

War on Lies; A Iuta Continua

Series: Battlefield:
fighting the flesh, the world, the devil
27th Feb 2022
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Genesis 3:1-7
Spiritual warfare

Prayer for Ukraine. We have been speaking of Spiritual war and right now there is war in Ukraine. This is evidence of the brokenness of our world the Spiritual warfare going on. When human beings listen to lies of the enemy and if they are in power their choice to partner with the enemy has far-reaching consequences.

But our prayers do not fall on deaf ears. The future belongs to the intercessors who believe the future into being. So let us spend some time today fighting the battle in Ukraine the best way we know how, in prayer.

Last week we talked about the war on lies. The enemy's main tact is lies. Jesus in a conversation with the Pharisees says that his goal is to kill, murder has been his business from the start and lying is his native language.

For generations teachers in the bible and of the bible warned against being deceived, false doctrines, false teachers. But nowadays it is not too common a peaching. And any teaching of that kind falls on deaf ears.

This year we will see the floodgates open on lies in this country as politicians speak their native language. What has often entrenched the division in this country has often been the lies told in and by different political factions.

Once in our theology class, we were looking at the tribalism and division amongst the Israelites in the Book of Judges. There was a time all tribes ganged up against the Tribe of Benjamin and came close to wiping them off completely.

Tribalism is quite a Human problem and so we decided to look at our battle with it here in Kenya.

One of the stories that came up was the association of Tom Mboya. I was surprised that the stories people knew about the ongoings were different depending on the people group and whom one listened to. So how are we to be united if we do not even share.

Which further divided this country. When we believe lies we do not show up to reality well. And this is at the core of Spiritual warfare. We live in the war between truth and lies. Even sin is an issue of giving in to the temptation to believe a lie about what will make us happy, fulfilled and satisfied.

And Jesus ties the root of deception and lies to a creature he calls the devil. What the enemy does is tell lies that play to our disordered loves or broken desires that are normalised in a sinful society.

The problem with lies is that we do not think they are lies. They often sound like the truth. In fact, it is way easier to spot lies in other people's lives or cultures than it is to see the lies in your own. We simply don't know what we don't know. It looks normal to you.

Ask me about it. I am a pastor. I sit with people and can soon see what lies they are leaning into, but not so with myself.

Why? Because the lies we often buy into seem to be true to us. And the devil is not just a liar, he is a very good one. He is good at telling mostly true statements, telling half-truths and oversimplifying things making his lies seem quite believable.

This is why Jesus makes the statement 'You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.' It seems that the main fight for our freedom against the enemy is primarily about being liberated from lies by God's truth.

So today what we will do is spend some time talking about the nature of the lies the enemy tells. What is the truth about lies?

In this exchange, Jesus makes a reference to a story describing the encounter of Human beings with the devil. All the way back in Genesis.

So let us look at it a bit?

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Gen 3:1-7

However you read Genesis, it talks a lot about the human condition.

The devil does not come to Eve with guns and tanks and bombs or even demonic attacks. Instead, he comes at her with an idea. Like I said last week, human beings are separate from other creations because we have the ability to hold ideas, imagination. And so this is what the devil goes for.

Let us look at the nature of the lies the enemy tells. There are three main questions of life.

1. Is there a God and if there is what is his nature - theology
2. Who are we as human beings - anthropology
3. And What is the good life? Morality.

And what we think about God determines what we think about humanity and what we think about humanity impacts what we think about the good life, good and bad and morality.

If there is a God, then he is the creator and if there is a creator that means there is design instead of accidents. If there is a design then it was intentional and intent implies there is a good and a bad, what we call morality. And if there is what is good and what is bad it implies there is something to be held accountable for.

This is what the enemy lies about. He lies to Eve about God.

“God knows you will not surely die”

Essentially lying about the nature of God. Whoever God is, you cannot trust him, he is jealous and holding back on you. He is not good.

Then he lies to her about humanity.

“You will become like God”

He lies that humanity can ascend its place in creation. Instead of being below the creator and above creation they can take the place of gods. They can be whatever they want and therefore be the ones to determine for themselves; good and bad, right and wrong.

And about morality, he makes Eve believe that instead of obedience she should just do what seemed right to her for her appetites and desires.

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye and desirable for gaining wisdom, she took and it ate it.

Do whatever you want and is pleasing to you. Ignore all other trees that are in the garden and have the blessing of God and take this one that pleases you that God says will lead to death. Eat this, believe this, sleep here, do this and then you will be happy.

The nature of the lies changes from generation to generation and culture to culture it is the same idea.

The enemy still lies about God today. With lies such as; He does not exist. We now know better. Ancient people just needed a way to explain the unexplainable. Now we have science. Or that God is unknowable or He is not good.

About humanity, the enemy lies in the same way that we can take into our own hands redefining what is right and what is wrong because we are gods unto ourselves. Just like in the garden, today human beings believe they can ignore God's authority and be the ones to decide what is good and bad. That is why we say morality changes from society to society and has no absolutes.

This has been how the enemy has been fighting and still is. This is the nature of the lies he is telling.

So why use lies? Why is this still the enemy's best strategy? It is by Spirit and Truth that we are transformed into the likeness of Jesus. Jesus comes to us and leaves His Spirit, this is His presence. Also, he comes as a teacher. What teachers do, hopefully, is bring truth to you. And one of the things Jesus said the Holy Spirit does is lead us to the truth. It is by Spirit and truth that we are transformed into Jesus' likeness.

Conversely, it is by isolation from presence and lies that we are deformed into the broken image of the devil. And get enslaved in a life of evil and death.

And I think this is also how we even give an opening to the demonic in our lives.

What do I mean by Spirit? It is the un-embodied personal presence of someone. I still always remember my father's laugh even when I am away from him. It is not about the volume or the cadence. It is the fact that it reminds me of his presence. Anyone else could say laugh the same way but it still would not be him, because it is not the same Spirit.

When you are with people, you are in the presence of Spirit. Some people walk into a room and even if there were 20 people in there already, the room lights up. It is their un-embodied presence.

What is truth? As I said, ideas correspond to reality.

And for transformation to happen, the two need to work together.

If someone just loved you and never corrected you. They are a great spirit around you but you are not getting any formation.

If someone just threw correction at you but you know they did not care for you, they break you. It is empty.

But when the two are present it is the most loving and transformative experience that forms you over time.

My experience even here has been people grow when they have the opportunity to learn in a place where they know they are fully loved. The people I have seen reach the great potential they did not think they even had, first needed the safety of knowing they were around the right spirit alongside good training or instruction.

And it gets crazy when the two are both bad. If you are in the presence of the wrong spirit and they fill you with lies, the destruction is terrible.

We have seen it in our country on our TVs. Churches where the Pastor's led by the wrong Spirit just speak lies and half-truths from the stage and a whole congregation falls under spiritual abuse and are deformed.

Politicians fuelled by the wrong spirit travelling across the country telling lies about other tribes set our country in flames in 2008 and over 30 deaths in 2017.

Some of the hardest situations I have come across in pastoral counselling is people who have lived broken lives because they were in the presence of Spirit, their parents, and they filled them with lies. They were told they were unlovable and no one would ever want them. That they would amount to nothing. That they could do whatever they wanted as long no one knew or it did not hurt anyone.

So how does the devil do it? Just like he did with Eve. First, he isolates you from the Spirit of God. She lies to even about who God is to create mistrust.

Secondly, He isolates you from community. Even was not with her husband as this was happening. There was no other sounding board.

Then you are ready to hear nothing but the lies he is telling about what will make you happy, satisfied and peaceful. And all the time it is always sin. This is how we get tempted.

All our worst regrets are often when we are alone or in the presence of a bad spirit. When we take ourselves away from God's presence and that of community then the enemy gets an opportunity to lie to us.

And we are at the age of busyness. We are so so busy we are cut off even from the spirit of God because there is always one more notification to get to. A culture that is ripe for lies from the enemy.

And the results? A more lonely, hurting society, further from God, suicide rates up and a world at the brink of war and destruction. A world with no sense of morality.

Now a note on suicide. I do not want to oversimplify the issue. It is a real problem and it breaks God's heart. And if you struggle at all God would like to heal you. There is both prayer and professional help available. Please talk to us or contact this Organization on screen.

(Call back the band)

So how then should we fight?

1. Communion with the Spirit of God.

To follow Jesus we must learn to abide in him and be found in intimacy with him. As I was praying this week I realised that even though it took me years to get rid of certain sins in my life that I completely thought were okay coz I bought into certain lies, I would never have gotten to that point were it not for being in the presence of God and just experiencing the Holy Spirit move.

On that note, worship is a very powerful way to be in the presence of the Spirit of God. David like many after him found that God dwells in the praises of His people.

I have realised the more I spend time with someone, chatting to them, doing stuff with them, the more I know them deeply. I can feel their presence. I begin to even

feel what they feel. We get so connected it feels like we have known each other forever.

But it is more than being in a good worship service. It is about learning to do the practices of Jesus. Prayer and fasting, silence and solitude. Gathering in church and in a small group, reading scripture. All these are a means to an end and the end is always to be with the father. Spiritual disciplines are Spiritual warfare.

2. Communion with others also pursuing Jesus.

Commit to follow Jesus alongside others. This is not a solo journey. Go to church. The church is not perfect, but she is Jesus' bride. We must learn to love her and be found in her. You need to be in a church if you are going to fight well. And online should only be an option if it is physically impossible for you to gather with others.

Also commit to a smaller group of Jesus followers who together, you create space for the Holy Spirit to transform you. This is a place you are seen, loved, held accountable, encouraged and blessed.

3. Invest in the right teaching.

Read your bible. Go to church and hear the public reading of scripture. Go to a good church where there is sound teaching of scripture. In the age of the internet, invest in a podcast or two. Truth frees us. Truth expels lies. We cannot afford to be lazy about this.

This week, go back to the Lectio Divina sessions we have online on our website. Practice again. Spend some time with God's word and with the Holy Spirit. Set some time apart to just pray and sit silently before God without your phone, computer or TV. Be with the Holy Spirit. Then call a friend whom you know is journeying in the same direction or even your spouse if you are married and try to do some of that together.