

Kingdoms at war.

Even as we open the Sunday newspapers today you will be struck by the amount of misery that is going on in the world. On the other hand if you scratch a little deeper you will find an incredible amount of good as well. Unfortunately when evil is reinforced through legislation, as it has been in many countries (abortion, same sex marriages etc), then there is an escalation of the power given to evil. It needs a foothold or a platform to become entrenched anywhere.

I want us to look at the process this morning. It is going to arm you for the battle. Like the Kingdom of God that is like a seed or yeast evil is the same, it also needs a seed and will quickly grow if the atmosphere is right. We have been called to overcome evil with good.

The battle has global proportions.

Matt 4 ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. NIV

Jesus came to this world not to start a new religion but to re-announce His Kingdom and reaffirm His call for man to rule on planet earth. In order to do this He engaged the one who had legal right to prevent this from happening.

He then gives us, His disciples a perspective of the battle to come. We are now living in this dispensation.

Matt 24 the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” ⁴ Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the

Christ,’ and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains. ⁹ “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

1. False appearance of “christs” or saviours.
2. Wars and rumours of wars – ethnic groups and nations but also kingdoms.
3. Natural disasters like earthquakes, famines, tsunamis.
4. There will be religious wars where Christians will be persecuted and put to death.
5. Many will abandon their faith in Christ.
6. Those who stand firm to the end will be saved.
7. This gospel of the Kingdom will be preached to all nations.

This global battle is very dependent on us to understand the personal involvement we each have. This is not just a battle that is going to take place out there and our involvement will be to read about it in the Sunday papers. The Lord has come to restore our authority.

Matt 16 ¹⁸ ‘And I also say to thee, that thou art a rock, and upon this rock I will build my assembly, and gates of Hades shall not prevail against it; ¹⁹ and I will give to thee the keys of the reign of the heavens, and whatever thou mayest bind upon the earth shall be having been bound in the heavens, and whatever thou mayest loose upon the earth shall be having been loosed in the heavens.’”

Youngs Literal Translation

- “My assembly”, many translations say” my church”.
- Hades shall not prevail – there is a place where we are safe.
- Jesus reaffirms our role – reigning.
- We have been given the authority to bring heavenly rule down to earth.

Isn't it amazing we pray *‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* Matt 6 NIV

This is a battle that can only spread beyond us if it has taken place in us.

James 1¹² Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.¹³ No one, when tempted, should say, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one.¹⁴ But one is tempted by one’s own desire, being lured and enticed by it;¹⁵ then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death.¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved. RSV

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 5. Sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death.
 6. Do not be deceived my beloved.

Matt 6¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’¹⁴ For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Group notes

Ice breaker.

1. Which “foreign” countries have you visited and which customs did you find the strangest?
2. What “foreign” custom made you feel most awkward?
3. How do you feel when you engage people from different countries?

What’s the Word on it?

This week we looked at the perspective of the global battle that is taking place. The usual response we have when we look at it from this perspective is that it is “out there, we are not really engaged, it has cosmic proportions, other forces are controlling the battle.” Little do we realise that it is because Christians have largely been lulled into this religious ideology that it seems as if we can do nothing about it. This is a strategy of the enemy. Religion is his weapon in this battle. Christ came to restore our role as rulers or governors and to act like His ambassadors on earth. We can only win the battle “out there” if we have won it “at home”.

1 Corinthians 10:1-13; James 1:12-16; Col 2:6-15; 2 Thes 3:3; Luke 22:31;

1. What has overcoming temptation got to do with the battle between nations (ethnic groups) and kingdoms of the world.
2. Why has overcoming temptation got the ability to strengthen us?
3. What is the significance of being “rooted” and having strong spiritual foundations in overcoming temptation?
4. What role should we play in each other’s lives in overcoming temptation?
5. The power the enemy has with temptation is in its secrecy. Some people are married for many years and their partners don’t even know about this battle in each other. Why do we keep these things secret?

Prayer

Pray for each other for strength to overcome.