

“Battle Stations”

Get Ready, the Enemy is Attacking!

Acts 16:16-21

Introduction:

Today we want to discuss something of utmost importance to the spiritual success of you and your family and friends. It is a message to call to your attention that you are in a battlezone. You may choose to dismiss this message, but the truth is that you are either being defeated, exploited, misused and abused, or you are seeing victory in some pretty high value battles.

The enemy would like to devour you or sift you like wheat. What will you do to guard yourself from his attacks. How will you recognize the onslaught of his wiles. In our passage today, we can pick up on three of his favorite tools. Demons, Dollars, and “Deaf”initions.

The Enemy uses: Demons, Dollars, and Deafinitions

I. Demons – (verses 16-18)

Your Menace

Be on the alert, demonic activity is:

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A. Convenient – “*as we went to prayer*”

*** In its Location**

- **as they went to prayer – Satan has set up his shop all around us. If we will just open up our eyes we will see the evil around us. The devil and his wares.**
- **A trap is best placed in highly trafficked area**

*** In its Timing**

- **As they went –**
 - **looking for answers,**
 - **in time of need**

B. Common – “*brought her master much gain*”

> Much gain means much use

- **brought her masters much gain – supply and demand works for psychics too. Evil spirits are common place today.**
 - **The idea of transcendental meditation is that of channeling spirit guides(demons).**
 - **We have had not long ago both a president and vice president that Time magazine reported that did just that.**
 - **We had a first lady that talked to demons who represented themselves as Eleanor Roosevelt.**
- **Just because a lot of people are involved does not make it good or right.**
 - **House warranty x Pledge & Windex.**

C. Complimentary - “these men are”

- **Just because they make us feel good but...**
- **these men are the servants of the most high God – the devil will tell the truth but he mixes it with lies.**

- **Psychics offer free readings if you call. Their adds say, We are waiting now for your call. Why do they wait for your call. They should call you if they know you want information and that you would pay them for more.**
- **Notice that Paul was Grieved - Not because of the message – cp. Acts 4:12, 13:26, 47**
 - **He was disturbed because they wonderful message of God does not belong in the filthy mouth of the enemy.**
 - **He knew that such truth was not to be mingled with such lies that surely were being told and would be told.**
 - **He knew that the messenger was inextricably linked to the message.**
 - **He knew that knowing the truth about Jesus does not automatically cause salvation. Belief is more than knowledge but has to do with trust or faith.**

VIDEO – Escaping Demonic Influence

II. **Dollars** — (verses 19) Your Money

Be on the alert, love of money produces :

A. **Counterfeit Hope** - "*hope of their gains*"

If you say that you know you should do something else with your money but right now you are going to do ..., perhaps you are in an abusive relationship with your money, you are in love with your money but your money is not loving you back.

- **Their hopes were tied directly to the production of the demons. They were willing to deal with the devil for dollars.**
- **Their hope was tied also to the taking advantage of others in stead of the helping of others.**
- **We should attach our hope to the one who is above all, over all, and creator of all. He will**

B. **Compulsive Action**- "*caught...drew them*"

Like:

- **Violence – anger**
 - **Caught = seized – grabbed**

- **Drew = dragged – coil up**
- **Legalities – time before officials, ie. Cops, judges**
 - **The masters loss led him to fight legally to get revenge = even when no restitution was possible**

III. **Deafinitions** – “exceedingly...our city” (verses 20-21) Your Mind

The Enemy uses our reasoning skills against us. He enjoys when we parse words and meanings so that we feel OK about doing wrong behavior.

We once had a president of the US that said:

"It depends on what the meaning of the words 'is' is

"It depends on how you define alone..."

"There were a lot of times when we were alone, but I never really thought we were."

"When I was in England, I experimented with marijuana a time or two, and I didn't like it. I didn't inhale and never tried it again."

When we hear these things, we have to ask ourselves if others are hearing us say these things... It is time to begin listening to ourselves talk and ...

Be on the alert, surrender is found in words of:

A. Complaints - “These men...trouble our...”

➤ **They are causing me trouble**

- **It is because they are different**

It is because they are making me quit doing wrong

Complaints can be helpful if given:

> **To the right people (Matthew 18)**

> **For the right reasons (Galatians 6)**

Complaints can be very harmful if they undermine the:

* **Integrity – will others not trust this or any other church**

* **Interests – will this issue become so disruptive to the work of the church that the focus is not lost souls.**

* **Individuals – will anyone be so stained and hurt that they will be limited in future ministry because of my words.**

Of Christ’s Church.

B. Correctness - “being Romans”

➤ **The need for tolerance is only wanted when it is for the doing of wrong not right**

- **Tolerance is the greatest virtue of this age except when it is confronted with Biblical truth. Creationism, Pro-life issues, Education choices**
- **Some how we are to believe that pro-choice is simply defined as giving the poor what the rich always have. A means to a safe abortion.**

Verses 6- 10

Tells of the struggles of God's team to follow closely to what the Lord desires. It tells how the team of Paul and Silas, Timothy and evidently Luke was desiring to be very accurate as to where they went. They were led by the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

They desired to go to Asia (go south) and the Spirit would not give them peace. They decided to go north to Bithynia but the Spirit nixed that idea. Through a vision in the night, the Lord directed them to go west to Macedonia. It was all for the giving of the gospel.

In Macedonia they meet Lydia from Asia. Her whole family came to trust in the Lord Jesus because God moved the messenger where He had moved the lost Asian.

That brings us to our text today. It involves a struggle with the enemy. It highlights the reality of evil in our world that is directly opposed to freedom as it relates to mankind.

v. 16 – soothsaying = telling of the future and wisdom.

- spirit of divination = a python, the idea of ventriloquism

v. 18 – Paul was grieved – did not appreciate the help or corporation. Some say ecumenicalism is the way to reach the

world. The world council of churches and the like. Paul would argue against.

v. 19 – their gain was gone – the verbs used for come out in verse 18 and this one for gone are the same. It emphasizes the reality that to the masters the evil spirit = money. That was their value system.

v. 20

- Exceedingly = to disturb fully
- Being Jews = a scourge to Romans (cp. 18:2)
Uses racism and prejudice to accomplish
- Our city = everyone ??! possibly an exaggeration?

v. 21 = Unlawful – The political correctness of that day allowed for the practice of banned foreign religions as long as no one objected. It was a very flexible principle which could be ignored or involved depending on the desire of the person involved.

> They were also intimating that the practice of Christianity would be a detriment to society. Gallio the procounsel answers that charge in 18:13-14