

OHC Family Camp**

Introduction to the weekend's theme:

Why should we consider spiritual warfare biblically this weekend?**

1. **Alignment: To ensure we have alignment with the biblical worldview.

We are socially embedded beings being constantly disciplined or shaped by influences

And so we need to check regularly, that we are not misaligned with the Biblical worldview

Christians tend to make **two mistakes** when it comes to the devil or spiritual warfare and our prevailing worldview we are dipped in tends towards either:

- **Overemphasis** (animistic or mystical worldview) or **underemphasis** (secular humanistic)
- May we do neither! May we simply seek to be biblical & be better for it.

So the first reason is ALIGNMENT having a biblical worldview of our lives... The second reason is...

2. **The Biblical Metanarrative: A cosmic battle is one of the major metanarratives in Scripture

One of the BIG STORIES of the bible is the TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS...

The kingdom of God & the rival rebel kingdom of the evil one.

It is common to divide redemption history into FOUR BIG CHAPTERS:

Creation, Fall, Redemption & Restoration

But have you ever consider this narrative & spiritual warfare? [Expand briefly]

If we fail to understand **the spiritual warfare dynamic** of the metanarrative

We are **likely to misinterpret events & the circumstances**

- Of our lives or of those around us
- In so doing, impacting our ability to respond with godly wisdom.

So the first reason is ALIGNMENT having a biblical worldview of our lives... The second reason is placing the circumstances we experience within the biblical STORY... & the third reason is...

3. **Salvation & Sanctification through a Spiritual Warfare lens

a) **Spiritual Warfare & Soteriology & Mission:**

- Salvation & rescuing people is **pushing back darkness**...

- Gospel advance, evangelism, salvation, church planting **is all an attack on the kingdom of darkness** (of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end' (Isaiah 9:7)
- Since this is true, **it should be no surprise** therefore that if you read the Gospels & Acts there are **demonic encounters often as new ground** is taken for gospel advance¹

b) **Spiritual warfare & Sanctification:**

- Kingdom restoration, over-turning the effects of the curse 1 by 1...

c) **Spiritual warfare & proclaiming Freedom:**

- We are mandated to set captives free (Luke 4:18-19).
- So many people are 'saved but stuck' but we have the keys (Matthew 16:19)
- Proclaiming the kingdom rule & reign of God in the darkness
- Calling people to restored relationship with God, self, one another & with society & creation...

d) **Spiritual warfare & Prayer:**

- 'you will not know what prayer is for until you know that life is war' - Piper

Do you see how NB understanding that we are in a spiritual battle is?

So the first reason is ALIGNMENT, the second is placing our circumstances within the biblical STORY & the third reason is SEEING SALVATION & SANCTIFICATION through a spiritual warfare lens...

I hope you will agree that this is not some side-show for some sub-category of weird Christians!

- Spiritual warfare is not some sort of specialist activity
- That people with special skills get involved with.
- Rather it is what all of us will face & need to learn to deal with
- As we advance the gospel and see the church built in our day.

Desired Outcomes

1. To **be sober-minded, watchful & wise**
2. Have **increased confidence in Jesus** our Saviour.
3. That we **would know the authority & agency** that is ours as Christ followers
4. That we would know **how to resist our enemy**.
5. We would be confident God has sent us **to set captives free, & to push back darkness**

¹ Gerasene Man (Mark 5), Philip preaching the gospel in Samaria 'Unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many' (Acts 8:8), Then also Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-25), Saul & Barnabas at Cyprus (Bar-Jesus the magician & Jewish false prophet approaches them (Acts 13:4) & Saul in Philippi - Lydia converted then comes the demonised fortune telling slave girl...

6. That anyone with any kind of demonic influence, **to be set free** from that influence forever

How will we break it down over the next three preaching sessions & then the break-away sessions tomorrow afternoon?

Session 1: Biblical Expectations of Spiritual Warfare
Session 2: The Devil's Schemes & Strategies for Resisting
Session 3: The Weapons of our Warfare
Seminars:
1. Heart Health
2. Powerful Prayer
3. Practicing the presence of God
4. Identifying & dealing with demonic influences

Session 1: Biblical Expectations of Spiritual Warfare**

[Text 1 Peter 5:8-11]

Brothers and sisters, the Scripture explains our lives as being part of a cosmic conflict.

Life is not like a war – it is one!**

⁸ **Be sober-minded**; be **watchful**. **Your adversary the devil** prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ **Resist him, firm in your faith**, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰ And after you have **suffered a little while, the God of all grace**, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, **will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you**. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

(1 Peter 5:8-11)

1. Be Sober-Minded & Watchful**

There is an exhortation here to a certain way of thinking.

If the apostle Peter was from Stellenbosch he would say; “Skrik wakker!”

A drunk person is present but not truly alert.

Their reflexes are dulled, their vision is blurred,

They are not in control of themselves or their thoughts, they are unguarded.

Scripture here urges us to be the opposite

To be sober-minded - alert, sharp, in control, on our guard...

But Why? Why should we be sober-minded?

Because we an **adversary**/opponent/a great enemy...

One who is prowling around looking to devour you.

And yet so many Christians walk around as though they don't have one!

So many, go through life **oblivious really...**

Acting as if they are **living in peace-time**.

When the Bible describes them as being deeply enmeshed in a cosmic conflict.

Now don't get me wrong;

I am not for a minute suggesting that we get pre-occupied with the devil

That is a major error that some Christians make.

We ought to be more caught up with a vision of God than with one of the devil - that's true...

It is an error to be preoccupied and or impressed with the devil, his power and his tactics

But, it is an equal error to be naive, ignorant and unaware

That you have an adversary, it is unwise to be unaware of his tactics & weapons...

Now, in a church like OHC, I would not think that you have an overemphasis on the devil!

But I do believe that churches like ours **can tend to overlook or be naive** or unaware...

And therefore be surprised when the devil does attack us!

You know, sometimes the devil roars like a lion in your face - and so his threat is obvious

In those moments, his intention is to intimidate, to strike fear...

But you can see his threat, you are aware of him

But that is only one of his tactics...

This passage says that he has other tactics.

- He is also the one who is on the prowl (1 Peter 5:8)
- **Moving stealthily undetected**, as a hunter focussed on it's prey.
- He is like one who **lies in ambush waiting** for an opportunity to pounce,
- **Having lulled us** into spiritual laziness concerning his threat **he uses surprise...**

But, we are to be like the springbok...(not the one in a green jersey)

Have you ever seen a springbok nervously approaching a waterhole for a drink of water?

Eyes up, ears, up listening out for each other as a herd for any sign of the adversary.

They are careful, watchful, alert.

Why?

Because **they know they have a powerful & ferocious enemy** and adversary...

The hungry lion lying crouched in the long grass waiting to pounce,

Seeking some springbok to devour!

You know, **there are no lazy, careless springboks...**

Because all the lazy ones have been eaten already!

Note however, that the springbok is alert, not afraid (there is a difference)

You see, a springbok can outrun a lion **IF they are alert.**

Likewise, you and I do have an enemy, an adversary.

So Scripture tells us to be **sober-minded & watchful**;

- The Gk word translated 'watchful' can be translated vigilant/staying awake/in a state of readiness,
- The word is not what some Christians are - nervous, over-stimulated & on edge, but alert...

Elsewhere in the NT letters we are told similarly;

- To be **very careful** then how we live **not as fools** for **the days are evil** (Ephesians 5:15 NLT)
- We are told not to be **unwisely ignorant** of **our adversaries schemes** (2 Corinthians 2:11)
- We are warned that if we are **not on our guard**, we **could be outwitted** by Satan (2 Cor 2:11)

Do you see it?

Scripture is urging us to have a certain expectation, a way of thinking about life... (a mental-map)

Scripture is urging us to consider how we evaluate things & how we react in circumstances...

So what's your mentality?

There are far too many Christians living **as though this life is peacetime...**

Not acknowledging that in fact they have an enemy

And that for this period in redemption history - we are living in **wartime not peacetime...**

We are urged to be sober-minded brothers and sisters.

Your adversary **is not seeking peace**,

Rather, 1 Peter 5:8 depicts your enemy **in attack mode** crouched down

And so this truth means that **this life here & now is not peacetime but wartime!**

Why is this important?

The way you see the age you live in

The way you see the circumstances of your life

Will determine **your expectation**

Which affects **your state of preparation**.

****Too many Christians are like a person who jumps into the boxing ring with Mike Tyson
Known to many as the baddest man/boxer on the planet known for his viciousness!**

So there they are bobbing in the ring with Mike...

And then suddenly Mike launches into a barrage of hits, uppercuts & jabs to the jaw!

And the Christian in the ring squeals to the ref - HE HIT ME!

I mean, seriously, what did you expect? A hug?

Our Christian life is a battle as real as jumping into a boxing ring with an angry champion boxer!
Jesus Himself said of **the enemy** that **he comes to steal, kill & destroy** (John 10:10)
Satan is not out to bless us, but is crouching seeking to devour us...

We have been stalked by our adversary this year **as a church...**

One of our worship leaders who led our Zulu choir...
Secretly caught up in pornography, masturbation, online gambling, then sexual sin!

Then also a senior leader in our church
Living with a secret unresolved pattern of unforgiveness,
Peace-faking through team meetings thinking that their resentment won't defile many....!

But then in the moment of our leadership transition it all comes out!
There was a risk of division & disunity...
And so it has cost us months of prayer & tough love & lost momentum at a critical time...

Brothers and sisters. Don't kid yourself, don't be complacent, be alert and sober minded!
You see your mentality determines your expectation and affects your preparation.

Earlier in his letter Peter the apostle wrote:**

Beloved, **do not be surprised** at **the fiery trial** when it comes upon you to test you,
as though something strange were happening to you. (1 Peter 4:11)

We should not be those who are surprised!
Attack, resistance, opposition is what happens in wartime.

Look at this example of what this looks like in practice in the life of a believer;
Paul in Lystra - has been stoned for preaching the gospel (not applauded)
He is so bad he is dragged out the city **as though dead**,
But the next day Luke records that this happens:**

“...**strengthening the souls of the disciples**,
encouraging them to continue in the faith,
and saying that **through many tribulations**
we must enter the kingdom of God.”
(Acts 14:22)

Paul is not surprised or shocked

And **he is not intimidated** or **knocked off course**

He keeps going **undeterred**, He doesn't mope about **licking His wounds** for months

He dusts himself off & stands up & continues the fight strengthening the disciples

Setting their expectation saying - 'this is the type of stuff we ought to expect'

Why? Because, the Christian life is not LIKE A WAR - it is a war.

So don't be so surprised when it FEELS LIKE A WAR.

Don't think something strange is happening...

Q: How 'sober-minded' & 'watchful' are you?

2. Resist him**

But note! We are not just to hang around like a **spiritual piñata** waiting for the next WACK!

We are **to do something.****

⁸ **Be sober-minded; be watchful.** Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ **Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing** that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has **called you to his eternal glory** in Christ, **will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.** ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.
(1 Peter 5:8-11)

Don't you love Scripture it's so balanced so practically applicable to our lives!

Scripture doesn't say we are to get a t-shirt with WELCOME printed on it
And lie down and wait for the Devil to wipe his feet on us - like some door mat!

No! We are to RESIST (stand against) our adversary.

- We are to be sober-minded & watchful **SO THAT we can resist** (stand against) him.
 - If we aren't sober-minded we will not be prepared to resist!
- But being sober-minded & watchful we can resist:
 - Firm in our faith knowing **the attacks** we endure **are not unique** but common (vs9)
 - And knowing **how the story ends!** (we have been called into eternal glory with God) (vs10)
 - Knowing that Jesus Himself will restore, confirm, strengthen & establish us!! (vs10-11)

We will look more tomorrow at how to resist.

But for now and in closing let's look at one more Scripture which shows us HOW to resist.**

Submit yourselves therefore to God.
Resist the devil,
and **he will flee** from you.
⁸ **Draw near** to God,
and he will draw near to you.
(James 4:7-8a)

Resistance looks like this; (3 steps & 2 promises)**

1. **Submit** yourselves to God
2. **Resist** the devil
3. He must flee from you
4. **Draw near** to God
5. He will draw near to you!

So, brothers & sisters, the point of tonight, this weekend, is not some devil/demon focus...
It is all SO THAT we can be prepared to respond biblically.
Watchful SO THAT we can RESIST his attacks & PUSH-BACK the darkness.
Amen.

[Pray & Minister]

Session 2: The Devil's Schemes & Strategies for Resisting

Last night we looked at having a Biblically inspired mindset & expectations.

We concluded last night hearing that we need to resist our adversary

But in order to do so, we need to consider what Ephesians 6:11 calls

The 'schemes of the devil' - his plans, his strategies for attacking us.

I feel a bit like a boxing coach today

Coaching his boxer in the corner of the ring during the fight...

"He's getting inside your defences..."

"Watch his left hook, he is unbalancing you on your right and then coming in with the hook"

"Don't let him come at you, advance on him, stun him with your jab, cut sequence..."

****Knowing your enemies tactics**

And **knowing your response** to him will be a massive advantage to you.

Awareness of the devil's tactics is 90% of the battle won!

So what are the enemies tactics?

****¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.**

(Ephesians 6:10-12)

This might feel like a bit of a list - but don't tune out.

I want us to turn the spotlight on these various schemes of the enemy

So that we can know how to identify & then resist his schemes.

1. Temptation (Pleasures, Pride & Worldliness)**

- Temptation is to sin... (define sin...)

******"(Sin) is a condition of the heart\mind\will\affections and the practical outworking of that condition in thoughts, words and deeds that offend God and transgress His holy law" (NIV Bible Dictionary, 946)

******"Every sin, is really a short sharp message to God: 'I don't like you.

I would rather have these things than you. They give me what I want." - Mark Dever

- Temptation **starts within us with our desires**
 - Sin is a misplaced love/desire that is then exploited (James 1:14)
 - We see this in the Genesis account of Eve; as it says that Eve was tempted by the fruit of the forbidden tree which was desirable;
 - It was a “**delight** to the eyes” (Genesis 3:6 ESV)
 - And it “**was desirable** for obtaining wisdom” (Genesis 3:6 in CSB) (Pride)
 - Jesus warned against the robbing power of “life’s pleasures” (Luke 8:14)
- We are warned in Scripture not to love **the ways of the world** or the things in the world
 - The desires of **the flesh**, the desires of **the eyes**, and **pride of life** (1 John 2:15-17)
 - NB in a town like Stellenbosch to not be enamoured with **the ‘wisdom of the world’** (1 Corinthians 1:20) or **‘earthly wisdom’** (2 Corinthians 1:12) - sex/gender revolution etc...
- Temptation **thrives in idleness!**
 - Beware of idleness King David is an example of someone who got this wrong
 - “at the time when kings go out to battle... David remained on his couch” (2 Samuel 11:1-2)
 - All the wisdom literature about the ‘ sluggard’²

Strategies for resisting: **

A) “Increased love for God is **the ultimate antitoxin** for temptation”

Because defeating temptation;

- Is not primarily about self-control or saying “NO”
- Because rules like “do not handle/taste/touch...”
- Have no power to restrain sensual indulgence (Colossians 2:21-23)

B) **Understand/believe/walk in the good of - **your new relationship to sin & temptation!**

- Romans 6 teaches us that the power & control of sin has been broken for believers in Jesus, & so we are no longer slaves to sin (Romans 6:6)!
- God will not let you be tempted beyond your ability & will provide an escape (1 Cor 10:13)
- So now WE CAN CHOOSE TO NOT SIN - do not let sin reign in your body (Romans 6:12)
- We have been set free from sins control & are now slaves to righteousness (Romans 6:17-18)

² The sluggard is lazy and sleeps late (Prov. 6:9), the sluggard craves and gets nothing (Prov. 13:4); the sluggard turns on his bed like a door on its hinges (Prov. 26:14); the sluggard buries his hand in the dish and will not even bring it back up to his mouth (Prov. 19:24; Prov. 26:15); the sluggard does not plough in autumn (Prov. 20:4); the desire of the sluggard kills him because he craves but does nothing else (Prov. 21:25); the way of the sluggard is overgrown with thorns (Prov. 15:19); the sluggard’s field is neglected (Prov. 24:30–4); keep away from every brother living in idleness (2 Thess. 3:6); we are to admonish the person who is idle...

C) **Serve Jesus! Romans 12:9 (NIV) “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord”

2. Accusation**

- Our enemy is “the accuser of the brothers” (Revelation 12:10)
- He loves to condemn & the problem is that his accusations about us are accurate!
 - But they are also designed to undermine the gospel truth about Jesus finished work for us & who we are because we have believed in Jesus (beloved children of God)!
 - His accusations will undermine Jesus’ forgiveness of our sin.
 - If he can get us wallowing in our sin, he undermines Jesus work for us
 - So, he then keeps us stuck in our sin and shame...
 - And discourages us from the repentance that will lead us to receive forgiveness, mercy & grace and the worship & thanks that is due to Jesus!

Strategy for Resisting:

****Let his accusations bring you to repentance!** (Yes I did that...)

So that you can **receive** God’s forgiveness & mercy!

Then **be rooted in the truth of God revealed in Scripture about who you are (identity)!

3. Deception **

- Jesus called Satan the ‘**a liar** and the **father of lies**’, there is ‘**no truth** in him’ (John 8:44)
- The Bible attributes Eve’s temptation to the Devil’s **deception** (2 Corinthians 11:3)
- The Devil **uses Scripture out of context** like he did when trying to tempt Jesus misquoting Psalm 91:11-12.
- He lies to us about God, ourselves or others!
- He appears for us, harmless... 2 Corinthians 11:14-15 warns: “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.”

Strategy for Resisting:

****Devote** yourself to **reading Scripture** + reading with others to avoid misinterpretation... **Ask:** “Is this TRUE according to Scripture?”

****Pray**, ask God to speak His truth over you (“Listening Prayer”)

4. Distraction **

- The ‘**opportunity cost**’ of life’s **worries, riches & pleasures** (Luke 8:14 NIV) is a lack of fruitfulness for God
 - Money, possessions & eternity (R.Alcorn) and how possessions clutter our lives & rob time

- The devil either withholds material possessions (stirring up the desire to have something) or he gives us possessions (stirring up the desire to hoard & have more and or worry about keeping it, looking after it...) Material things rob us of time and thought space.
- Media consumption & busyness! 'Seek first the kingdom...' (Matthew 6:33)
- The danger & deception of letting good things become ultimate things (entertainment, rest, recreation, health, family...)
- Busyness reduces our capacity to join ourselves to the church and to the mission of the church, busyness hinders the depth of our relationships, hinders evangelism & militates against intimacy with Jesus!
- Busyness chokes the life of God and fruitfulness in the Spirit which God wants for us. And yet, busyness is subtle in that it can feel so right, and we feel so important if we are busy...

Strategy for Resisting:

**Don't major in the minor & minor in the momentous!

**Do regular diary check, time-check, money-check, who did I invest in relationally?

Review...

Ask:

- "Do my choices align with my stated priorities?"
- "Do my priorities reveal I'm seeking first God's kingdom?"

5. Discouragement & fear**

- Moses was 'very meek/depressed' (Numbers 11:3)
- Elijah was afraid of Jezebel runs for his life & then asks to die (1 Kings 19)
- Nehemiah - opposition, intimidation, mocking (what you are doing is insignificant) threat (Nehemiah 4)
- My own battle with fear & demonic intimidation when God said: "build for me a non-racial, multicultural, class-crossing church"
- The devil uses threats and fear to try to control us or limit us in our obedience to Jesus.

Strategy for Resisting:

**Let God fight for you (Moses with Miriam & Aaron Numbers 12:4-9)

**Ask God for a revelation of His omnipresence & omnipotence! (Hebrews 13:5)

**Know that greater is He that is in me than He that is in the world! (1 John 4:4)

**Ask God to fill you with His love because - Perfect love drives out all fear (1 John 4:18)

6. Isolation**

- **This is the oldest trick & trap** that the devil has. (The old ones are still working)
 - We either are sinning or on the way to sinning (in some compromise)...
 - And so we feel unease about worship & Christian community...
 - Sin likes to hide so we withdraw...
 - Or we have sinned and we feel shame (deception & accusation)
 - “I just need to sort some things out then I’ll come...” (you can’t!)
- **Don’t you find it strange?**
 - That we so willingly self-impose the harshest punishment available to the church for discipline of serious unrepentant offences - removing one from fellowship!
- **Be on your guard** when you feel ‘hurt’ by ‘the church’ and you feel like you are just going to withdraw a little, you feel you need a little space...

Strategy for Resisting:

**Determine to not walk alone! (Discipleship groups, Life Groups)

We are meant to fight in platoons

Protected by those around us and protecting those around us.

**We are not to give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing (Hebrews 10:25)

7. Sickness **

- Not all sickness/physical suffering is a demonic attack.
- This is a massive topic that needs more time than we have here!
- However in summary, biblically I believe there are **three potential sources of pain** for us

**Source 1: Our unwise/sinful actions & the consequences

**Source 2: God’s sovereign loving Fathering of us & His sovereign purposes

- The blind man - Jesus: “but that the works of God might be displayed in him” (John 9:3)
- Paul’s thorn (2 Cor 12:7-10)
- Endure hardship as discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11)
- God “delivers the afflicted by their affliction & opens their ear by adversity” (Job 36:15)

**Source 3: The Age we live in!

- An age where the SINFUL ACTIONS of OTHERS impact us
- An age in which the SYSTEMS of this world (political, socio-economic & natural) are impacted by sin
- An age in which our bodies are MORTAL & DEGENERATING
- And an age in which we have a genuine & active ENEMY

- We are looking at the 'schemes' of the enemy. And what is clear in Scripture is that some sickness is directly from the attack of our adversary (Source no.3);
 - The woman with the **disabling spirit** kept in bondage by Satan for 18yrs (Luke 13:16)
 - Jesus went about doing good & healing all who were **oppressed by the devil** (Acts 10:38)

Strategy:

Prayerfully consider the potential source of your suffering.

Ask - "Is there something I should stop?"

Ask - "Father is this You?"

If it is because of the AGE WE ARE LIVING IN;

- Pray for the in-breaking of the kingdom of God in healing.
- Pray for the disabling spirit or demonic influence to GO in Jesus name
- Set the captives & oppressed people free. . .
- And also accept that this side of Jesus' second coming we will still experience sin/sickness/sadness & death but one day Jesus will stand up and make all things new!

We have covered a lot of ground! Temptation, accusation, deception, distraction, discouragement & fear, isolation & sickness. . .

But a large part of the battle is won when you have identified what's happening.

The BIG IDEA is that for each of these we are not meant to just act **like a piñata** getting whacked! You can resist the devil, we can take action.

[Prayer/Ministry]

Session 3: The Weapons of our Warfare**

Last night we looked at having **a Biblically inspired mindset** & expectations.

Then having looked at **the schemes of the devil** earlier this morning

Let us conclude by considering **the weapons of our warfare** using Ephesians 6:10-20. . . .

Through this letter to the Ephesian church the apostle Paul has:

- Painted a glorious picture of our salvation by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone.
- And he has exhorted us how to live in response to this glorious good news (4:17-6:9)
- But now as the apostle's letter comes to its close. . .
- The letter faces up to the reality of life in this present age
 - An age in which victory has been secured on the cross by Jesus & so the final outcome is secure
 - And yet an age in which there are still very real, dangerous and painful skirmishes with an enemy who's destiny is fixed - but one who is still able to inflict pain in these days. . .
 - An age which is described as "this present darkness" in which God's church is an outpost of the kingdom of light!

Paul has been at pains to describe the glorious new united community formed through faith in Jesus!

- But now he wants to alert believers to the demonic which hates God & hates God's church
- How they will do their utmost to try to destroy what God has been forming through faith in Jesus.

And so as the letter concludes - it is these powers we are told to be aware of & it is these powers we are told to wage war or wrestle with as we advance God's kingdom & build His church! **

¹⁰ Finally, **be strong in the Lord** and in **the strength of his might**. ¹¹ Put on **the whole armor of God**, that you **may be able to stand** against **the schemes** of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, **against the cosmic powers** over this present darkness, against **the spiritual forces** of evil in the heavenly places.

¹³ Therefore **take up the whole armor of God**, that you may be able **to withstand in the evil day**, and **having done all, to stand firm**. ¹⁴ **Stand therefore**, having fastened on **the belt of truth**, and having put on **the breastplate of righteousness**, ¹⁵ and, **as shoes** for your feet, having put on **the readiness given by the gospel** of peace.

¹⁶ **In all circumstances** take up **the shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take **the helmet of salvation**, and **the sword of the Spirit**, which is **the word of God**, ¹⁸ **praying at all times in the Spirit**, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, **keep alert with all perseverance**, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

1. Be strong in the LORD and in the strength of HIS might (vs10)**

What beautiful balance! The imperative is: **you** be strong but **you** to be strong **in God's might!**

We are being warned & encouraged simultaneously.

Be **Warned:** The powers we are up against are significant & cunning. They are not to be engaged in our own strength - as the sons of Sceva discovered (Acts 19:13-17)

We are not told to be strong in our own strength

Like the dad to the son on the rugby field
Who's been knocked down
And the dad just tells him to 'man up! & get up!'

And we are also not told to 'let go and let God'

Be **Encouraged:** Rather we are exhorted to strengthen ourselves in God.

This reminds me of Paul's prayer for these believers in Ephesians 1:16-21

- Where the apostle prayed that they would **have revelation**
- Of **the immeasurable greatness** of God's **power** for us,
- That same power that **raised Jesus** from the dead and defeated sin, Satan & death!

How?

- Being constantly more in awe of God in all His majestic sovereign power (faith is rooted in WHO God is)
- Being constantly filled with the Spirit our Helper
- Being constantly in prayer - for wisdom, guidance & for in-breaking power

2. Be aware - this is a spiritual battle (vs12-13) it's a present darkness so keep alert (vs18)**

We dealt with this thoroughly last night.

So here I will just reiterate that **our battle is a spiritual one**

Against cunning rulers/authorities/cosmic powers in 'this present darkness'

Life is a battle, it's not like one, it is one.

**And because this is true;

- We need to keep being constantly alert (vs18)
- We need to ask for God's enabling power
- And we are to 'put-on' & not neglect the spiritual weapons & armour God's given us...

3. Put on ALL God's armour so that you'll be able to resist!** (vs11&13)

It is instructive that twice in this passage we are told to put on the FULL ARMOUR OF GOD

- We need to **put on ALL that God's given us**.
- It is a set that's designed by God to work together.

Cricket illustration - Kagiso Rabada 154km/h

Will you just take the gloves & pads **or the ball box also?**

Or are you asking for the thigh guard, chest guard, elbow...

- This is **God's armour**
 - It is **His provision for us** & it is **sufficient** to stand & **resist** our adversaries attacks.
 - Since it is God's armour given to us, it is by implication not ours.
 - It is not us relying on our ability/cleverness but trusting what God designed for our protection.
 - What we need is not the wisdom & counsel of the world, we need God's wisdom, God's armour - to withstand in the fight against spiritual forces.

Our responsibility is to take up what we've been given by God to defend ourselves.

- We're not to take up just what we think we might need, we're to put it all on & to keep it on.
- Then the promise is that we **will be "able to stand"** against the schemes of the devil" (Eph 6:11)

How do you put the armour on? - That's what the rest of verses 13-20 cover.

4. Stand & keep standing! (vs13-14)**

Again we have the beautiful balance in Scripture

We are to stand & to keep standing - regardless of what comes our way.

And yet it is God himself who sustains us to the end (1 Corinthians 1:8)!

Don't be surprised when you encounter strong opposition that threatens to knock you down....

So when you feel the winds of warfare tugging at you like a howling South Easter Wind

STAND & keep standing! Knowing that it is God who will keep you to the end.

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

(Jude 24-25)

How to keep standing?

- Vulnerable authentic prayer, call on the help of the the Helper...
- Don't stand alone, stand together.

5. Belt of truth (vs14)**

Fasten the belt of truth on you - an under garment that kept all the armour together.

So, what is the truth that keeps us together?

- **Truth is Jesus Himself!**

- We follow One who said; “I am the way the truth and the life” (John 14:6)
- **Truth is summed up in the man Jesus Christ**
- His life, death, resurrection, glorification & his return to come
- Truth is the gospel, the announcement of good news about Jesus.
- The absolute & unchanging truth of Jesus is the antithesis of the relativism of our age!

- **The truth of Scripture**

- We can use to defeat the lies/accusations/deceit of the Deceiver
- Truth that overturns our feelings.
- Living as those who's lives & spiritual walk **go up and down** based on how we feel
- “I don't feel very loved by God right now” or “I don't feel that God is with me” ...

- **The truth of our testimony** - we overcome by the testimony of our salvation (Revelation 12:11)

**How do we fasten the belt of truth on us?

- Saturate your life with Scripture daily - read it, meditate on it, let it shape you & obey it.
- Testimony from 20+yrs of ministry: those who have & those who haven't.
- You won't be the exception.

6. Breastplate of righteousness (vs14)**

Guarding our most vital organs is the breastplate of righteousness!

This piece of armour is a truth, so it is linked to the belt but it is a piece in it's own right too...

What is the breastplate of righteousness?

- Knowing that the Lord is my righteousness!
- Knowing that Jesus' perfect righteousness was imputed (given) to me when I believed in Jesus
- And so His always perfect magnificent life has been accredited to me as if I lived it!
- And so that I now stand in restored right relationship with God by grace alone (Romans 5:1-2)
- And therefore God has and always will accept the one who has believed.

Our righteousness has nothing to do with performance or how well you are doing.

It's not the breastplate of performance,

It's not the breastplate of our achievement or good works

The Lord is my righteousness!

This truth will fortify you, strengthen you and enable you to take your stand against the accusations of the devil - this is the armour God's provided for you.

Do you know it? Do you believe it? Are you living in the good of it?

7. Shoes of readiness that comes from having believed the Gospel^(vs15) **

- We are meant to be soldiers **in attack mode**
- We are to have the gospel about Jesus on our lips.
- We are to be ready to proclaim the good news of Jesus 24/7 & push back darkness as we do...

The best form of defence is attack!

I love how this aspect of the armour **gets us out of thinking** the armour is just defensive.

God calls us out of darkness and into his marvellous light
and then calls us to walk right back into the darkness and shine. - Burk Parsons

Are you sitting down soldier waiting for arrows or are you up & out there **always ready to give an account for the hope you have in Jesus** (1 Peter 3:15)?

8. Shield of faith (in all circumstances) (vs16)**

- The shield of faith is the biggest single piece of this set of armour we have been given.
- It is a vital first line of defence.
- And it is meant to be raised with the shields of brothers & sisters standing shoulder to shoulder to form an impenetrable wall of protection.

Why is it described as the shield of faith?

One of the main tactics of the enemy is to try to get us to doubt God & His goodness!
This was the original tactic on Adam and Eve in the Garden.

We combat unbelief with faith, with belief (pisteos).**

"Faith is not primarily a function of how you feel. Faith is living out, trusting, and believing what truth is despite what you feel." - Tim Keller

RT Kendall says: **"Faith is believing God"**

- It is believing what the Bible says about WHO God is & WHAT He has done for you
- Faith is believing what the Bible says about WHO's you now are forever.
- It is appropriating & standing on the truths of Scripture about God, yourself & this life.

This weapon is so potent - it is not just able to defend you from the fiery arrows of the enemy (accusation/lies/deception) but it is able to extinguish them/nullify them!

Faith has to overshadow, subjugate, dominate reason and challenge reason's right to rule when God has made a promise. - Terry V

****So, take it up**, hold up your shield of believing God.

Believing what the bible says about God, and about your life and the church...

****How can you strengthen your faith?**

"Faith is not the sort of thing that can be gained by trying harder" J.Ortberg

****So don't strive, but ask God for more revelation of WHO GOD IS & WHAT HE HAS SAID.**

****Be more in awe.** Pray with Paul - **"I want to know Christ"** (Philippians 3:10)

9. Helmet of salvation (vs17)**

- The Christian soldier's helmet is **'the hope of salvation'** (1 Thessalonians 5:8) which is;
 - Our assurance of all **we have received** through Jesus (every spiritual blessing in Christ - Eph 1:3)
 - Our hope in all **we still anticipate to receive** on THE DAY of Christ (1 Peter 1:13)
 - The hope to which He has called us to (Ephesians 1:18)
- We are to guard our minds with this hope!
- We are to set our hope fully on the grace that will still come to us on the day of Christ (1 Peter 1:13)
- We are not to waiver in unbelief concerning these things but they are to fortify and protect our minds and thinking.

Past grace is the foundation for future faith - J.Piper

- Remember to remember. So look back to look up with unwavering hope!

10. Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (vs17)**

- This item is our most attack oriented .
- We are to advance God's kingdom, push back darkness, resist the enemy...
- With the short-sword (dagger) of the Spirit - God's word.

We don't rush out into with our clever ideas, opinions or feelings ("I know it says BUT I feel...")

- Impact on how we do life, counselling, preaching, discipleship...
- We do not lean on our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5)....

- We submit to, we lean on, we saturate everything we do with Scripture...

Make a decision today;

Arm ourselves with Biblical truth.

The foolishness of: "I wish I knew the Bible like you..."

Start today.

11. Praying at all times in the Spirit (vs18)**

- The New Testament highlights **prayer** as a constant need!
 - Prayer is how we access God's strength we are to stand in
 - Prayer connects our need with God's supply

"Prayer is weakness leaning on omnipotence." W. S. Bowd

Why pray? (4 reasons)

- Because we GET TO, we get to speak to the Maker of heaven and earth (I tried to get to speak to J.Zuma once)
- Because life is war & prayer is the connection to the power/resources/guidance we need
- Because to pray is to be wise & humble because in prayer we learn to fear the Lord (Proverbs 1:7)
- Because we are aware of the immensity of the need in our lives, our families, within our circle of friends our town, nation and the nations and the inadequacy of our own resources.

And how do we pray 'in the Spirit'?

To pray in the Spirit is to pray with the enabling power of the Spirit

- Asking for the Holy Spirit's help as you pray³
- Bringing a freedom of utterance & a liberty of expression
- Allowing the Holy Spirit to awaken our mind & heart to the heart of God & divine perspective
- The place where we commune with God & hear His voice
- It's the place where prayer is no longer hard work but we are caught up & carried in prayer.

12. Stand/Resist Together in community**

The three exhortations we looked at since Friday night are all exhortations to a community of faith.

We are meant to stand together, resist together...

We are not meant to walk alone.

³ Romans 8:26-27

Conclusion: Jesus wins!**

1 John 3:8: “The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil.”

Hebrews 2:14: “Christ took on human nature that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil.”

Colossians 2:15: “God disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.” In other words, the decisive blow was struck at Calvary.

[Pray & Minister]

Seminar: Identifying & dealing with demonic influences

Introduction

- Aiming to avoid the two mistakes generally made - overemphasis or underemphasis
- Allow Scripture be our framework whilst not ignoring anecdotal wisdom to inform us
 - Jesus doesn't set up any deliverance ministries
 - But does set people with demonic influence free & authorised His disciples to do the same
- David Devenish⁴ summarises that three things are important to hold on to:
 - God is sovereign & unmatched
 - We have personal responsibility
 - The Devil & the demonic realm is real
- How we will proceed
 - Terminology & Translations
 - Can a Christian be demonised?
 - How do demons gain influence in people's lives?
 - A Theology of Setting people free (A quick biblical survey)
 - What have we learnt from the survey
 - Wisdom for setting people free from demonic influence

Terminology Matters: Demonic oppression/influence

Demonic oppression/influence are terms used to describe pressure exerted by demons to tempt us to sin, or to keep us bound in some form of bondage or oppression.

When reading English translations of the Bible the way the translation translates the Greek word "daimonizomai" matters as it influences our understanding of the demonic.

ESV: 'demon-oppressed'

NASB, NIV, NKJV & NLT: 'demon-possessed'

I am of the opinion that the ESV's use of 'demon-oppressed' **is more helpful** than 'demon-possessed' as used by some of the other translations.

This is because Scripture records a number of situations where there is demonic influence/oppression to a greater or lesser degree:

- The man in the synagogue's oppression **was limited** in that he was acceptable enough to attend synagogue unnoticed until Jesus walked in and the demon's exclaimed (Mark 1:22).

⁴ Demolishing Strongholds - Dave Devenish

- The crowd of people outside the house are **a combination of physically sick & some who were demon-oppressed**. Jesus physically **heals some & sets others free** of the their demonic oppression that was manifesting in their lives.
- Jesus discerns in Matthew 12:22 that **the root cause of the blind & mute man's ailments is a demonic influence & so heals him of them by setting the man free** from his demonic oppression.
- In Matthew 15:22 **the Canaanite woman** discerns that her **daughter** is demon-oppressed & in response to her request and her faith **Jesus frees her of the demonic influence instantly**.
- The crippled woman in Luke 13:11 had **a spirit of infirmity(KJV) (weakness physically)**, but there is no mention of her being deranged.
- In Luke 9:37-43 & Matthew 17:14-20 Jesus instantly heals the boy under the influence of an unclean spirit which used to throw the boy to the ground in convulsions.

All these people were **seemingly part of normal society** but had a **variety of varying degrees of demonic influence**. The ESV helpfully translates all these instances as **'demonic-oppression'** not 'demonic-possession' - their lives were impacted by a demonic influence.

However, **in contrast** to all of these is **the Gerasene** recorded in Mark 5:1-20 & Luke 8:26-39

- This man was seemingly **influenced to a far greater degree** by demonic spirits & so was feared by all, excommunicated from the town & chained in the place of the tombs & uncontrollable.
- **Here the ESV helpfully translates the Luke 8:36 "daimonizomai" reference differently to all the rest of the references - the ESV translates it as "demon-possessed"** presumably due to the degree of the demonic influence.
- **But uses "demon-oppressed" for other references** of the same word in other less severe instances of demonic influence.

This differentiation is helpful I believe. The phrase **'demonic-oppression'** allows for varying degrees of demonic influence. In contrast, the English word **'possessed'** means:

- **'completely controlled by'** no allowance for the varying degrees of influence/oppression evidenced in Scripture or experienced in life.
- 'Possessed' also implies that the person is **'owned by' or 'occupied by' demons**, which is theologically **hard to reconcile** with a believer who is 'in-Christ' & who has been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Jesus (Col 1:13)
- Because 'possessed' **implies ownership or residence** it causes one of two problems:
 - If one believes that Christians **can be** 'demon-possessed' then I believe that there is an undermining or devaluing of the miracle of salvation & regeneration & being in-Christ.
 - If one believes that Christians **cannot be** 'demon-possessed' because of holding to a high view of salvation, this then leads to the belief that demonic influence is then not something

Christians need to be concerned with, which could allow for demonic influence to continue undetected in the lives of believers.

So, can a Christian be demonised?

I believe that the answer is yes. We can be affected by, influenced by, oppressed by, tormented by demons to a greater or lesser degree.

The New Testament is full of **warnings to believers concerning the work of the devil**. The devil is not omnipresent, however, and so we can extrapolate that he uses demons under his control to accomplish his evil:

- **Afflicting** our bodies with various sicknesses that have a spiritual root such as a spirit of infirmity (Luke 13:11) or an unclean spirit (Mark 9:25)
- To **devour** Christians (1 Peter 5:8-9 'the devil prowls around like a roaring lion...')
- To **deceive** Christians (1 John 4:1-3 'do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits')
 - You can be lied to & believe those lies about God, yourself & or others (depression, self-loathing, trust issues...)
 - Some were **bewitched** into false belief about the gospel (Galatians 3:1)
- To bring **opposition** to leadership. You can have a horrible attitude towards leadership & authority that's more than just a bad attitude. (2 Timothy 2:25-26)
- To **oppose** the work of God (Matthew 4:1-11 & 2 Corinthians 4:4 'has blinded the minds of unbelievers')
- Causing **fear**. It is possible to have a fear that has its source not just within yourself but rooted in a demonic influence.
- A **stronghold** - being stuck in a pattern of thinking & so not free in your thoughts (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)
- We are warned not to give the devil a foothold by not dealing with **anger** (Eph 4:26-27)

So, demons can influence our lives as believers by tempting us to sin, attacking us, bringing us into bondage, inducing sickness, troubling our minds, or oppressing our spirits.

We must not think that only people **who look or act like the Gerasene man** are demonised! Remember that satan is the 'father of lies', deception is his game and name.

If demons can deceive us through lulling us into a false sense of security in order to ensure that they can influence and affect lives undetected they will.

So, we need to pray for discernment in our own lives and the lives of others to uncover demonic activity/influence where it exists and then deal with it...

How do demons gain influence in someone's life?

[This is not all authoritative but a blend of biblical & anecdotal wisdom]

1. Satan is our **accuser** (Revelation 12:10) we allow the demonic influence if we accept his accusations.
2. Satan is the **deceiver** (2 Corinthians 11:3&14) we allow the demonic influence if we believe his deception leading us to unbelief concerning the truths of Scripture. Satan's deception normally takes the form of lies about God & or ourselves.
3. Demons can gain influence through **"open doors"** they can exploit to gain influence:
 - Patterns of **sin** we have engaged in (Lying, Divisiveness, Pornography, Sexual sin...)
 - Satan takes advantage of **emotional hurts/trauma** (breakup of relationships, divorce, job loss- more serious, violence, rape, abuse, a spirit of fear or rejection)
 - **Inherited curses**: Demons can influence people to commit the same sins as their ancestors.
 - Although it could be argued that these are learned behaviours (nurture) anecdotally some sins appear to repeat in families (things like depression, fear, rejection, rebellion, anger, rage, shame, financial troubles, sexual unfaithfulness or perversion, control, abandonment).
 - **Passive states** of mind: Drug/alcohol abuse, hypnosis and transcendental meditation can open up our minds to demonic influence.
 - **Occult Involvement**: Engaging in witchcraft/sangoma visitation or cultural practices involving the appeasement of ancestors, some alternative medicines, astrology fortune tellers, Ouija boards etc could open the door to demonic influence in your life.

A Theology of setting people free from demonic influence

Luke 4:18-19. This is what Jesus came to do!

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8)!

And this is the work Jesus has entrusted us to do - John 14:12

A) Activity: Quick Bible Survey

1. The Man in the Synagogue

21 And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. 22 And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. 23 And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24 “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” 25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” 26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” 28 And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee. (Mark 1:21-28)

What can you learn about the demon’s responses to Jesus?

What can we learn about the way Jesus dealt with the demon?

How did the man get set free?

What can we learn from this encounter about setting others free?

2. The Gerasene Man

They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. 2 And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. 3 He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, 4 for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. 5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. 6 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. 7 And crying out with a loud voice, he said, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.” 8 For he was saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!” 9 And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He replied, “My name is Legion, for we are many.” 10 And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. 11 Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, 12 and they begged him, saying, “Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.” 13 So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea. 14 The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. 15 And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. 16 And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. (Mark 5:1-16)

What can you learn about the demonic influence in this man?

What can you learn about the demon’s responses to Jesus?

What can we learn about the way Jesus dealt with the demon?

How did the man get set free?

What can we learn from this encounter about setting others free?

3. The Women with a disabling spirit & the Man’s son

10 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11 And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. 12 When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your disability.” 13 And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God. . . . 16 And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?” 17 As he said these things, all

his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him. (Luke 13:10-13 & 16-17)

What strikes you about this encounter & how Jesus handled it?

What can we learn from this encounter about setting others free?

37 On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. 38 And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. 39 And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him.

40 And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." 41 Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." 42 While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43 And all were astonished at the majesty of God.

What strikes you about this encounter & how Jesus handled it?

What can we learn from this encounter about setting others free?

B) What can we learn from this survey?

1. Demons can inflict pain and suffering into our lives. They can cause physical ailments... But Jesus also has authority over the result of demonic influence in the lives of people
 - Dumbness – Matt.9:32,33;
 - Blindness – Matt.12:22;
 - Convulsions – Matt.17:15-18; Mark 9:20;
 - Self-injury – Mark 5:5; 9:22.
 - They can cause mental disorders or wrong patterns of thinking – fear, depression, withdrawal, nudity, filth, irrational behaviour Luke 8:27-29
 - Suicidal mania – Mark 9:22.
 - They can inflict problems upon believers as well, if allowed by God (Job's troubles – Job 2:7-9).
2. Jesus has total authority over demons
3. Jesus doesn't pray for demons to go He commands them
4. Freedom comes quickly in most instances
5. There are no specific teachings from Jesus on methodology
6. Demons sometimes make a scene as they go
7. Jesus wants to release those being oppressed and lied to by these filthy evil spirits...
8. Not every physical or mental ailment or sickness is the result of demonic activity! So, we should be careful to label certain conditions as always being the result of demonisation!
 - Have a look at Mark 1:32-34
 - Yet in Matthew 17:14-18 Jesus healed the epileptic boy by rebuking the demon
 - BUT, we should also not ignore demonisation as a possible cause for pain & suffering.
9. ...

Wisdom for setting people free from demonic influence

1. There are no biblical formulas/methodologies - keep it Scriptural, keep it simple.
2. Freedom from demonic influence is just one of a number of ways that people are not free. So what are the typical things tend to keep people from freedom?
 - Sin (all types of sin that give the enemy influence, including sins like unforgiveness)
 - Unhealed Past hurts
 - Idols of the heart
 - Strongholds⁵ (ungodly beliefs)
 - Inner vows
 - Generational sin/curses
 - Demonic oppression/influence
3. All freedom flows from the finished work of Christ on the cross. Therefore the cross is the source and the way towards walking into freedom no matter what the obstacles:
 - There is forgiveness for sin in the cross because of Jesus' death and resurrection
 - There is healing from past hurts in the cross (the greatest demonstration of God's love)
 - There is truth in the cross to renew your mind freeing you from strongholds & unbelief
 - The cross speaks eternal hope/truth for those who believe in Jesus (which combats the things we say to ourselves)
 - The cross destroys the power of curses & gives us a new start in Christ
 - The cross is the place in which Jesus triumphed over satan and all demons!
4. Different Models for Freedom
 - Different churches and ministries approach the path to freedom in a different ways/models. Below is a list of the common models of how churches believe one gets from bondage to freedom:

⁵ "For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, 6 being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete." (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)
Dave D:

- Strongholds are wrong thinking patterns that challenge God and His sovereignty today.
- The whole of the world's system is set up against God under the influence of the prince of this world. Strongholds have been erected.
- The devil seeks to establish an alternative, autonomous way of thinking. Behind all these thought patterns, philosophies and practices is an enemy who is experienced; an enemy who maintains a vast array of spiritual forces that are self-sufficient and God-rejecting.
- Strongholds can also be in our emotions. For example, self-pity is not just in the mind; it is in the emotions as well.
- Strongholds can also have a spiritual, demonic, dimension.

- **Repentance of Sin:** This model is built on the premise that what we need to do is to acknowledge sin. And that when we identify the behaviour in our lives as sin and accept responsibility for the behaviour, confessing it as our sin and when we repent of that sin (rejecting the sin and turning away from it), we are then able to receive and accept forgiveness and continue on by walking free from the sin. Essentially it is a case of find the sin, deal with it, confess, repent and receive forgiveness and you'll be free.
- **Truth model:** - Relies on the belief that proclamation and believing of the truth which leads to right believing, results in freedom. Essentially the truth sets us free: so changing the way we think to the way God thinks sets us free. Freedom is a truth encounter.
- **Life-story model:** Involves talking through one's life history then praying about your past experiences believing that leads to healing and freedom. Essentially you're going back to your past, re-experiencing it while sharing your story and praying through the events which in turn heals and frees the hurt.
- **Supernatural Model:** - Here the belief is that encountering God is what heals us. There are two main types of encounters this model tends to focus on:
 - Healing which comes through intimacy with the Holy Spirit during worship or soaking in the Spirit as you encounter God's love.
 - Classic 'deliverance' ministry which focusses on a power encounter with the Spirit for deliverance from strongholds within us or from demonic influence. Essentially an encounter with God's power through his Spirit brings complete deliverance and freedom in an instant.
- **Accountability Model:** Here interpersonal accountability is the key to freedom. Essentially walking alongside someone in a discipleship / accountability relationship leads to freedom.
- We believe that all the above models are valuable and can be an effective part to bringing freedom and healing to people. We believe however, that the specific thing(s) that hinder any one person will require differing approaches and we believe that different personalities are better matched to some models more so than others. Therefore we recommend at way draws on all these models/elements of God's work in a person's life in order to bring them into freedom.

5. Suggested wisdom should you need to pray for deliverance of some demonic influence

Deliverance is the process of setting people free from demonic influence through prayer rooted in the power of the cross and Jesus' authority.

Deliverance is a truth encounter rooted in Scripture, however it is also a power encounter as we access the power of God in authoritative prayer.

a) Be prayed up - gospel confidence & humility

b) Work in team

c) Put the person at ease

- The person who is being ministered to needs to feel at ease, so it is important to take the mystery out of the situation, to explain to the person the truths from Scripture.
- It is also important to ascertain whether they really want to be set free.
- They may need to be told that their lifestyle will probably have to change, for example, and they might not want that.
- The key issue here is not to get 'spooky' about it, but to try to maintain as normal an atmosphere as possible with all eyes on Jesus.
- Be loving and kind to the person but hard line to the demon.

d) Invite the Holy Spirit & ask for His presence & Help in discerning

e) Confession & Renouncing of sin

- It is important for the person to confess any sin that might have provided an entry point
- The sort of sins involved here include any that could be a foothold for demonic activity
- It needs to be the person who renounces their involvement, and they need to take full responsibility for it.

Charles Kraft - gave an analogy about rats and garbage. The rats (demons) gather around garbage (lies, unrepentant sin, wounds, strongholds). He said that if you remove the garbage then the rats will go to. We encourage focusing on the 'garbage' and not the 'rats'.

f) Forgiveness of others is often a key in deliverance

- Ask the person if there is anyone they need to forgive?

- The problem of unforgiveness (which is a stronghold) is frequently a bigger issue than the need for deliverance itself, and it can be a major battle to bring someone to the point of forgiveness.

g) The releasing prayer

- Once these issues have been sorted out, and the person fully understands any changes that might have to occur in their lives, then they can be released in Jesus' name from any curses or, if appropriate, any family involvement with the demonic.
- We can command the demon to leave the person in the Name of Jesus.
- Pray for the person to be filled again with the Holy Spirit & with the love of God

h) Help the person to walk free...

- Life giving relationship with Jesus
- The Holy Spirit our Helper
- The cross of Christ (appropriating gospel truth)
- Grace that saves & sanctifies
- Identity in Christ
- New relationship to sin/Satan/demons
- Knowing your authority in Christ

Q&A
