

Ephesians 6 (Part 3): 10-24 •

Recognizing Spiritual Attacks

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Life Bible Ministry

Ephesians chapter 6. We're going to re read some of the verses that we covered last week because I wanted to. Honestly we only have like 4 verses truly left in the chapter and it's really just kind of Paul signing off.

But it gave me an opportunity because I was feeling last week like we didn't really get a chance to answer some significant questions about the topic of spiritual attacks and spiritual warfare because I know it's an ongoing issue and it's a very challenging issue for many people. So we're going to go ahead and read verses 10 through the end of the chapter.

Follow along with me as I read Ephesians 6:10, it says, *“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.

²¹ So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. ²² I

have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

²³ Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.” (ESV)

Stop there, let's pray. Heavenly Father, open our hearts to this, the ministry of your Word. Jesus, we just look to you. We look to you to speak to us. We look to you to give us insight. We look to you to help us apply your Word to our lives. Use this, we pray, Father, in Jesus precious name, amen.

One of the reasons I really wanted to go over these last verses here in Ephesians that relate to spiritual warfare is because, while we talked about dealing with spiritual battles and taking up the full armor of God, I feel as if there were still some questions left unanswered. Particularly how to recognize spiritual attacks.

I don't just think that's an issue in the body of Christ. I know it is predicated upon the number of comments or questions that I get from people asking that very question. How do I know, pastor Paul, if I'm dealing with a spiritual attack or is it something else? Because there's just a lot of uncertainty about that.

In fact, there appear to be 4 areas where people kind of think their circumstances may fall into place. For those of you taking notes, this might be helpful. I'll put them up on the screen for you.

- Circumstances that are self-inflicted

The first one is, **circumstances that are self-inflicted**. There's times when we bad choices, we make bad decisions, poor choices in our lives and we reap the consequences from those choices. And in fact, it's not a spiritual attack that's going on. It's the fallout from the things that we've done and that's just a reality of being idiots from time to time. You know what I mean? And I've played my role a lot along in those respects. I mean, what a man sows, so also shall he reap. We get that but we wonder sometimes if what I'm dealing with in my circumstances, is this something that I brought on myself? And if so, where exactly did I make the mistake?

- Circumstances that are self-inflicted
- Circumstances that are the result of living in a fallen world

Secondly, we wonder if they are, **circumstances just that are the result of living in a fallen world.** When we're going through hard stuff and it appears that we're being attacked. But then we stop to think, well I am living in a fallen world where things break down, bodies break down, cars break down, relationships break down, and we ask ourselves the question, is this just part and parcel of living in a world that is slowly being decimated by sin? And not something specific that we've done as it relates to sin, but just the fallenness of this world.

- Circumstances that are self-inflicted
- Circumstances that are the result of living in a fallen world
- Circumstances that are induced by dark spiritual forces, or

We wonder if perhaps **circumstances that** we're going through might in fact, **are induced by dark spiritual powers.** This is where we're truly wondering, is this, is there some kind of a demonic something or other going on that's behind this? But frankly, most of the time we don't know. We're left wondering but we're not sure. There are some people who I'll grant you, they're always sure, whether they know or not, they're always sure. It's like Satan's attacking, but the rest of us are going, yeah, I don't know.

- Circumstances that are self-inflicted
- Circumstances that are the result of living in a fallen world
- Circumstances that are induced by dark spiritual forces, or
- Circumstances that are caused by God

And then finally, we wonder if sometimes our **circumstances might be caused by God.** And that presents an even stranger kind of a dynamic because we know that something's going on, we're not maybe always that crazy about it, but we're kind of wondering, well, maybe God has done this. And let me explain what I mean by that. There are a couple of examples in the scriptures that I want to bring to your attention. The first is in the Book of Acts, written by, of course, Luke, on the screen here. He is writing about Paul and his companions, and he says,

Acts 16:6-8 (ESV)

And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.

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And you guys probably remember that's where Paul received what we call, The Macedonian Call. Anyway, the point is, without giving us any insights into how their way was blocked, Luke makes it clear that it was blocked by the Lord Himself through the agency of His Holy Spirit.

And he says in 2 occasions there, they were, “*forbidden by the Holy Spirit.*” We don't know how. We don't know what the circumstances were. We don't know how the Lord communicated and forbade them to go into that particular area, or blocked them from actually getting into Bithynia. Interesting, isn't it?

But see, then we have the other side of the coin when we get over in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. He writes this,

1 Thessalonians 2:17-18 (ESV)

But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.

But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again (look at this last phrase)—but Satan hindered us.

Oh, interesting now. See, before, Luke makes it clear that it was the Holy Spirit Himself who blocked their way into a particular area and Paul says that it was Satan who hindered him from getting in to the area of Thessalonica. Zero information as to how that block took place or what precisely happened that caused Paul to be blocked. But he seems pretty convinced of the fact that it was the enemy behind it.

And I got to be honest with you, I think one of the reasons why these kind of passages just befuddle us, and we're like, how did Luke know that it was the Holy Spirit? How did Paul know that it was the enemy? One of the reasons

we're struggling to understand what's going on, or what's behind this sort of a thing, is because there is a propensity among Christians, and I'm speaking in general terms. Maybe I'm keeping charismatics out of this particular generalization.

But in a lot of ways, I believe that a lot of Christians tend to minimize the reality of spiritual involvement and that's, again, a general statement and by in large sort of a thing. We tend to minimize and one of the reasons we do that is because we've all been around people who over spiritualize things.

And they're talking about spiritual reasons for everything. I really wanted to wear that blue shirt, but Satan made me forget to put it in the wash or something. And we're all like, we roll our eyes like, good grief. And so our tendency is to kind of back away and we don't want to be blaming Satan for everything that goes on. And so we minimize actually what maybe is in fact a spiritual dynamic that is being played out in a given situation.

I'll be honest with you and I got to be careful how I say this and who I say it to so don't throw anything at me. But I've come to learn over the years that I think there's a greater danger in minimizing spiritual activity than there is overemphasizing it. And here's why.

When we minimize spiritual activity, we tend to condition our hearts to almost default to a non-spiritual explanation for things. And we get into kind of a habitual sort of a routine of that, and pretty soon we're rationalizing pretty much everything. And you know what? Pretty much anything can be rationalized. Pretty much anything you can reach for some kind of a natural explanation for things, when in fact there isn't. Let me just tell you what the Bible makes very clear. Satan is real. I wish it wasn't true, but it is.

The other reality is that spiritual forces are real, and spiritual dynamics playing into our lives, and the things that go on in our lives, are a reality. I mean, honestly, we do that. We got to be..., let's not get weird, but let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater when somebody does get weird. And let's realize that spiritual realities are all around us. Here's the deal. Here's the deal.

I'll put it this way, before we came to Jesus, we were living in the kingdom of man. And the kingdom of man, we like to call it the kingdom of man, but it's not our kingdom, it's Satan's kingdom. The Bible refers to Satan as, the prince of this world. (John 14:30) It's a temporary position. He will be unseated, but for right now he has a position of rulership. And before we know and surrender our

lives to Jesus Christ, that is the primary influence of our hearts, and our minds, and our thinking, our words, our actions, and so forth. That's just the way it is.

Doesn't mean you're demon possessed. It just means that, whether you like it or not, or whether you knew it or not, your primary influence comes from the king of the kingdom in which you are a citizen. And we were all part of that before we knew Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Then, we came to Christ, we surrendered to His lordship, and suddenly the Bible tells us we were born into a new kingdom. Literally translated into a new kingdom. Let me put on the screen how Paul describes it here from Philippians 3:20.

Philippians 3:20 (ESV)

...our citizenship is in heaven...

...our citizenship is in heaven...(you see)

Isn't that cool when you think about it, as it relates to your citizenship. You were born with citizenship in the world, and under the dominion of the enemy, you came to Christ, you bowed the knee to Him. Your citizenship is now in heaven.

And there's a dynamic reality that goes along with that citizenship that ought to affect your life. But Paul also refers to this in the Book of Colossians. On the screen it says,

Colossians 1:13 (NIV)

...he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and has brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

...he has rescued us from the dominion (or the rulership, if you will) of darkness and has brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

That's you and I. We've been brought into a new kingdom so there's been a transfer of our citizenship from one kingdom to another. And the best way that I can describe it to you, it's like going into a different culture, or a different country. I've never lived in a different country. In fact, the only country I've been in outside of the United States is Canada, a few times. Which is interesting, because being so close, it is very different. I don't know if you've been to Canada, but it feels very much like a European sort of a feel, anyway.

But my sister, for example, lived in Japan for about 10 years, and I learned a lot from her from the things she told us. I've talked to other people who've lived in foreign countries and it is an entirely different mindset.

But here's the deal. If you're raised in a particular country and you go to live in a different in a different country altogether, and you hold on to the mindset from the country of your birth, you're going to be out of place. Everything is going to be different for you because you're going to be living life differently from the way you... The language you speak to the food you eat, to just the way you do things like marriage, and raising children, and the whole nine yards because you're used to a different culture. Different cultures do things very differently.

And it is no less true about the kingdom of this world and the culture of the kingdom of heaven. And there are a lot of Christians, frankly, who are born into the kingdom of God, who are maintaining a mindset from the kingdom of this world, and they're trying to operate according to the kingdom of this world while living in the kingdom of God.

And they don't fit. It doesn't fit. The language is even different. And that's one of the reasons that I believe we lack discernment about the kingdom of heaven is because our mindset is still very much anchored to the kingdom of this world, even though we're living in the kingdom of God or we're a citizen, I should say, of the kingdom of heaven.

And that's one of the reasons why Paul also said to the Colossians up on the screen,

Colossians 3:2 (ESV)

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

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Do you know that's where the kingdom of God, that's where you're going to find the kingdom of God. Obviously it's within your heart as well. But Paul says, “*Set your minds on things that are above, not on things of the earth,*” meaning don't be so fixated on the mindset of the kingdom of this world.

Don't you just..., isn't that just instant conviction? It is for me. I feel like I'm just so tied to this world sometimes. It just, it bugs me. And I see verses like this, “*set your minds on things above.*” Set your minds... Paul could have just as easily said, set your mind on the kingdom of heaven instead of the kingdom of man. Set your mind on spiritual realities rather than merely physical ones.

Do you know what, let's admit something as Christians. We think physical things are more real than spiritual things. You may have never thought of it in those terms, but I believe that the majority of Christians believe the life of the spirit is less tangible and less real than the life of, or the physical realm, and that's sad. Because that means we're just not keyed in. We're not tuned in to what the Lord is doing and what's happening even all around us. And honestly, I think the operation of spiritual things, the involvement of spiritual things, is more prevalent than we would otherwise believe.

There's a wonderful story in the Book of Daniel that shows some amazing things to us about this. Daniel was a man who had incredible visions from God. God showed him things that actually troubled him very much. In fact, Daniel admits to us that after receiving some visions from the Lord, He was so troubled about what they meant, he actually became physically ill. He was so troubled, so challenged to discern the meaning. And the reason he couldn't discern the meaning was because God hadn't given him the meaning, He simply gave him a vision.

And in fact the meaning of the vision was for a time period that was far beyond his own. In fact, some of this stuff is still in the future for you and I. But the point is, Daniel was a man who wanted very much to understand the things the Lord had shown him spiritually and so, he began to pray.

We're told in one particular case, he began to pray right away after receiving a vision from the Lord. He wanted to know what it meant and he prayed, and he prayed, and he prayed, and he prayed, and the answer wasn't coming. Eventually, the Lord appeared to him in this incredible angelic messenger who I believe, by the way, was the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. But the point is, this messenger began to explain to Daniel why there had been a delay to the answer to his prayer. Let me put it on the screen so you can see it together.

Daniel 10:12-14 (NIV)

Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your

words were heard, (that tells us he began praying) and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

Now, this is a fascinating passage that gives you and I spiritual insights that we otherwise would not have. I want you to know where Daniel was though at this time. He had been taken captive. When the Babylonians began to invade Israel, kingdom of Judah, before they actually even completely decimated the city, they started taking people who were of noble birth and bringing them to Babylon to serve there.

And Daniel was one of those, even before the fall of the city of Jerusalem. And he was a young man when he went to go live in the Persian kingdom. And he lived there for the remainder of his life. Daniel is living in the Persian kingdom. Okay. Persia, just like today, is a godless society, and this passage reveals that when Daniel prayed to receive understanding about the vision he had received previously, the answer started coming immediately as he prayed, but it was delayed 21 days.

Why? Look what it says here.

Daniel 10:12-14 (NIV)

Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

In the very middle it says, *"But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days.* In fact, he says, had it not been for *"Michael, one of the chief princes, ..."* And we know that Michael is an archangel who is actually a prince over Israel, right? One of the chief princes. Actually, he says, *"came to help me, because I was detained there with..."* this principality, this demonic prince that was ruling over the Persian kingdom. And so Daniel is made aware of the fact that the response to his prayer had been detained for 21 days. How else are you going to figure that out unless the Lord reveals that to you? And there's no way,

right? So, we're getting this glimpse, right, through the scripture, into spiritual realities that we had absolutely no clue about.

How many times have you prayed and had the answer delayed, even to the point of where you gave up? How many times has that happened to you? Did you ever stop to think there was a spiritual dynamic going on? Did you ever stop to think that there was some spiritual resistance somewhere that was actually holding back what God would otherwise desire to say to you or reveal to you about whatever you were praying about? No, we don't usually think that because we're not spiritually minded. We're earthly minded.

What happens to us when God doesn't answer our prayers after a period of time? God doesn't love me. He's not hearing my prayer. I don't think God cares about me. It's all about me. Right? It's all about me, because that's what my life is all about. And I am cut off, it seems, from the realities of the spiritual things that are happening all around me. And so as I said, were it not for passages like this and others in the Bible, you and I would, we'd be completely ignorant about these things that are going on. So what do we know about spiritual warfare and the battles and the attacks that come our way.

Well, there's actually quite a bit the Bible does tell us and there's one particular passage that I love to go through when we're talking about spiritual attacks because it talks about spiritual attacks. But it's one that we often ignore as it relates to the subject and it's in Matthew chapter 4. I'm actually going to have you turn there.

Okay, turn over to Matthew chapter 4 and we're going to look at this passage that speaks of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. And this is a time when Jesus was tempted by the devil and drawn into a, well, you'll see into the temptations that were involved related to the things that were going on in His life at that moment in His ministry.

Beginning at verse 1, it goes like this. *"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry."* You think?

Here's what's interesting. First, 2 verses of this passage give us actually some incredible insights into when the enemy is going to attack. Okay? *"...Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry."* What does that mean? That means that there's a physical weakness going on. He hasn't eaten in a long, long time. It's probably safe to say He was famished.

What is the enemy going to do when you and I have some kind of a vulnerability going on in our lives? Look at verse 3, the first four words, and *“The tempter came...”*

Guys, that's exactly when the enemy is going to come. When there's something in your life that presents for him a foothold or a vulnerability of some kind where he can speak into your life. Where he can do something into your life and present some kind of an issue or temptation.

And *“³ The tempter came (we're told and said) to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”* Alright, stop there for just a moment. Let's look at this first thing so far.

Jesus is fasting, praying, there are temptations going on, He's hungry. Satan comes to Him at the point of that physical vulnerability and essentially suggests that He uses divine power to turn some stones into loaves of bread.

And the first thing I want to emphasize is the point of the temptation. And someone might read these verses and think, what's the big deal? I mean, what's wrong with turning a few stones into loaves of bread? I mean later on in His ministry, He took a few loaves of bread and a few fish and multiplied them for a multitude of people so what's different about this?

He's hungry and there's nothing wrong with being hungry. That's not a sin. Eating isn't a sin so why is it a big deal? Well, it's not about eating bread because you have to understand something.

Jesus came to live the life that you and I are called to live, which is a complete dependence upon the Father. Okay. What's going on here? What the temptation is all about is trying to get Jesus to look to self instead of trusting in His Heavenly Father. The same way you and I are called to trust in God and not to look to self to meet our needs.

Here's the deal. What's the temptation? The temptation is to attempt to get Jesus to take his eyes off God the Father and put Him on His own ability to resolve the issue of His hunger. But you and I, if this were happening and of course it wouldn't happen to you and I in the same way. Satan's never going to tempt you and I to turn stones into bread. But the temptation is to get His eyes off the provision of the Lord. But see, here's the point. You and I think the problem or the attack is the lack of food or the hunger. And that's the way people will talk to me about what's going on in their lives.

And they'll say, pastor Paul, I really feel like, I'm really under attack right now because we don't have a thing to eat. Or, I just really got attacked this week because my car just died right in the middle of the road and I needed to get to work. Or, pastor Paul my company, the company I'm working for, it just is going through some hard times economically and they've just asked us all to take a hit and pay and I don't know if we can do it. I don't think we can. I don't think we can make it on what I'm going to be earning and so forth and so on. And they say, this is an attack of the enemy.

Oh no, it's not. You want to know where the temptation is going to come in? It's how you respond to that issue or that circumstance, that's where the enemy is going to tempt you. He's going to take a situation. He's going to take circumstances in your life where you are going to be put into a place of asking yourself the question. Am I going to trust God or am I going to just take care of it myself? And 9 times out of 10, we take care of it ourselves. We fall to that temptation.

In other words, we turn stones into loaves of bread. Forget God, I need to get this done. I'm in a desperate crisis situation here, and if I don't act, this thing is going down? That's where the real attack is going on, but see, we miss it. We think the attack is our circumstances, but the attack is how the enemy is going to try to woo you to respond to those circumstances, and what he wants to do is to get you to take your eyes off your Father, your Heavenly Father and put them on yourself. Squarely on yourself for you to take care of your problem, for you to resolve your issue. Because if he can do that, he can begin to whittle away at that relationship between you and God to the point where you are your own god. You are your own provider. Who needs God? You can take care of yourself, right?

You know where I've seen this happen a multitude of times over my years in the ministry? It's people who want to be married, desperately. And they have a very similar sort of a feeling in their life as Jesus probably did after fasting for 40 days and 40 nights. But instead of a gnawing hunger, they've got a gnawing loneliness and they desperately want it to be filled. They want to be married, and they'll even say to me, is there anything wrong with being married? Is it a sin to be married? Of course not. Well, I think the enemy's just really holding me back. The enemy's just really been attacking.

No, the attack of the enemy is going to be on how you're going to resolve this issue. Are you going to trust the Lord and wait on His provision? Or are you going to just take matters into your own hands and marry the first person that comes along that shows you attention? Or are you going to hop in bed with

somebody in order to try to convince them to marry you? Because I've seen that happen too and it's heartbreaking. But we're doing exactly what the enemy is trying to get Jesus to do, taking matters into our own hands. I'm going to fix this. I'm done. I'm done struggling. The hunger, can't stand it one more minute. Going to take care of it. Forget waiting. Forget praying. Time to take action. You ever heard somebody say that? They're falling to the attack of the enemy. That's exactly what Satan wants to do.

We need to be recognizing the real attacks when they come and stop pointing our fingers at simple circumstances. It's how we respond to those circumstances is where the enemy really wants to get in.

So how did Jesus resist the spiritual attack? Look at verse 4. *“Jesus answered, ‘It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*

Number 1, you guys, Jesus used the scripture, which is the sword of the spirit, right? Pick that baby up and start swinging. And He quotes Deuteronomy chapter 8 and He begins to speak about priorities. And see, Satan, this is what Satan's m.o. is.

When you've got a vulnerability in your life and there's a gnawing something. Satan wants you to believe that gnawing something is the biggest something you're ever, ever, ever, going to experience. And if you don't take care of it, you're dead. That's what he wants to convince you of. This is the biggest thing you're ever going to face.

Jesus, by quoting this passage from Deuteronomy, puts into perspective, you know what? Here's the point, Satan, man doesn't live by bread alone. In other words, what He's saying to the enemy is, this is not the biggest need of my life. The biggest need of my life is to hang on every word that proceeds from the mouth of my Father. That is the biggest need of my life.

See, that's what the Word of God does, and that's why it's important when you're going through a time of spiritual attack, that you are in the Bible, that you're in church, that you're in fellowship, so you can hear the Word of God, and the Word can correct your perspective. Because the enemy wants to twist your perspective and make you believe that your problem is the biggest problem that you ever had.

Next, verse 5. *“Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw*

yourself down, for it is written, “‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and “‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’” Interesting sort of a temptation. We note the fact that the enemy quotes scripture here.

We can only imagine how the people would have reacted had Jesus jumped off the temple, the pinnacle of the temple, and floated gently to the ground, in full view of all the people. I mean, I don't know about you, I'd have been impressed, right? In fact, I probably would have maybe gotten down and worshipped Him right then and there.

Here's what's interesting about this. What Satan is offering is a way for Jesus to receive the glory without the cross. You don't need to go through all that stuff just to get these people's attention and so forth just jump off the temple and so forth.

And you know Satan loves to suggest that you and I take the easy way to get what we want and if he can tie our pride into it somehow all the better. And that's what's going on here, at least that's the attempt here.

But this is another kind of spiritual attack that you and I ought to be watchful for but often we're not. We're not even thinking about how the enemy might appeal to our human pride to get us to do some dumb stunt, to get what we want right away, right now, without having to go through the difficulty of waiting on the Lord and the path that often includes for us.

Again, verse 7, here's the response of Jesus. *“Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”*”

Coming back with the scripture. This is the reality of the situation. That's why we need the Word of God. We need the reality to Satan's deception.

And then finally, *“Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.”* Your Bible may say splendor. *“⁹ And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”*

He showed Him. Isn't that interesting? He showed Him all these things. And Satan does that to you and I, too, because he knows that what we seek can easily turn into what we want. He's not against using a little eye candy to draw you and I away from God.

Notice that Jesus doesn't dispute the fact that Satan can, in fact, or has the right to even give Him all of the kingdoms of the world. Remember he is the prince of this world temporarily.

Again, the temptation. No reason for the cross. No reason for going through the death and blood and all that other stuff. There's no reason to do that. Just take what you need, get what you need, take the easy route.

How did Jesus respond? Verse 10, *“Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’”*

See, that's the point. You see what Jesus is bringing it back to? He's saying, I know what you're doing, you wily old devil. If you can get me to look at something and want it and desire it, and then to reach out and take it apart from God's provision, it then becomes the God that I serve. That's the bottom line.

And so He comes back with a scripture and says, it is written, serve God and Him only. I will not serve even the desires of my heart, and wanting those above and beyond what the Lord has for me.

You can see what's going on here. The enemy is willing to use anything. Getting our attention with the vulnerabilities of our flesh, the eye candy that he wants to present before us or the pride of our lives to bring us to a place where we're going to step out and do it on our own rather than trusting in God.

And you got to know, Satan is a liar. He is the father of lies, the Bible tells us, which means he originated the very first lie. Where did lies come from? From Satan. That's why he is referred to as the father of lies. The father in the Bible always means the originator of something. So his lies are an enormous part of his arsenal against you and I. You can have this. You can have this now. You can be happy.

Oh, how many people have gotten sucked down that sewer pipe with just those promises. Just take it and you'll be happy. Do it and you'll be happy. Divorce him and you'll be happy. Get this and you'll be happy. Then you'll be happy.

But what Satan comes to do is to destroy. And when we give in to the temptations and the attacks of the enemy, we give him the freedom to destroy. And maybe as Christians he can't destroy the actual lives that we have in Christ, but boy, he can destroy a lot along the way. And it's heartbreaking to watch it happen. I've watched him destroy Christian marriages. I've watched Satan pick

apart Christian homes. I've watched him steal children away from their parents, not physically, spiritually, emotionally. I've watched him destroy people's faith, shipwreck their faith.

But we must never forget that the secret to withstanding Satan and his lies and his accusations comes not from what you and I do, it comes primarily through what Jesus did on the cross. And that is such an important thing to remember. When we face temptation, when we face the temptation to give up, when we're loaded down with guilt and the enemy's kicking us and telling you're nothing, that's spiritual warfare. That's a spiritual attack.

And you and I need to take up the armor that has been given to us outlined here in Ephesians chapter 6. And we need to put it on and then we need to do what Paul told us to do at the beginning of this passage and that is, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might, not yours.

Now looking at the final 4 verses, turn back if you would please to Ephesians chapter 6. These last 4 verses are very simple. Paul writes, ²¹ *So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything.* ²² *I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.*

²³ *Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*” What a beautiful passage. He ends by saying, ²⁴ *Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.*”

Please don't ever forget what grace is. Favor from God that you have not earned and cannot earn. That you can't perform good enough to get it. He simply gives it.

Spiritual attacks. I think we need to start praying that God would open our eyes. What do you think? I think we need to start living in the kingdom that we've been born into. It's not even like you have to even try, you've already been born into it. It's like, Lord, just make, open my eyes to the kingdom, open my eyes.

I don't know, I have a feeling that the Lord wants to respond to that prayer. There's a lovely passage in the Old Testament, won't make you turn there, we're done. But there's a wonderful passage in the Old Testament where Elisha and his servant are in their tent, they're kind of just hanging out. And it says that his servant got up in the morning to go do something. And the king of Assyria was gunning for Elisha, because Elisha was, through the Spirit, giving military

information to the king of Israel. In other words, telling him where the king of Syria was going to be, when and where, and da, da, da. And so whatever the king of Syria was trying to do against the king of Israel got foiled because obviously God knows everything in everybody's heart.

The king of Syria is all upset about this and he goes, all right which one of you guys is a mole? Let's rat him out and one of his servants comes in because he says king, it's not us, believe me. There is a prophet in Israel and he tells the king of Israel what you say in your bedchamber the king of Syria says that's it, we're going to kill him. Let's go get him. So they find out where Elisha is living and they surround his tent with this army, the Syrian army.

And so, Elisha, in my mind's eye, I see this thing playing out, he's still like, napping, or whatever, he's just kind of hanging back. And his servant gets up to draw water or whatever and he sees this army on the hillside and he runs back in master, master, the enemy has come out against us. We're dead. We're dead. We're going to..., we're doomed.

And Elisha, in my mind, he never opens his eyes. He just, yeah, that's the way. And he just says, it's okay, those who are for us are greater than those who are against us. And then he says this, he prays, he says, Lord, open his eyes, let him see.

And the servant goes back to the opening in the tent, and he looks upon the hillside where the army of Syria is stationed and ready to attack, and he sees the heavenly hosts in flaming chariots surrounding the enemy. And he realizes that they have nothing to worry about. But the reason is, is because his eyes had been opened.

How about we make that our prayer? Lord, open my eyes. I want to see what's going on. Not to get weird. I want to know. I want to see. I want to understand more about the reality of what you are doing in the spirit.

I want to be connected to what you're doing. I want to see it.

And the Lord would speak to all of our hearts and say, well, get your eyes off earthly things, put them on things above. I'll start to show you things.