

## 182. The Gospel of John—17:14-19

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### *“With Jesus Behind the Veil” Part 16*

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

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As we come to John 17—we are roughly 9 hours from the Cross. The evening started in the upper room back in Chapter 13 with Jesus and His disciples observing the Feast of Passover.

I believe Jesus knew that He would be crucified early the next morning, and yet as we saw when we studied Chapters 13 and 14 (before they left the upper room and began to make their way to the Mount of Olives), it was obvious that Jesus wasn’t worried about Himself—but rather He was deeply concerned for His disciples.

He knew that after He returned to His Father, and they began to take the gospel into the world fulfilling the Great Commission—they would be the targets of Satan’s vicious, unrelenting attacks at the hands of his demon armies and the world system which he, as the god of this world, controls.

The Lord stressed this to His disciples after they left the upper room and were making their way thru the streets of Jerusalem towards the Golden (eastern) Gate which they would use to exit the city, crossing the Kidron Valley and making their way up the Mount of Olives.

He warned them:

#### **John 15:18-20 (NLT2)**

<sup>18</sup> “If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. <sup>19</sup> The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. <sup>20</sup> Do you remember what I told you? ‘A slave is not greater than the master.’ Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you.

The Lord continued along these lines in Chapter 17 where He stopped teaching His disciples (directly) and began to pray for them to His Father (in their presence)—

#### **John 17:14-15 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> [Father] I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup> I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

**In essence, the bulk of Jesus’ prayer that night for His disciples concerned [spiritual warfare](#).**

If we sum up these verses—Jesus is asking the Father to give His disciples (then and now) victory so that they all might overcome the world even as He had overcome the world.

You remember that Jesus ended His formal (direct) teachings to His disciples at the end of Chapter 16 with a declaration of victory:

**John 16:33 (NKJV)**

<sup>33</sup> "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

This was in anticipation of His work on the Cross. He then proceeds to pray for His disciples in Chapter 17 that we would be enabled by the Father to be overcome the world as well.

The word **'world'** is used nineteen times in this prayer and every time it appears it's the Greek word—'kosmos'. In this context *kosmos* refers to the *fallen world system* that is controlled by the devil and which is in rebellion against God.

Once again, throughout this Chapter the underlying idea or principle is that of spiritual warfare and victory.

As we said last week, spiritual victory comes thru personal holiness—even as Jesus pointed to His personal holiness as the basis for His victory over the world—

**John 17:16-19 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> **They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.** <sup>17</sup> **Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.**  
<sup>18</sup> **As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.** <sup>19</sup> **And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.**

As we said last time, the words **'holiness'** and **'sanctify'** both come from the same Greek root and mean—*"to be set apart."*

Now, when the Bible talks about God's people being *holy*—it means that we are to live our lives separately from the fallen world system we are currently living in but must never be a part of. In other words, we are to be living separately from the world's values, actions, philosophies and ideologies—as instruments to be used exclusively for God's glory and not our own glory or for the glory of the world.

Alright, this is God's will for us—but because the world we're living in is so corrupt and wicked—how can we accomplish this? Well, Jesus tells us through His prayer to the Father for His disciples—

**John 17:17, 19 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> **Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth...** <sup>19</sup> **I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth**

Personal holiness is the key to spiritual victory—and personal holiness is achieved by staying in, feeding upon and living out the Word of God in our daily lives as children of God. Now, before we talk about that—let me stop here and talk a little about spiritual warfare in general.

Sooner or later we all learn that the Christian life is a battleground not a playground.

When we gave our lives to Jesus we entered into a war—a war that, although invisible, is still very much real.

**Ephesians 6:10-12 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

This among many other passages in the New Testament tells us that we are at war with an extremely powerful, super intelligent, hyper-malevolent spirit being known as the Devil who commands a very powerful army of demonic soldiers.

The Devil and his army are determined to destroy your walk with God, your witness for God and everything in your life that's important to you—including your marriage, your family, your ministry, your health, your sanity etc.

The Devil isn't playing games (like many of God's people seem to be playing when it comes to their walk with God and spiritual warfare)—and he'll do whatever he can to accomplish his mission. That's why our commanding Officer, the Captain of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ commands us to be good and faithful soldiers to His cause every day—as He said in His Word:

**2 Timothy 2:3-4 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup> You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

**1 Timothy 1:18 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.

Spiritual warfare, as we have already stated in our previous studies in John 8—is primarily a battle for control of our *thinking*. In fact, the Bible teaches that the mind is actually the *main* battlefield in our war with the devil—the place where most spiritual warfare is fought.

Satan knows if he can control your thinking, he can control you—  
even as Solomon said in the Book of Proverbs,  
*“as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”* (Proverbs 23:7)

That's why the NT has so much to say about our *minds* as Christians—

**Colossians 3:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

**Mark 12:30 (NKJV)**

<sup>30</sup> *And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.* 'This is the first commandment.

**Philippians 2:5 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

**2 Corinthians 2:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices (mind-games).

The Bible says that Satan has *“blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ...should shine on them.”* (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Now, please don't misunderstand—this doesn't mean they're helpless victims—Satan has blinded them because—*they* have allowed it—*they* love darkness rather than light because *they* want to do evil. (Explain)

**Romans 1:28 (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup> And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

**Romans 8:7 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

**Colossians 1:21 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled...

That's why salvation begins with a change of mind—

**Acts 17:30 (NKJV)**

<sup>30</sup> Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.

The Bible says that salvation requires a person to first of all repent. The Greek word for '*repent/repentance*' is 'metanoia' which means— "*to have a change of mind.*"

Once a person repents and receives Jesus as their Savior and are born-again—at that point we are commanded by God—

**Romans 12:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

This transformation by the renewing of your mind will only take place if you continually fill your mind with the Word of God (His truth)—

**John 8:31-32 (NKJV)**

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide ['remain', 'continue'] in My word, you are My disciples indeed. <sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Now as you fill your mind with God's Word you begin to think like God thinks which means you stop thinking like the world thinks—the result will be that you will be transformed in your life by the Holy Spirit—from the inside out.

God's Word teaches us that godly *living* always flows from godly *thinking*—and godly thinking starts when you fill your mind with good doctrine (the Word of God).

Many today have fallen into the trap of pragmatism—the belief that if something works it must be true. Jesus said, "*Blessed are those who believe without seeing*"—or in other words, Christianity starts with the truth of God's Word and based on that truth we live our lives for God—not the other way around.

God's Word teaches us that godly *living* always flows from godly *thinking*—which is only possible by the renewing of your mind through the Word of God—and hiding it in your heart.

**Psalms 119:9, 11 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup> How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word...<sup>11</sup> Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!

I am absolutely convinced that the reason so many Christians are still living worldly lives is because—they're still thinking worldly thoughts! Their minds are still conformed to this world's way of thinking because they have not allowed them to be transformed by the renewing that comes from reading, studying and hiding God's Word in their hearts!

That doesn't necessarily mean that they aren't reading the Bible or even going to Bible study (although I doubt they are)—it simply means they're not serious about putting into *practice* what they are learning—

**James 1:22 (NLT2)**

<sup>22</sup> But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.

**Hebrews 5:12-14 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. <sup>13</sup> For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. <sup>14</sup> But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

If you come to church and hear the Word of God taught but you basically let it go in one ear and out the other without any real desire to obey it—then, although the Word of God is in itself '*living and powerful*'—it will be rendered *lifeless* and *powerless* to change *your* life.

But again, spiritual warfare at its core is a fight for control of a person's thinking—one of the classic passage on this being 2 Corinthians 10:3-5:

**2 Corinthians 10:3-4 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup> For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds...

Paul is saying here that spiritual warfare is all about '*pulling down strongholds*'—but what does that mean? What are these strongholds? Well, he tells us in verse 5—

**2 Corinthians 10:5 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> **casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.**

"*Pulling down strongholds*" in v.4, relates to "*casting down arguments*" in verse 5 (in verse 4 Paul gives the metaphor, and in verse 5 he explains the metaphor).

These *strongholds* are "**arguments**"

➤ *Okay, but what exactly does that mean?*

The Greek word is *logismos* and it means, "*Thoughts, opinions, philosophies, theories,*"—or to sum it up—"Ideologies" (i.e., "belief systems"). The "**and**" in v.5 is *kai* in the Greek and should be translated "**even.**"

Paul is saying that we are fighting against ideologies **even**—"every high thing (every proud, arrogant, lofty belief system) *that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.*"

This would include all the false religions of the world and the cults—but also things like: atheism, communism, Marxism, secular humanism, and of course *naturalism*.

Naturalism is the reigning ideology of our day embraced by intellectuals, scientists and most of academia in our country and around the world. A naturalist believes that the natural realm is all there is, and that everything came into existence through natural processes (think ‘big bang’) without any supernatural input by a deity.

In fact, most if not all naturalists believe that God only exists as a fantasy in the minds of religious non-intellectuals—so if you believe in God you’re a superstitious religious dummy!

In our university’s “*naturalism*” is the virtually unquestioned assumption upon which all matters of life are based—including and especially the theory of evolution.

The last 4 mass shootings in our nation have been done by teenagers—which has shocked many secularists in our country—but why? *If you teach children from age 5 that they came from animals—why should you be shocked when they act like animals.*

So, to state it again, spiritual warfare is a battle against the brainwashing of the devil who has pumped incessantly into the minds of people through academia, the mass media, and many other outlets—all of his satanic propaganda.

This means that primarily, on a day-by-day basis, spiritual warfare is all about rescuing people who have been taken captive by the devil through his lies—and we have the truth that alone can set them free—

#### **2 Timothy 2:23-26 (NLT2)**

<sup>23</sup> Again I say, don’t get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. <sup>24</sup> A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. <sup>25</sup> Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people’s hearts, and they will learn the truth. <sup>26</sup> Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil’s trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.

Alright, but here is where the spiritual warfare intersects with our lives as believers—the devil doesn’t want us to share God’s truth with those he has deceived and taken captive.

So, he will do whatever he can (whatever we allow him to do) to take us out, to neutralize our walk and destroy our witness. Yet, remember what Paul promised us in 2 Corinthians 10:4—“*For the weapons of our warfare are not physical but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds...*”

So, what are these mighty weapons God has given to us  
to smash the devil’s strongholds in the lives of those he has taken captive?

**Paul tells us in Ephesians 6—they are Word of God and prayer.**

As we said a few moments ago—personal holiness is the key to spiritual victory, and that personal holiness is achieved by staying in the Word of God—and obeying what God has commanded in our daily lives as His children.

But as we just quoted James 1:22—Christians can be “*hearers of the Word without being doers of the Word.*”

So what motivates and animates our obedience to Jesus and His Word? Jesus said, “**If [the Greek is ‘since’] you love me, obey my commandments.**” (John 14:15)

How many here love Jesus—please raise your hands? Okay, but **how many here are ‘in love with Jesus?’**

***“How do I know if I’m in love with Jesus?”***

Next time we’ll explore this simple concept that I believe holds the secret and the power for living a dynamic Christian life of holiness and obedience to our Savior!

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If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

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