

The Authority of the Believer to Confront Spiritual Darkness

Many people don't realize that the spiritual kingdoms of this world involve geography. Cities, geographical areas, and even the ten acres your church sits on are ruled over by spiritual authorities. The question that begs an answer is *which unseen rulers and authorities and spiritual powers rule over your property?* The rulers of darkness or God's armies and the Hosts of heaven?

"God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display His wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was His eternal plan, which He carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord." Ephesians 3:10-11 NLT

The unseen rulers and authorities mentioned in Ephesians 3:10-11 rule the heavenly realm, but the object of their rule is people, and people occupy the geographic properties under the heavens they rule. Whether you know it or not, or whether you believe it or not, there is a battle raging in the spiritual realm for the souls of men and women in the natural realm.

Principalities are contended for, not for the dirt, but for the people, families and business owners living and working there. For instance, have you ever said something like this? "We can't go that way because it's the bad part of town," or "I can no longer take the kids to play in the park because a steady stream of homosexual men have taken over our park with acts of lewdness and sodomy." These geographic areas, and the heavens above them, have been given over to demonic rulers, authorities, evil spirits and mighty powers of this dark world.

As Christians, we use warfare prayer, spoken aloud, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Ephesians 6:10-18 says it this way,

"Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

"Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. "For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

"Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere." NLT

As believers, we have the authority and power in Jesus' name to rebuke and defeat the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Through prayer, we resist the demonic rulers, authorities and powers of this dark world through spiritual battles. By faith, in Jesus' name, we take back territory controlled by Satan—to *stand firm against all strategies of the devil*. Standing firm means that we depend upon the wisdom and power of God in defeating *all the devil's strategies* against us and our neighborhoods. We can do this by trusting in God's victory—*We fight from victory not for victory!*

One method of standing firm is participating in prayer a walk with other mature believers. A prayer walk is "two or more mature believers gathered in Jesus' name" to reclaim a geographic area that has been ruled by "*evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world*" over a particular location. The model for a prayer walk comes from Joshua 6:1-20 when the Israelites conquered the walled stronghold of Jericho by marching around the geographical city.

The Israelites were instructed to take Jericho so they could inhabit the Promised Land and live in peace. God directed them to "walk/march around the stronghold" as they communed with Him in prayer and thanksgiving. God would do their battles as only He can do. Therefore, the Jericho model tells us that our warfare is spiritual. This means that we do battle in the spiritual realm through prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit as we commune with Him in prayer and thanksgiving.

The Jericho example is important for several reasons. (1) We understand that the victory was accomplished by God's hand and not by man's "strength." (2) Obedience to follow God's instructions will test your pride. Pride says, "Marching, singing and praying is foolish and not how to destroy a fortified city." (3) Praise and worship is an important part of doing battle in the spiritual realm.

The destruction of the city of Jericho is a historical fact, but it also provides us with symbolic implications as well. For instance, the massively-walled city of Jericho symbolizes an area in your community held as a demonic stronghold.

For example, I previously mentioned a once peaceful city park that was overtaken by perversion and depravity, making the park "uninhabitable." Also, consider the once vibrant business district that has become crime-ridden. The point is that this public park and business district are plots of land overtaken by demonic strongholds ruled by "*evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world*" Like the Israelites, genuine Christians are called into this battle through spiritual warfare to "tear down the walls" of demonically controlled areas. Our parks and blighted areas can once again be peaceful, prosperous and habitable.

I have a good friend who joined with other Christians and marched around a strip club in their area; not in protest, not carrying placards, but praying and singing praises to God. We must remember our Jericho example. If we will submit to Him and do things His way, God will fight our battles and He will accomplish great things for His glory.

Lastly, a warning is due here. Organizing and participating in a prayer walk is serious business. Similar to a regular soldier attempting to participate in a Special Forces operation, a half-hearted or unprepared believer should not be involved. Those who do participate should be "prayed-up," Spirit-led and immersed in God's love for people.

Moreover, it is most important to remember that our warfare is not against people. The strip club owner, the homosexuals in the park and the thieving teenagers in the business district are not the real enemies—God loves them, too. Our warfare is *against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places*—the demonic forces that influence, oppress and deceive people. Jesus did not come to condemn people, but to set people free from the devil's oppression, who came to steal, kill and destroy.

"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:17 NKJV

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"Let's Make Disciples Together!"