

The New Testament Church
 Preparing for Persecution #7: Pillars of Spiritual Warfare
 Pastor Paul Jehle – September 18, 2022
 Ephesians 2:1-2; 6:10-12

I What is Persecution?

- A. Persecution is defined from the Greek; *to put to flight, drive away.... to pursue* – it is **pressure**
- B. God’s purpose for allowing persecution is to expose the darkness and intensify our godly living
 1. God uses pressure from the flesh and enemy to focus on the manifestation of His Kingdom!
 2. Preparing for persecution begins with practicing to fight the pressure against spiritual growth
 3. When your faith is assaulted; we learn to defend it in humility, revealing our assumptions
 4. Loving our enemies is what makes Christ’s message so unique; *love is our primary response*
 5. The gospel response is to die to self, bury all hope in the natural and expect His intervention!
 6. God uses persecution to reveal our need for His strength in the midst of weakness

II Pillars of Spiritual Warfare – 2nd Kings 6; Ephesians 2:1-2; 6:10-12

- A. 2nd Kings 6 – **Pillar 1 – there is a spiritual war in the invisible realm – and God surrounds us!**
 1. Elisha informed the King of everything the enemy (King of Syria) was doing, foiling plans
 2. The King of Syria suspected treachery, but was informed about Elisha, focusing on him
 3. He brings 50,000 to arrest Elisha in Dothan! – His servant says “we’re surrounded”; no hope
Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those that are with them! – 2nd Kings 6:16
 4. Elisha prays “*Lord... open his eyes that he may see*” – horses and chariots of fire!
 5. God blinds the Syrians, and Elisha leads them into Samaria, to be surrounded by God!
- B. The context of Ephesians and spiritual warfare
 1. Written 60-61 AD as a treatise on what a local church can become; most well taught church
 2. It rehearses who we are in Christ (chps 1-3 – heavenly places) and how we are to live on earth (chps 4-6); the ideal goal of doing spiritual warfare as we live out our faith
- C. Ephesians 2:1-2 – **Pillar 2 – As we submit to God we can resist demonic spiritual persecution**
 1. When unsaved we walked according to sin (with no active conscience); but *also...*
 2. We also walked according to the prince of the power of the air – Ez. 28; Isaiah 14
 - a. The devil was an archangel of worship but rebelled with a third of the angels (demons)
 - b. His power over men is in proportion to how much we dwell in sin – James 4:7
 - c. Our enemy wishes to persecute God’s children to get back at God – Revelation 12:11-12
- D. Ephesians 6:10-12 – **Pillar 3 – We must distinguish between the people and the demonic**
 1. *Finally... be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God (the nature of Christ), that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*
 2. *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against...*

Pillar 4 – The battle is for our families for manifesting the Kingdom displaces the darkness

The Kingdom of God (Mt. 5:14-16)	The Kingdom of Darkness (Eph. 6:12)
(Kingdom of God moves bottom up / inside-out)	(Kingdom of darkness moves top-down by force)
Nations set free from darkness	Lucifer rules the world through national rulers
Churches / Cities set free from darkness	Cities ruled by nations and states
Families set free from darkness	Families in bondage to familiar spirits
Individuals set free from darkness	Individuals in bondage to wicked spirits

3. The strongest of force is at the family level for the curse is broken there (Malachi 4:6)
4. The best way to fight is to ask God to change our hearts and submit to Him in a greater way
5. At the individual and family levels that the Kingdom of God displaces the devil’s kingdom

Conclusion – The Kingdom of God manifests from the inside-out and bottom-up, locally displacing demonic oppression as believers overcome sin and walk in the Lord!