

Week 18 – Outreach: Facing Sin and Satan

Outreach - To Minister to the Lost

“How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14)

In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells His disciples, “And you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, all Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.” These four areas of the outreach of the first church included Jerusalem (the home front), Judea (a nearby region), Samaria (people representing a different culture) and the uttermost parts of the earth. All four areas serve as a model for us today.

We need to get beyond our own four walls to minister Christ’s love to the world. Confining church activity to Sunday morning has been one of the best schemes of the devil. Outreach includes acts of compassion and bold evangelism. It should be both spontaneous and strategically planned.

We also see in the passage above that He seeks people of all nationalities to join His family. God’s church includes a broad diversity of people. This multinational and multiethnic presence in local churches reflects God’s purpose and heart in the earth. When the world sees us together and happy, they know it must be the power of God.

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” (Revelation 5:9)

Opposing Satan and Demonic Forces – Spiritual Warfare

Jesus said that He came to earth to “destroy the works of the devil.” (Luke 10:19; 1 John 3:8). We continue that work. Matthew 16:15-20 reveals that we will ultimately prevail, but victory comes through conflict with the forces of darkness: Satan, his demons, and their schemes to “steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10).

The church uses corporate prayer just as the Army uses the Air Force; ground forces need the strategic covering of the air power. We can have the greatest ideas, technologies, and strategies to reach the lost, but without serious prayer, we’ll never do all that is in the heart of God. Our battle is spiritual in nature and it must first be addressed spiritually (Ephesians 6:12).

The church is God's mobile throne on earth, His primary institution empowered to deal with enemies and set people free. Jesus called Himself a liberator:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden” (Luke 4:18, see also Mark 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

God has given us this ministry to help liberate people, regions, and nations. Jesus appointed and anointed His disciples to release people from the grip and bondage of the enemy (Matthew 12:25-29; Luke 10:19-21). This struggle against darkness will go on until the Lord returns. Therefore, we must know who our enemy is (Satan) and the weapons Christ has given us to defeat him.

Spiritual warfare is the invisible battle that occurs when the local church models the life of Jesus, prays against the works of darkness and proclaims the kingdom of Christ. Although Satan and his fallen angels were defeated at the cross (Colossians 2:14-15), we are still assigned the task of resisting them, pushing them back, and advancing the kingdom of Christ into enemy territory.

The Lord Jesus has prepared us well for the spiritual battles we face. Several critical weapons equip us for victory in spiritual warfare:

These gifts from God to His children enable us to be more than conquerors. When facing the devil and his host of demons, we fear and infatuation. As the Psalmist said, “Through God, we shall do valiantly” (Psalm 60:12). To be an overcomer, we must wield these spiritual weapons of war.

Angels give us another advantage in this warfare: “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?” (Hebrews 1:14).

Angels are mysterious spiritual agents who minister on our behalf as we do ministry for the Lord (Hebrews 1:14). Although artists portray angels as plump babies in diapers, the biblical description is quite different – oftentimes dazzlingly brilliant, powerful and strong. As one man put it, “if an angel appeared to you, you may need some diapers yourself.” Angels are powerful spiritual giants who surround, protect and assist us, especially in the ministry of spiritual warfare (Psalm 91:11; Daniel 12:1; Matthew 18:10; Revelation 12:7-12).

To encourage those who recoil at the thought of battling demons and demonic fortresses, Revelation 12:7-12 portrays this battle in the light of our guaranteed victory. When the Lord expelled Satan and the fallen angels from heaven, only one-third of the angels fell. Two-thirds of the angels remain are on our side. Moreover, when the battle is over and done, God's people win!

God promises victory in spiritual warfare:

“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7)

“And they overcame him because of the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony.” (Revelation 12:11)

Review:

1. What are some of the components of a successful outreach?
2. How can the local church of Jesus Christ reflect a variety of diverse people and cultures?
3. Name the 5 critical weapons needed for spiritual warfare.
4. Who are and what is the purpose of angels among us?