

BFF371 The Holy Spirit in Spiritual Warfare

Scott Moore: Welcome to the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

Steve: I'm well. I know that you're a little weary. It's been four and a half months taking care of your family without a wife for many of those days. Is that correct?

Scott: Yes. My wife is still helping out my daughter and her husband with baby Henry, who is doing well, so that's a good thing. There's always something. We're making it.

Steve: How much is that bruise weighing these days?

Scott: Five pounds something, I think. I don't think he's broken the six-pound mark yet, but he's doing well. He went home. He's got oxygen that he's still using just to keep his oxygen saturation levels correct.

Steve: We're still working with my son on his oxygen levels. We are often up in the night making sure that he's wearing his CPAP. All of a sudden, he didn't want to wear it. Same thing, we have to test his oxygen levels. Like you just said, it's always something. It's OK. God helps us, so we're good.

This morning we're going to talk about, and it almost sounds like a redundancy, the Spirit in spiritual warfare. As I was preparing for it I thought, "Boy, this sounds kind of strange." Obviously, the Spirit's involved because it's spiritual warfare. We know that our wrestling is not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers in the spiritual places, so our greatest asset is the Holy Spirit.

Let's pray. Father, help us now as we contemplate this topic. Help us Holy Spirit as we contemplate this topic. Help us to sense and be lined up with your character and your presence and your person as we talk about this topic this morning. In Jesus' name, amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: I don't know where my listeners are coming from nor their church persuasion, or how you've grown up and perceive God, but God is a God of war. He's also God of shalom, wholeness, peace.

In Exodus 15:2-4, "Jehovah is my strength and song and He has become my salvation. This is my God and I will praise Him, my Father's God, and I will exalt Him. Jehovah is a man of war. Jehovah is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host has He cast into the sea, and his chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea."

Moses is rejoicing after the sea has come in and drowned the Egyptians.

Isaiah 42:13 echoes this sentiment: "Jehovah will go forth as a mighty man. He will stir up His zeal like a man of war. He will cry, yea, He will shout aloud. He will do mightily against His enemies."

Not only is God a man of war, Moses is a man of war, and Moses and his priests are men of war. In our culture today we don't associate our pastors, our priests, or our godly leaders, with being men of war men of war, but this is God's Word.

After Moses had come down from the mountain: "When Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on Jehovah's side? Come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. He said to them, "Thus says Jehovah, the God of Israel, 'Every man of you put his sword upon his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbor.'"

I can't replicate this, but I'm sure he bellowed because there's all mayhem going around here and he just lets loose. "Who is on Jehovah's side? Come to me!" Now there's a lot here to unpack.

The point was, Moses is a man of war, and these Levites, who had their swords on, pulled them right out and went at it. It had to be an awful experience, however it had to happen because there was something in that camp that needed to be dealt with. That's all I'm going to say.

David is a man of war. We know this. That expression is used several times in the Old Testament, "David, a man of war." It began in 1 Samuel 16:13, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David in the midst of his brothers, "And the spirit of Jehovah rushed upon David from that day forward."

We remember David appearing on the scene with Goliath, but his heroism started when God's Spirit came upon David. He went up to the camp of Israel as the anointed harpist, the psalmist, and he was helping Saul against the evil Spirit. When Goliath appears, the same Spirit of God rushed upon David.

Psalm 144:1, "Blessed be Jehovah my rock, who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle. He is my steadfast love and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield and He in whom I take refuge."

David rightly gives the credit for his courage and skill in battle to God. He's the one that taught him how to fight. He's the one that came upon him. He's the one that gave him these skills.

In the book of Judges, there's an expression that's used several times, I'm going to start with Gideon in Judges 6:34, "The spirit of Jehovah clothed Gideon and he sounded the trumpet and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him."

Then Samson, Judges 13:25, "The spirit of Jehovah began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol." Then three times in the next two chapters, this expression is used. "The spirit of Jehovah rushed upon him," and he struck down men and defeated lions.

There was others like Jephthah, who were described as the spirit of God coming upon them and they became like other men. They won great battles and they slew their enemies.

In Isaiah 59:15–18 we read of God's Spirit in the face of evil: "Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey." This is at the end of a long chapter, where he's talking about how bad the situation was.

Then it reads, "Jehovah saw it. It displeased Him that there was no justice. He saw that there was no man and wondered that there was no one to intercede. Then His own arm brought Him salvation and His righteousness upheld Him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate and a helmet of salvation on His head.

He put on garments of vengeance for clothing and wrapped Himself in zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, so will He repay. Wrath to His adversaries, repayment to His enemies. To the coastlands, He will render repayment."

The next verse, Isaiah 59:19, is rendered differently in different translations, but there's something special about this verse. I'm going to read from the King James, and then I'm going to read it from the Geneva Version.

"So shall they fear the name of Jehovah from the west and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of Jehovah shall lift up a standard against him."

The Geneva Version renders it, "So shall they fear the name of Jehovah from the west and His glory from the rising of the sun. For the enemy shall come in like a flood, but the Spirit of Jehovah shall chase him away." Now, let me see if I can apply that verse right now because I've got a couple testimonies to accompany this passage.

When everything around was so bleak, God himself stepped up to the plate and took care of stuff. "The enemy was coming in like a flood, but the Spirit of Jehovah lifted up a standard against him." As Geneva said, "The Spirit of Jehovah chased him away." I believe that.

When I look around our world today, and I see things getting worse and worse, there's something or someone else that's also at work. When evil comes in like a flood, God's Spirit rises up inside and says, "This far, but no further."

Just like those guys in the book of Judges, the Spirit of Jehovah came upon them, and they were different men. Because they saw that the battle was too big for them, and the Spirit of God made the difference.

Zerubbabel, in Zechariah 4:6, "The word of Jehovah came to Zerubbabel, 'Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit,' says Jehovah of hosts."

Many years ago I was reading 2 Timothy 3:1–4, "Know this, in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

As I read these troubling words, something rose up inside of me, I don't know how else to describe it, but I felt like it was the Spirit of God right there, coming up inside of me and said, "No, by God's grace, our family is going to be the opposite of all these

characteristics. We are going to be thankful. We're going to be holy. We're going to honor our mom and our dad, etc."

This is why I don't feel discouraged when the world in which we live appears bleak. I don't feel like just letting things go the way they're going because there's something that's working in our hearts that's different, and it's God's Spirit. God's Spirit is the one that senses the battle, senses there's warfare, but He rises up inside of us and says, "No, no, no. By God's grace, we're going to be different."

Let's move into the New Testament. Matthew, chapter 4. We know the story because this is Jesus. He had just received His wonderful benediction. He'd received the Spirit at His baptism. His Dad had told Him, "You're my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Then it says He was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness.

The devil comes before Him and tests Him, and you and I know what happens. He doesn't yield an inch because the Spirit of God kept rising up inside of Him. Every time the devil said something, the Spirit of God would quote Scripture. Isn't that the reason why we call it the Sword of the Spirit?

The devil said, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread." He answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" The devil takes Him up to this pinnacle, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down." Jesus said, "Again, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to test.'"

Then the devil takes Him to a very high mountain, and he gives Him all his garbage. Then Jesus says, "Be gone, Satan, for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.'"

I used to think that Jesus must be weak, He hadn't eaten for 40 days. However there's no weakness at all when He's talking to the devil. He stands right up to him, and He throws the Scripture in His face in every situation, and the devil left Him.

The Spirit of God came upon Him, just like He came upon those judges. The Spirit of God rose up inside of Him, just like He did in Isaiah when He says, "No." Then in Matthew 12:28, which is a powerful passage, "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

This is a sign of the kingdom. The Spirit of God is coming upon Jesus, and now He's casting out demons. Not by Himself, but by the Spirit of God rising up inside Him.

Romans 8:26, "The Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." It's the Spirit within us, but we have to go to our knees and ask.

Paul was the one that said, "Don't be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit," in Ephesians 5:18, because he knows, as we know, that it's the Spirit who helps us know how to pray. It's the Spirit who will rise up inside of us and put the battle through. It's the Spirit that helps us in our weakness.

Ephesians 6, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 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. 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."

There's a battle, it's a spiritual battle, it's against cosmic powers that we don't see. We see the impact of them, but we don't see them themselves. They are spiritual forces of evil, and the battle is in the heavenly places, which is why He tells us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

He tells us to bind the strong man on earth because whatever we bind on earth will be bound in heaven. We're helping to put the battle through in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:14–18, "Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit."

Now, someone might say, "Well, how do I pray in the Spirit?" Ask the Spirit to help you. That's why Paul says, "Be filled with the Spirit."

You don't have to go through theological wrestling. Just simply say, "Paul said for me to be filled with the Spirit. Father, fill me with Your Spirit. Help me to pray in the Spirit. Help me to wield the sword of the Spirit." This is what we're talking about. We're going to talk about the Sword of the Spirit in another podcast.

Paul in Acts 13:6–11, "When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.

But Elymas, the magician, for that is the meaning of his name, opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, he looked intently at him and said, 'You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?

"And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time.' Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand."

As I picture that scene, Paul and Barnabas were talking to this man. They are trying to be men of peace. They are meek. Finally, this guy keeps interrupting. He keeps trying to turn them away until Paul had enough.

This is what we want to happen to us. We want the Spirit to rise up inside of us, and we want to encourage the Holy Spirit to rise up inside of us and help us to be led by Him and empowered by Him to do the work of God.

1 Timothy 1:18, "This charge I entrust you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare." May God help us all to wage the good warfare right where we are. In our homes, in our relationships, in our towns, our communities.

I like to think that there are, you might say, modern-day Levites walking around here. When we hear the call, like Moses called to them and says, "Unto me," or when we sense the Spirit of God welling up inside of us, that we just give place to Him.

We don't have to make a big scene. We can just simply walk around our neighborhood in faith. We can walk in our stores by faith. We can walk around the Capitol, if God leads you to do that, by faith, and we can bind the strong man in the Spirit.

We can war against him in the Spirit. This is what we're doing as priests of God. As people who stay close to their Savior. I believe that most of this is just training us.

Whenever I think about the Spirit of God rising up inside of us, I think about this picture of a battle horse in Job 39. This is powerful stuff. It says, "Do you give the horse his might? Do you clothe his neck with a mane? Do you make him leap like the locusts? His majestic snorting is terrifying. He paws in the valley and exults in his strength. He goes out to meet the weapons. He laughs at fear and is not dismayed. He does not turn back from the sword. Upon him rattle the quiver, the flashing spear, and the javelin. With fierceness and rage, he swallows the ground. He cannot stand still at the sound of the trumpet. When the trumpet sounds, he says, 'Aha.' He smells the battle from afar, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting."

Now, I don't know what that does to you, but that's a picture of a horse. It's battle-tested, it's carrying a warrior on his back, but when he hears that trumpet sound, when he senses the Spirit of God coming up inside of him, he goes, "Aha, it's another battle."

This is what he was bred for. This is what he was trained for. This is what he revels in. Now, take that picture and multiply it by millions, and put one underneath yourself. I'm serious about this.

Revelation 19: 11-16 says, "I saw heaven open, and behold a white horse. The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness, He judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, and He has a name written that no one knows but Himself.

He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which He is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following Him on white horses.

From His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath

of God the Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh, He has a name written, 'King of kings and Lord of lords.'"

If you want a picture of spiritual warfare, there it is right there. Think of that white horse as the Holy Spirit because Jesus, by the Spirit, cast out demons. Paul, in the Spirit, cast out demons. We, in the Spirit, fight the good fight and we fight spiritual warfare. We can't do it without the Holy Spirit. He is the one.

Just like Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, coming to clean house. But He doesn't do it alone. He has the armies of heaven following Him on white horses. I think that's each of us, we've learned how to be led by the Spirit. We've learned how to fight in the Spirit. We also are on white horses, and we are at His side.

Just like those Levites were at Moses' side, so we're at Jesus' side, and we're coming to finish the battle and to cleanse this earth of ungodliness and put that devil in the pit, the whole package. It's a beautiful picture.

I believe it's saints because these armies of heaven are arrayed in fine linen, white and pure. We know what the fine linen is. We've talked about that. Let's close in prayer.

Father, thank you for this majestic, powerful picture of the Spirit of God helping people all the way back from Moses, helping judges, helping David, helping Jesus, helping Paul, and now helping us. Thank you, Spirit of God, for coming upon us when we need you the most. Thank you that when evil comes in like a flood, you lift up a standard against Him.

Thank you that we've sensed that. We're not giving in. Regardless of how bleak it looks, regardless of how much it seems like the god of this world is prevailing, we know he is not. By faith, we say, in Jesus' name, in Jesus' name, in Jesus' name, be gone. Just like Paul did.

In Jesus' name, be gone. In Jesus' name, we put the battle through today. Help us to be led by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit, and we honor You, Holy Spirit. When we don't even know how to pray as we ought, we say Amen to what you're doing in our hearts today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

I had been in prayer meetings, too, where you can sense the Holy Spirit moving upon one person after another. It's one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen or participated in.

Steve: When the Spirit of God comes in you, you start praying like you didn't even know how to pray. You let it loose, and it's good because this is what the Holy Spirit does. All He needs is for us to cooperate with Him, be filled with Him, be led by Him, and learn to listen to Him. We don't know what to pray as we ought, we just groan and let God take the reins, so to speak.

Scott: I used to think the Spirit was that nice, happy, calm thing.

Steve: The comforter.

Scott: Yeah. He is a comforter, that's for sure, but the songs and stuff that I'd heard and the passages and whatever. I don't know if I'd really paid attention, I guess, until

one time I was reading about Samson and the Holy Spirit came upon him and killed a thousand men. It's like, "Huh, that's not what you see in church."

Scott: Then I started noticing other passages where that happened, and it's like, "If the Spirit of the Lord comes upon somebody, you better hope you're on the same side as them. Otherwise, you're about to get whipped."

Steve: He's inscrutable in a way. The Holy Spirit is not at the forefront. That's His job, to put Jesus to the forefront. At the same time, there's so much in the Bible about the Spirit and Jesus Himself.

"If I by the Spirit cast out demons..." Jesus the Christ means Jesus, the anointed of the Spirit. He needed the Spirit. We need the Spirit. He's a warrior spirit.

Scott: The comforter still.

Steve: Yeah, amen.

Scott: Amazing.

Steve: May God fill us all with the Spirit in a special way. Amen.

Scott: That's our show for this week, folks. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve at spdemme@gmail.com. If you have a question for me, you can reach me at scott@unsocializedmedia.com. Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.