

INSIGHT

Spiritual Warfare: Seeing the Unseen Forces at Work For Us...

Why does God let Satan hurt us? This question is similar to the ageless questions: Why do bad things happen to good people? Or Why does God allow humans to suffer?

“The only way anyone—even God—could explain the problem of human suffering to your complete satisfaction would be if you possessed divine knowledge, wisdom, and power. When Job questioned God about the harm in his life, God replied by pointing out Job’s lack of divine knowledge. He made it clear that if He explained why He let Satan attack him, Job wouldn’t be able to understand it.” —*Joe Beam, Seeing the Unseen*

"Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?"
Job 38:2-7

Job realized that he could only trust in God and believe that He had Job’s best interest in mind:

The Lord Challenges Job	
In the face of God's fearful challenge, Job could only humble himself.	
God's Challenge	Job's Response
First, Job's ignorance (38:1-40:2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was absent at creation • He cannot explain the forces of nature 	Job admits his ignorance and becomes silent (40:3-5)
Second, Job's frailty (40:6-41:34) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He cannot overrule God's ways • He cannot control the forces of nature 	Job confesses his presumption and repents (42:2-6)

How do you respond to the challenges that God brings about in your life? Do you let Satan stop you from thanking God? Do you doubt the love of God? Do you get angry at God?

Why don't we begin to develop spiritual foresight and learn to see God's love for us in everything that happens around us?
See God with your headlights AND your taillights!

Key Text:

1 Peter 1:3-9

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

Theme:

The Lord God allows Satan and his evil forces to attack us because growth comes as a result of trials. He never lets them defeat us, but He permits them to cause us grief. Peter uses the refinement of gold as a word picture to illustrate to us this process of growth through trial. The kind of growth that emerges through trial and suffering is a spiritual growth; a growth that comes by having your faith proved genuine because of your trust and reliance upon God throughout difficult times.

Application:

Here are some practical suggestions:

1. **Don't let trials embitter you.** Satan's desire is to paralyze your growth in Christ. Use trials and difficult times as stepping stones toward spiritual growth and maturity, not as stumbling stones!
2. **Don't be hardened.** Listen to the voice of the Spirit through your older brothers and sisters. Don't give in to the flesh! It doesn't like trials! **Remain pliable in your heart!**
3. **Become better!** Let the Holy Spirit mold you and renew you in thought, attitude and strength. You have the victory!

May the Lord richly bless you!

SERMON OUTLINE

Spiritual Warfare: *Seeing the Unseen*

I. Forces at Work Within Us

"...but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed." *James 1:14*

1. Your desires are used against you.
2. Your emotions are used to *deceive* you.
3. He uses pain and suffering to *weaken* you.
4. He tries to *confuse* your convictions.
5. He uses your family against you.

II. Forces at Work For Us

A. The Goal: Purification of your Faith.

1. *1 Peter 1:3-9*

2. Impurities need to be burned away!
3. The Goldsmith wants His gold to reflect Him!
4. The gold needs to be malleable.
5. The gold needs to become strong.
6. He does not allow the fire to get too hot.
1 Co 10:13
7. He doesn't allow the heat to be on too long or the cooling process to happen too fast. He will *gradually* restore you. *1 Peter 5:10*

B. The Cross defeated the Devil.

1. Satan was unaware of God's plan. *1 Co 2:7-8*
2. Jesus suffered separation in *our* place!
3. His blood was shed for our sins.
4. If we die with Him, we too shall be raised to life!
5. He has made a public spectacle of Satan's force.
Col 2:14-15

C. The Power at work within us. *The Holy Spirit*

1. *Ephesians 3:20*

2. He lives in us. *Rom 8:9*
3. He leads us. *Rom 8:13-14; 1 John 4:1*
4. He represents us. *1 Co 2:9-16; Rom 8:26-27*
5. He strengthens us. *Ephe 3:16-17*

D. Angels minister to us. *Hebrews 1:14*

E. We are here for each other.

1. He comforts us in our trials so we can comfort others. *2 Co 1:3-4*
2. We pray for each other and confess to each other.
James 5:13-16

Warm-up:

Read *1 John 4:1* and think about the answer to the following question: *How do you learn to listen to the Spirit of God?*

See To It

Joshua 1:7-9

- 1- Who is this speaking? To who is he speaking?
- 2- How were they going to find success? (*Three things...*)
- 3- How many times does he command them to be strong and courageous? Why?
- 4- How would they know whether God was with them or not?
- 5- How would they be able to test whether something was from God or not?

Seeing It Closer:

Hebrews 5:12-14

- 1- What was Paul's rebuke to the *Hebrews*?
- 2- What does he call the *elementary truths of God's Word*?
- 3- Does a young Christian live on milk or on solid food?
- 4- Is a young Christian acquainted with the teaching about righteousness? Is a young Christian well trained to listen to the Spirit of God?
- 5- What is *solid food*? How is a mature Christian trained to listen to the Spirit of God?

Getting To It:

"Oh, how I *love* your law! I *meditate* on it all day long. Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for *they are ever with me*. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I *meditate* on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I *obey* your precepts. I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might *obey* your word. I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. How *sweet* are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

Psalm 119:97-103

SMALL GROUP STUDY