not physical battles. The battles we face are spiritual battles and we must use the spiritual weapons entrusted to us by God by controlling our mind. Second Corinthians ten verse three.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

- 3. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:**

- 4. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;**
- 5. Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;**
- 6. And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled**

During His earthly ministry, Jesus told his disciples that they had been given power over anything the enemy could bring to them, and that even with this power, they needed to be happy not with that information but that their names were written in heaven. Luke ten verse seventeen.

Luke 10:17-20

- 17. And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.**
- 18. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.**
- 19. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.**
- 20. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.**

David had fought many battles and knew spiritual warfare as well, and David trusted in God knowing that God would deliver him from all enemies. David writes that when we trust and obey God, evil does not bring us down as we will be protected by the angels. Psalm ninety-one verse one.

Psalm 91:1-16

- 1. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.**
- 2. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.**
- 3. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.**
- 4. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.**

- 5. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;**
- 6. Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.**
- 7. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.**
- 8. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.**
- 9. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;**
- 10. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.**
- 11. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.**
- 12. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.**
- 13. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.**
- 14. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.**
- 15. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.**
- 16. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.**

As we fight our spiritual battles against our common enemy, we need to remember that even Satan can transform into an angel of light. What is the very darkest that this universe knows can appear as the brightest, and the people who do Satan's bidding here on earth do the very same. Second Corinthians eleven verse seven.

2 Corinthians 11:7-15

- 7. Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?**
- 8. I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.**
- 9. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.**

- 10. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.**
- 11. Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.**
- 12. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.**
- 13. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.**
- 14. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.**
- 15. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.**

Our spiritual victory against the spiritual warfare we face from our common enemy is assured through Jesus Christ who through His death and resurrection will destroy Satan who has the power of death. We are also told that through Jesus we are reconciled to God. Hebrews two verse eleven.

Hebrews 2:11-18

- 11. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,**
- 12. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.**
- 13. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.**
- 14. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;**
- 15. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.**
- 16. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.**
- 17. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.**
- 18. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.**

Peter reminds us of the need to be sober and vigilant knowing that Satan seeks whom he may devour and that we resist him being steadfast in the faith knowing Satan is the common enemy of the people of God. First Peter five verse six.

1 Peter 5:6-11

6. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7. Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9. Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

11. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

In writing to the Ephesians, Paul writes that we are not to give place to the devil. We are to do away with bitterness, wrath, anger, disputes, evil speaking, and malice and instead be kind and tenderhearted with each other forgiving each other. Ephesians four verse twenty-five.

Ephesians 4:25-32

25. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

26. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27. Neither give place to the devil.

28. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

We resist Satan steadfast in the faith and that means we cannot have itching ears. We must hold fast to the truth, knowing that if there is truth we must hold fast to it is easier to be part of the lie. We have to keep the faith knowing that if we do not what we know as the truth can be rejected, forgotten, and replaced with a lie. Second Timothy four verse one.

2 Timothy 4:1-8

- 1. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;**
- 2. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.**
- 3. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;**
- 4. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.**
- 5. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.**
- 6. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.**
- 7. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:**
- 8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.**

There may be dozens and dozens of groups and congregations within the Church of God and many hold themselves at a distance from other groups and congregations. While holding fast to the truth, to be pure to the faith we cannot allow envying, strife, and divisions to develop amongst us. We all have a common enemy, Satan, with whom we are engaged in spiritual warfare. While that warfare is spiritual in nature it is often fought in the physical realm and we cannot allow our thinking to devolve to ignore the spiritual warfare component in whatever situation we face in life, including these divisions within the Church of God. When Satan seeks to destroy us, through faith we will defeat our common enemy, Satan.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.