

WARFARE FROM THE PLACE OF REST

by Terry Somerville

I began my Christian walk being mentored in deliverance and spiritual warfare. I had come out of the occult and had to learn how to resist the devil. Only a few people had insight into this back then. Today things are different and spiritual warfare seems to be a big part of praying for revival. Now we have spiritual warfare networks, identificational repentance, identifying and binding principalities etc. But there is a problem. Most of us know Christians doing this in earnest and being tormented by the enemy. This is not right. We have the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead living in us! The enemy should flee when he sees us! What's wrong?

The church in Acts advanced dramatically, but didn't do warfare the way it's done today. They boldly preached the Kingdom of God and cast out demons, and the Kingdom of God came in. They seemed almost indifferent to the enemies power, though they prayed a great deal. Was there spiritual warfare? Of course. At times Satan hindered them, but their approach had a different character than we see today. It was a warfare from a place of rest in the victory of the cross.

This is the place God wants us to be!

Transitions in Spiritual Warfare

I was one of those being tormented by the enemy as I pressed forward in revival prayer. I knew my authority in Christ, but had to seek God in desperation. Over the years I experienced several seasons of refocusing in Spiritual warfare and ministry. Each step was a breakthrough. Here is a brief outline of steps I took to "WARFARE FROM THE PLACE OF REST".

1. From Discernment of Demons to Discernment of the Holy Spirit

When I was baptized in the Holy Spirit, the gift of discerning of spirit came strongly. I needed it. I had come out of the occult. But like many Christians with a prophetic calling, I picked up on every demon around! I bound them all! After a while I was getting tired of this and desperate. One day I prayed "God, I'm tired of seeing what demons are doing, I want to see what you are doing" At that point the discernment of spirits took on a new dimension. I began to see what the Holy Spirit and angels were doing. I found if I knew what God was doing, what demons wasn't an issue.

One Christmas time a demon possessed man was in the front row of our church during an evening service. He was a Christian with many mental struggles. As I preached I discerned a demon watching me, and also discerned the power of God going forth. At the end of the message I came about six feet from him and said, at ordinary volume, "get out of him!" Suddenly the demon manifested and he hit the floor thrashing, growling and knocking over the Christmas tree. The congregation began to run out of the building and I yelled " don't leave, it's only a demon." With a Holy boldness I jumped on top of him commanding the demon to leave. Why did I respond differently than the congregation? The congregation only saw what the demon was doing, I could see what God was doing.

2. From Battling the Enemy to Dealing With Idolatry

When I came to Campbell River I entered into a level of warfare I had never experienced. God was about to show me something I had never seen before. For the first ten years of ministry I had always experienced victory over the enemy. Now I was embattled, and all my efforts at binding and rebuking the enemy were useless. This went on for over a year and I didn't understand it. Sometimes the oppression was so overwhelming I would be on the floor crying out to God. "What is going on Lord??"

Then, in a time of deeply seeking God, He revealed something I never knew about myself. He said "Terry, you are an idol worshiper." I didn't understand it. Then he showed me the vision of ministry I wanted. Like the priests in Ezekiel 14, it was like a "picture on the wall of my heart". I served this image of ministry rather than the Lord. (An idol is an image) When the picture came true my flesh was happy, when the picture was denied I was upset. The Lord showed me this idolatry in three areas of my life. It had become a foothold for the enemy to attack. I was unsubmitted to God, and could try and resist, but the enemy did not flee. I was tormented.

The key to victory was a change of heart. I repented of my idolatry in church ministry. But there was a process that took years, I slowly realized that what is valued in our culture had become the values of the church...success, fame, youth, size, money, control. We watched the clock not the Lord. Even when renewal came, we wanted renewal to be our ticket to fame! I could see that my prayers for revival were nothing but prayers from idolatry! Oh how deep these years of repentance became.

During this time identificational repentance became part of my walk with God. I became involved with The Gatherings and we realized we needed to take corporate responsibility for our history as a church and a nation. Though this cleansed away many sins, there were more changes to come.

3. From General Commission to Specific Jurisdiction

Another key revelation for warfare from the place of rest concerns knowing the jurisdiction the Lord has given us. The fact is, much spiritual warfare is presumptuous. It is based on the general commission "Behold I give you authority over all the power of the enemy." Many Christians assume this is a blanket authority to do whatever they please in confronting Satan. Even Jesus did not do that. He only did what he saw the Father doing, though He had all authority.

The things of the old testament "were written down for our instruction"(Rom.15:4). God told Moses He had given them the land - a general principle over all the power of their enemy. But when the spies brought an evil report, that generation lost their jurisdiction. Later Joshua entered the land on the same commission. When Achan stole the goods from Jericho the people again suffered defeat.

We need to understand our assignment and the jurisdiction God gives us at any given time and not exceed it. I have spiritual authority in my home, but not someone else's home. The RCMP and the FBI both have police authority, but it applies to their country of assignment, not to police work anywhere. When I understood my assignment it broke through a lot of difficulties I had made for myself. Here's an example.

One day my wife and I were in our living room praying for the ministry. Suddenly we both saw this five foot tall spirit. An old woman, or "hag" was standing in front of us. It was a principality. I would have rebuked it, but immediately the Holy Spirit said "don't touch it!" and warned me that it could kill. He also showed me that she was out her territory, and that I had no jurisdiction to deal with it! I said to it "You don't have anything to do with me, and I don't have anything to do with you." It just left. Who knows what warfare I would have been in had I not obeyed the Lord! I learned new respect for spiritual jurisdiction that day!

Here are some important scriptures that stood out to me. Col 1:16 For all things were created in Him, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created through Him and for Him. This scripture tells us clearly the realm of powers and principalities is something Jesus is highly involved with! Daniels revelation of the angelic battle was not an authorization for us to do high level spiritual warfare, but a revelation that the Lord dispatched His archangels against the prince of Persia. He created those thrones, determines their times and seasons. He "created the destroyer for a purpose!" It was the Lord that determined the Canaanite Kingdoms were at an end, and then gave Israel authority to take the land. The word tells us the God will crush Satan under our feet! We need to know our jurisdiction. Our clear mandate is to cast demons out of people. We can always set seekers free! Beyond that, we must absolutely know God's throne room commands, then, principalities yield to the advancing church! We are warned about being ignorant and reviling these spiritual authorities.

Jud 1:8-10 Likewise, indeed, also these..... despise rulership, and speak evil of glories. But Michael, the archangel, when contending with the Devil, he argued about the body of Moses, he dared not bring a judgment of blasphemy, but said, Let the Lord rebuke you! But what things they do not know, they speak evil of. ...

We may petition the Lord, but He alone determines the rise and fall of these princes today, and we participate in carrying it out! Though the Lord utterly destroyed every evil power at Calvary, they still exercise an evil dominion and God sets His timetable. Presumptuous warfare is costly, and many are suffering because they presume to have jurisdiction not given to them at the time. When it is time, the Father delegates it and we see great victories! Our assignment determines our jurisdiction.

4. From Breaking Curses to Releasing Blessing

Many of us have focused on finding the key to break curses we experience, and the curses on the land. I must admit, after God confronted my idolatry I kept looking for causes of failure in myself, and my people. I would strive terribly, becoming self conscious and analytical about everything I was doing, especially in ministry. It seemed we battled a constant stream of curses. Then I was invited to go to Argentina. God changed my life.

We visited Hector Giminez' church and were immersed in the revival. They had ten services a day, seven days a week! Wow! I just soaked in what God was doing and loved it. On the way home I found a corner alone on the plane and said "OK God, what do you want to show me?" He began to talk to me about about blessing.

The Lord reminded me of what happened one day at Hectors church. Between services we would be taken to the guest lounge by our hostess. One time the woman who usually brings refreshments was not there, so our hostess served us. Soon afterwards the other woman came in and began debating with the hostess. I asked one of the men to translate what they were saying. He told me "she is saying "you took away my chance to bless our guests."" I started recalling how these people were always focused on blessing. They loved to do it. It was a Kingdom lifestyle.

Then the Lord brought the scriptures on blessing to mind. Jesus took the whole curse and paid for it and I am blessed with Abraham. I am called to be a blessing!

So then those of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are out of works of the Law, these are under a curse; Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone having been hanged on a tree"); so that the blessing of Abraham might be to the nations in Jesus Christ, and that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Gal.3:8-14

Knowing Satan is a legalist I had been labouring in spiritual warfare under the law to revoke the curse. But the Lord was saying "don't fight the curse, just bless. Jesus took the curse and blesses you! The blessing breaks the curse!" When I came home we began to put this into practice. We found that spiritual warfare changed dramatically. Whenever we felt the enemy at work through curses we blessed! The curse and struggles just seemed to dissolve away. The Kingdom was here!

Is repentance ever a key for breakthrough? Of course! But our focus is to bless, not look for sin. The Holy Spirit will convict us if necessary!

5. From Fighter To Lover

Up until 2001 I had been a person who "contended" for ministry. We had seen wonderful things, but like a good charismatic minister, spiritual victory seemed to depend on my ability to walk in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In 2001 Bob Brasset invited me to accompany him in His new healing ministry. Over the next year I ministered with him in about 30 meetings as he mentored me. I saw so many people healed that I was astonished and Bob spoke regularly about "the love anointing". I had seen all kinds of anointings in the Spirit, but what was the "love anointing"? I kept asking and Bob kept explaining, but it had to come by revelation. Finally I saw it!

As I ministered to the sick one night I suddenly saw what looked like liquid wind come down on the person. It was the love anointing! Under the love anointing I spoke to the infirmity and the person was healed! My reaction was "OH! I get it! It's Him! Jesus IS here. He's coming on people with His love, but He's doing when I pray for it to come. God is the love anointing!" When he pours His love on you, you can minister but it is Him that ministers. Its not about me ministering the gifts. He is the gift! It was not about me having love, He is love. In a moment I understood how Jesus said "He who has seen me has seen the Father."

My life and ministry dramatically changed from that point on. Ministry is no longer about ministry, but about His presence and love in me ministering. As Paul the apostle said "I am a steward of this grace". Spiritual warfare also changed completely. Instead of being in a fight, it's no contest! Jesus love at the cross utterly defeated the enemy. Anywhere this love goes the enemy leaves! Even deliverance ministry is different! What a joy pouring love on a person. The enemy just melts away in easy commands. I've begun to wonder if warfare is even warfare? I found myself resting with Him on the throne of His grace!

In 2002 I started travelling in healing ministry myself, and in 2003 went to India for the first time. The new Hindu temple behind my hosts house was being dedicated while we were there. Loudspeakers broadcast the demon worship for blocks in every direction. Years ago I would have been paranoid about being surrounded by idols and demons. I honestly felt nothing of the enemy at all as we immersed in his territory! One day I asked my host to translate the worship for me. I was surprised to find it was an expression of worship and thanks to a god of stone. Instantly I felt the love of God for the people and His jealousy for their worship of Him. From that point on every demon, idol and temple reminded me of Gods love. Under the love anointing the blind saw, the deaf heard, the mute talked, the infirm became well, the lame walked, and the leper was cleansed, demons were cast out, and many were saved! .

Here was the key. Jesus loves India and He's bringing India to Himself. The enemy may hinder, but he can DO NOTHING to stop it. We didn't fight and war our way into this. It just is, because of His love! The sin, the idolatry, the history, all that man has done, all the blood shed, all that Satan has worked, was taken by Christ at the cross.

6. From Advancing Our Church to Advancing His Kingdom - Warfare From The Place of Rest

Finally I experienced a shift in overall focus, from advancing the church organization, to advancing the Kingdom of God. Some will say "Isn't it the same thing?" No it isn't. The Kingdom of God always exists. We don't build, it we announce it. It's a banquet God has set. We are the waiters at the table inviting the world to dine! The Kingdom is the presence of the King, with authority, love, grace and life for all who will believe. The Kingdom is already organized. God sets His ministries in the body as he wishes. On the other hand, believers may build a church organization as a wineskin. We try to reflect the Kingdom of God in our organization. Eventually the wineskin loses its flexibility and does not respond to the Holy Spirit as it once did.

When we seek to advance an organization or our own plans, we will experience spiritual warfare as "hand to hand combat" with the enemy.(Eph 6:12) Why is this? Because we are wrestling at a "second heaven" level. Every piece of armour in this passage is there to gird the natural man in the things of God. But there is a different level of warfare that God wants us to know about. It is when we sit with Christ in the heavenly places and God crushes Satan under our feet.

In India at our miracle crusade I noticed a remarkable thing. When I preached the good news of the Kingdom the miracles dramatically increased over other occasions of ministry. I asked God why? He said "because you are doing Kingdom business." I understood our organized ministry was right and good, but God's hand of power is on the advancing Kingdom. It's His Kingdom mandate that destroys the works of the devil. I need to keep that straight. His orders were specific "go and preach the good news of the Kingdom."

What's amazing about this Kingdom shift is that spiritual warfare has almost ceased entirely, Yet the enemy still falls back. If I leave the place of rest to advance things myself, the "wrestling" starts up and the results plunge.

Here are some thoughts on the power of a Kingdom focus.

1. The power and mandate to destroy the works of Satan rests on preaching the Kingdom of God
2. When we seek first the Kingdom of God, He will back us up with the "other things".
3. When we represent the King and not ourselves, we have authority as an ambassador.
4. When we put no confidence in the flesh, then we see the power of the Spirit

Conclusion

I believe the Lord is orchestrating a divine shift throughout the body of Christ. Our experience of spiritual warfare is slowly moving to the place where we see "power over all the power of the enemy." However, this power is not about having a "larger sword". It has much to do with the fact that Jesus himself bears the sword, and we are His body. (Eph.6:17 Rev 1:16) God is shifting our battle in spiritual warfare from hand to hand combat, (Eph 6:12) to putting the enemy under our feet. (Rom 16:20)