



# VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

## SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

# Allied Forces: The Holy Spirit

**Invisible War: Winning Against Evil | Part 5**

**Tim Badal | July 12, 2015 | Various Scriptures**



Today we come to the third part in our series. In part one, we talked about the war that is going on around us. We need to be alert and ready to do battle in that war. In part two, we talked about our adversaries in that war: the devil, the world and our flesh. Now we move from our enemies to our allies. In the upcoming weeks, we will examine three allies:

1. The Holy Spirit
2. Angels
3. The Church

We will see how each of these allies aids and brings strength to us in their own unique ways. Let's pay particular attention to John 16 as we explore the specific role of the Holy Spirit in spiritual warfare. Jesus shares this with His disciples and with us in. John 16:4b-15:

*I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*

*I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

Any lover of history will tell you how important alliances are for any nation. In America we have both received and given help in various wars. Our rebellion against the British for our independence would have ended in utter defeat had it not been for the French. During the Civil War, the South sought the help of the French again. Historians believe that if the French had aided the Confederacy, the civil war might still be raging today.

An alliance, simply stated, is a formal agreement between two parties to vanquish a common foe. In our battle against sin, believers must ask the question, "Who is fighting with us? In the battle against spiritual forces, who is on our side?" We have three strong allies in our midst. If we are going to have victory in the battle against sin, the flesh and the world, we need these allies. We need to discern what resources the allies have, utilizing those resources and alliances in the most effective way, always seeking to bring glory to God.

Perhaps you feel defeated today. Maybe you feel like you don't have any friends to help you. If you are a child of God, if you have bowed the knee to Jesus Christ as your Savior, any attack by the devil, the world or the flesh is seen as an act of war against God

Himself. Because He is our Ally and Friend, He will come and protect us in our hour of need. We don't need to be fearful or filled with dread because we have an ally on our side Who makes us more than conquerors.

Some people in the evangelical world think that in order to vanquish spiritual forces, you have to use a few Bible verses saying, "I rebuke you Satan." A few weeks ago, the church provided a position paper on the devil, demons and the deliverance ministry. Vanquishing evil in your life does not come through the types of things you see on TV or read in Christian fiction. It doesn't always involve rebuking spirits. The greatest victory comes through placing yourself under the Lordship of Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit. This isn't flashy, but this is the model of the Scriptures. Over and over again we are told to *"walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh"* (Galatians 5:16).

Even though there are countless passages on deliverance from demonic possession, these stories are the exception, not the rule. God has given us the allies we need to fight this battle in our everyday lives. Before we get into the Spirit's role, we need to understand a few things. In order to mount a winning offensive against sin, we must remember:

## 1. The Adversaries Against Whom We Toil

Let's remember where we've come from and what we have learned in our study on spiritual warfare. Ephesians 6 tells us about the enemy that we face. This enemy has three characteristics. Our adversaries are:

### Spiritual

We don't wrestle against flesh and blood. Your battle with sin, the world and the devil cannot be fought with human weapons. Your fight isn't with other people. Because of some of the things happening in our country, social media has erupted in many unloving and even hateful ways. It can be easy to think that people who disagree with us and whose lives are lived contrary to our beliefs are the enemy. However, they are not the enemy; they are prisoners of war. The enemy is not flesh and blood; it's spiritual. The fight we are fighting isn't something we can defeat on our own. We can't use human weaponry to resolve this issue.

### Societal

The war is against the rulers and principalities of this dark world (Ephesians 6:12). We live in a system that strives to remove God from the equation. The term "world" refers to a system or society that seeks to find its purpose and happiness apart from God.

Some of you may think that you're not fighting spiritual warfare because you're not engaged with the issues of the occult or dark practices. However, this aspect of the enemy hits close to home. We live in this world and fall prey to the "frog in the kettle" syndrome. We swim in the murky mess of the world, incognizant of the spiritual battle around us. The devil lulls us to sleep using that mindset.

Christians do many things to find their happiness and purpose apart from God. We make decisions every day without God. We don't invite God's Word into the process. Every time you make a decision apart from God, neglecting the question, "God, what would You do? How would You want me to spend my money, treat this person or respond to this situation?" you move further into the realm of the world and away from the realm of the Spirit. If you are anything like me, a ton of your decisions happen in the realm of the world. I need the Spirit's help to remind me that my life is for the Lord.

We live in a world that glorifies self, not God. You can't live in the in-between. You must make a decision: Will you live in the world with a desire to glorify God or will you strive to bring glory to yourself? We fight against the devil, demons and the world.

### Selfish

This was the enemy that we talked about last week. How can our enemy not be against flesh and blood, and yet one of our enemies be our flesh? Our inner selfishness thinks we're in charge. When the Bible uses this term, it describes the appetites, the hungers and the desires that we have as people. These are real desires and hungers. In themselves, they aren't evil. It is not wrong to have feelings, desires and wants. They become sinful when we try to take care of these appetites on our own. We feed them and encourage them in our own power. We worship them and elevate them. We allow them to rule us in God's place. This is what gets us into trouble.

Sin is a deceptive desire. If we try to satisfy our desires through our own means, we think we will be happy. However, that sin only leads to our death. The flesh describes our effort to achieve happiness and contentment apart from God. What things have

you done this week that elevated your flesh over God? Whether it was a thing or a passion, what have you done that is not becoming of a believer? This is your inner selfishness.

Christians need to be reminded of their enemies in the battle. A few weeks ago we watched police in New York pursue two fugitives. The news broadcasted this search for these convicted murderers. Their faces were everywhere on every station. Any sighting was made public. They wanted to make sure that people knew who the enemy was and how to help capture them.

We need to help one another spot our enemies. We need to talk about spiritual warfare and how the enemy is wreaking havoc in our lives. This should happen in our small groups and fellowship times. We should say, "I'm struggling with this issue. The devil is wreaking havoc in my life." Why would we say this? When we verbally name what is going on, we are able to expose the warfare of the enemy. It causes us to be more aware of the same struggles in our own lives. It helps us warn others of the battle. We need to help one another recognize and expose the issues with which we are dealing. When we expose these struggles, the devil wants us to think, "Oh, I don't have that problem. You're a weirdo. What's your problem? My kids don't have those issues. My kids are perfect. What's your problem?" However, we need to declare these things so that we can help one another recognize when the enemy is out and about.

One of the biggest reasons we fail in our war against sin is that we are trying to fight it:

- a. On our own
- b. In private

When you do it on your own and in private, you are losing the battle. If no one else knows about your problem, if no one is praying for you, if there aren't people to whom you can turn and say, "I need help," then you're probably losing the battle. We have allies. Even though the enemies are tough and come from every side, we have an Ally we can turn to.

## 2. The Ally To Whom We Can Turn

In this battle raging around us, we have One to Whom we can turn. Francis Chan called this Ally, the "Forgotten God." When I was growing up, the Holy Spirit always seemed to get a bad rap. We would diminish and squelch Him. We treated the Holy Spirit like Mary the mother of Jesus because of some heresies we saw in the churches around us. So many churches have elevated the Holy Spirit and Mary to unscriptural levels. Many times, we swing the pendulum the opposite way and diminish the role of the Spirit, thinking this might keep us from getting into trouble. This happens to our own demise.

The Holy Spirit is our Helper. The Holy Spirit indwells us. He helps us fight against sin and temptation. We need to change our understanding of the Holy Spirit and embrace the biblical role that the Holy Spirit plays in our lives. There are three important aspects of this role that we need to understand. The Holy Spirit:

### Was promised during a time of great spiritual warfare

John 14–17 describes Jesus' last earthly moments. Jesus is with His disciples in the Upper Room. They celebrate the Lord's Supper and Jesus washes their feet. They have a time of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. After that, Jesus is arrested. The disciples depart and deny even knowing Him. Then the arrest and crucifixion take place. John 14 is not a moment of fun and frivolity, but tension, for the disciples. The tension is so thick that you could cut the air with a knife.

Jesus changes the disciples' understanding of their mission. The disciples thought that they were going to overthrow Rome through political insurgence. Who could blame them? They had seen Jesus do amazing things. Jesus had authority over nature, over demons and sickness. He confronted religious leaders. He had even raised the dead to life. The disciples knew that Jesus could do anything He wanted. They wanted Him to take off the chains of slavery to the Roman Empire and build God's Kingdom. In John 14–17, Jesus begins to talk about laying down His life. He starts talking about the cross. He talks about how the Son of Man needs to suffer. He tells the disciples that He's going away.

It's easy for us to badmouth the disciples. However, if I was a disciple, I would be disheartened. I would have thought that everything was falling apart. In that moment, the disciples are filled with trepidation and fear. Jesus tells them in John 14:1, "*Let not your hearts be troubled...*" Jesus then tells the disciples in John 16 that His going is more advantageous for them because He is going to send them a Helper. Imagine that you're in the place of the disciples. Jesus, Who has done everything that you could ever imagine, is leaving and He says, "The One I'm going to send you is of greater advantage to you" (John 16:7).

This refutes the desire that Christians sometimes have, "If I could only walk with Jesus, if I could see the miracles, if I could hear Him teach, I would be a faithful Christian." Jesus seems to say the opposite. He says that if you have the Holy Spirit within you, it is of greater advantage than walking and talking with Him in His earthly ministry.

The disciples are about to face some of their most difficult trials. The devil is about to come at them. At one point Jesus tells Peter, "The devil desires to sift you like wheat" (Luke 22:31). The world was coming at them. When Jesus was arrested, people tried to identify Peter as Jesus' disciple. In John 16, Jesus tells the disciples that the world will want to kill them, and in doing so, the world will think that they are doing a service to God. People will do terrible things to the disciples and the world will think that they are doing a good thing. Even in the Garden of Gethsemane, the flesh tempts them with sleep and keeps them from praying.

The evil forces come upon the disciples and beat them down in one of the greatest battles of spiritual warfare. In that moment, Jesus says, "I am giving you an Ally Who will give you victory even in the most difficult struggle. His Name is the Holy Spirit. He will come and serve you in a way that I cannot." Many Christians are trying to fight the battle on their own. They think that they can find victory on their own. Unless they tap into the Holy Spirit, they will never find the victory that God wants them to experience.

What does the Spirit do? He dwells in you. This is one reason why the Spirit is an advantage. Jesus didn't indwell anyone. He was God in human form. The Holy Spirit lives inside every person who calls upon the Name of Jesus to be saved.

### **Would perform duties that only He could do**

In John 16:7, Jesus says, "*It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you.*" The word for Helper here is *paraklētos*. This is one who comes alongside you, who encourages you, the one who enables you to go the extra mile. What will the Helper do when He comes? John 16:8, "*And when he comes, he will convict the world.*" The world is the system that is made up of humanity. The Spirit is going to do something to them. The word "convict" describes the purpose of the Holy Spirit's coming. He is going to convict the world of sin and bring righteousness and judgment.

What does "convict" mean? It's a Greek word that describes the drama within a courtroom. A prosecuting attorney has the defendant on the witness stand. The prosecution begins to question the defendant from various vantage points in an attempt to convince the judge that the defendant is guilty. The Holy Spirit incessantly tells the world: "You are guilty and here is the proof." He piles evidence upon evidence against the defendant—the world. Finally, the enormity of evidence is so overwhelming that the judge is forced to say, "You are guilty beyond a shadow of a doubt." The Holy Spirit presents the evidence in such a way that not only the judge is convinced of guilt; the defendant himself is convinced that he is guilty.

If you're a child of God, you know this is how you came to know Jesus. If you think about it for a moment, you know that the Holy Spirit kept dogging you. He piled up evidence and showed you the futility of your ways. He showed you your guilt. God declared you guilty. Finally, you stood up and acknowledged your own guilt. This is a knowledge that we need to keep in mind when we evangelize. Your job isn't to convict others of their sin; that's the Holy Spirit's job. Your job is to declare the truth that:

1. I am a sinner in need of God's grace.
2. Jesus is the One Who gives the grace by His perfect, substitutionary death on the cross.

You don't need to try and do spiritual gymnastics in order to win people to Christ. That is the Holy Spirit's job. You just need to be true to the message.

The Spirit convicts the world of sin, but He also makes known the judgment of God. He shows people that they are under the wrath of God and that they are destined for hell. They are facing a death sentence that lasts an eternity. He forcefully declares to the entire world, over and over again, that God's judgment is upon them. This is how God will display His wrath: the work of the Holy Spirit. Romans 1:18 says, "*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*" The Holy Spirit acts as the prosecuting attorney. He shows the world that life apart from God is foolishness.

Isn't the Holy Spirit supposed to encourage us? What advantage is it for us to hear that we are dirty, rotten people who deserve death? Jesus tells us that the Spirit also comes to convict the world concerning righteousness. The Holy Spirit builds the case against us, but Jesus is the answer. Jesus has come to take our punishment for sin and death. Jesus, the Perfect Lamb of God, takes away our sin and judgment. Jesus is our only way to redemption and peace with God. If you bow your knee in repentance and faith, you can be free from the death sentence and now live life in joy, peace and contentment. This is the gospel. The Holy

Spirit has come to convict the world and we must share the good news of Jesus Christ. People no longer need to live in their sin and deeds of death, but can now live in newness of life.

Some of you may say, "That's fine and good, but what about the believer? I understand that the Holy Spirit brings me to a place of conviction of sin and brings me to a knowledge of Jesus." What role does He play in the life of the believer?"

### Is pivotal in defeating the forces of evil

You will not win the battle without the Spirit. In Ephesians 6, Paul says three times that the Spirit needs to be involved in the fight. We need to put on the armor of God that comes from the Spirit. We need to pray in the Spirit at all times. Without the Spirit, we're sunk.

Some of you today are trying to live life on your own. You struggle with sin and the devil keeps beating you up over it. Next week you're just going to keep trying harder, thinking that you'll do better. You're stuck in the "Try hard, fail" merry-go-round. Next week you'll come back to church just as despondent as you did this week. The reason this is happening is that you are trying to do it in your own strength. The essence of "I will try harder" should show you that you are not tapping into the Spirit's strength.

My father used to remind us of a verse that most people don't think about. Few of you have probably studied this book of the Bible. It's the book of Zachariah. My dad used to tell his three sons, "If you're going to do anything great for God, if you're going to serve Him, honor Him and find victory in this battle and over the temptations that befall young people, you can't do it on your own." Zachariah 4:6 is a reminder that it is "*not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.*"

Think about this verse for a moment. Apply it to your situation. Perhaps the devil is beating you down with discouragement; maybe the devil has deceived you into thinking that the sin you love is okay; maybe the world has you thinking that you can never do anything of value. Some of you may be struggling with lust, lying or depression. You may say, "I can't fix this on my own." Remember Zachariah 4:6 and say, "Whatever the issue, it's not by might, nor by power, but the Holy Spirit Who will defeat this issue in my life." The Name, "Lord of Hosts" is the military name of God. God says, "My angel armies will take care of that. The Spirit Who indwells you will take care of that."

Stop trying to fix it on your own and give it to the Lord. How do you do that?

## 3. The Actions We Must Take

In Ephesians, Paul makes it clear that if we try to fight the enemy on our own, we're goners. The battle is raging around us. We need to fill ourselves with the Spirit. What does that look like? There is only one thing that you can do: walk by the Spirit. This isn't flashy, nor does it stir up excitement. It doesn't beat the war drums. It doesn't feel like it prepares you for the battle. However, this is how the Bible tells us to fight. We must walk by the Spirit and be filled with the Spirit.

Turn to Ephesians 5:18. This is a good reminder of what we need to do to face the battle this week. "*And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.*" How can we tap into the Holy Spirit's strength and find victory through His power? We need to be filled. This involves:

### Capitulation

We must surrender. We must say, "I give up." Being filled is a concept that we need to investigate. What does it mean to be filled? How do we become filled? It is important to study how verbs are used in the New Testament. This phrase is in the middle voice. We might be familiar with the other two voices, but we might not be familiar with this third type of voice.

- The active voice (ex. The boy hit the ball). The subject of the sentence is doing the action.
- The passive voice (ex. The boy was hit by the ball). The subject of the sentence receives the action. Something is being done to the subject.
- The middle voice (ex. The boy hit himself with the ball). The subject acts upon itself. It is not done to him exclusively. It's not something he's doing to something else. Both are happening.

This means that you have a part to play. You need to do something and something needs to be done to you. You cannot be filled by the Spirit on your own. It's not like putting on a new set of clothing. You can't be filled on your own. You need to surrender yourself.

In Ephesians 5:18, Paul mentions not becoming intoxicated by wine. In order for you to become drunk, two things need to happen:

1. A working hand—a mind that decides to drink the glass of wine.
2. Someone who has poured the wine into the glass and has caused your inebriation.

There is a two-part process to being filled with the Spirit. You have to surrender, plus the Spirit must come and fill you. The second part is something that you cannot do.

## **Compliance**

The verb is also in the imperative mood. This simply means that to “be filled” is a command. The Christian must be filled with the Spirit. It’s not optional. There are two modes: you can be filled with the Spirit or you can grieve the Spirit. There is no in-between. This is a question that you must ask yourself today: Are you complying with the Spirit? Some of you want victory in this spiritual battle and you’re not fulfilling your part. You’re not obeying the command to be filled with the Spirit.

This means that as you are filled with the Spirit, every part of your being becomes affected by the Spirit. Paul uses strong drink as a metaphor. As a person becomes filled with strong drink, every time he takes a sip, the more he becomes affected by that drink. When a person becomes a believer, he doesn’t experience a deluge of Spiritual filling. Rather, being filled by the Spirit is a progressive thing. We continue to become more and more filled by the Spirit as we yield ourselves to Him.

## **Control**

If you want to be filled with the Spirit, you need to make fewer decisions and allow God to make more. The more a person drinks an alcoholic beverage, what takes control? The person or the drink? The drink. As that person keeps drinking, the drink takes over the decisions. The drink is in charge, not the person. Just as a drink is to the drunk, so the Spirit is to the Christian. As you yield yourself to the Spirit, the sin you struggle with loses its hold on you because you have yielded yourself to the Spirit and not the sin. As you walk with Jesus, you will allow yourself to be more controlled by Him and less by the flesh. As you walk with Him and talk with Him, everything you do will be consumed by the desire to do what the Spirit wants done. That is how you will find victory.

## **Consistency**

Being filled is also in the present tense. This means that being filled needs to become a habitual action that marks your life. It needs to continue. If you stop drinking, the effects of the alcohol will eventually wear off. If you get drunk and stop drinking, you may get a hangover, but eventually you’ll be sober again. You can’t live on the hangover of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Some of you have had spiritual revival at some point in your life. Perhaps you went to a camp, or heard a sermon that fired you up. Now you’re just living on the hangover of that experience. Being filled with the Spirit happens each and every day when you say, “Lord, not my will be done, but Yours. I’m going to live according to Your Spirit and not according to the flesh.” Every day you must yield yourself to the Spirit. This is an action that you must do and an action that only God can do. When you walk by the Spirit, you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

What are you struggling with this week? Some of you may have filled yourselves with that sin to the point of excess. Instead of filling yourself with that sin, devote yourself to the habitual dedication of your body as a vessel filled by the Spirit so that you will walk in the will of God, not the flesh, the world or the devil. It means dedicating yourself to doing only that which God wants you to do. When you do that, the Spirit of the Almighty God will fill you beyond measure.

Let’s think back to the disciples for a moment. The disciples who denied Christ, who did everything they could to protect themselves, were filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Those twelve men changed the world.

You don’t think you have any chance of defeating the devil? You don’t on your own, but when filled by the Holy Spirit you are more than conquerors. You can accomplish anything with the Spirit of God.

In this church, it may seem like we’ve lost the culture war. The only reason we’re losing the culture war is that we’re not being filled by the Spirit. It’s not the world’s problem; it’s ours. We’re so filled up with other things that the Spirit of God can’t find any room in our lives, our calendars or in our priorities. As a church, we need to reevaluate who we are and what we’re about. Ask yourself the question: Am I filled with self, the world or the Spirit?

How do we get there? Let’s close with some applications.

## Next Steps

Walking in the Spirit this week means:

1. **Welcoming Him into your life.** Maybe today you've heard about things that you've never understood before. Perhaps there are struggles in your life and you recognize that Jesus has come to set you free. Jesus has come to give you His Holy Spirit to live and reside in you. Maybe today you need to welcome the Holy Spirit into your life. That means that you need to bow the knee to Jesus Christ. You can't have the Spirit of God without Christ Jesus. Jesus is the One Who gives the Spirit to us. Some of you may find yourselves at a place where you need to bow the knee to Jesus and say no to your sin. Recognize that you're a sinner and receive Christ as your Savior and Lord. Repentance and faith are simple. You just need to believe that Jesus is Who He says He is and will do what He says He will do. If anyone would follow Jesus, he or she must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24). It isn't just about getting perks. It's about being ready to do battle, knowing that you have an Ally on your side. You have the Spirit of Almighty God.
2. **Asking Him to help you when trouble comes.** You're going to be hit with temptation this week. You will be hit with thoughts contrary to the will of God. You will be tempted to go on living your life without any thought of God. In those moments, stop and pray. Seek the Spirit's help in your hour of need. If you don't know what decision to make, if you need help, stop and ask, "Spirit of the living God, what would you have me do? I want to be filled with you. I don't want to be filled with the desires of my flesh. I want to fulfill Your desires and Your plans." In your moments of trouble, stop and find the way of escape the Spirit of God is ready and able to give you.
3. **Letting Him lead you toward holiness.** We cannot pursue the holiness of God on our own. The greatest hindrance we have to being victorious is allowing the spirit of this world to wreak havoc in our lives and not allowing the Spirit of God to fill us. Stop and pray, "Lord, I need Your Spirit to lead and guide me this week. I am lost without You. I don't even know what holiness looks like. Spirit, I need Your help." That simple prayer will set you on the trajectory of a life of holiness and not a life of defeat.
4. **Keeping the proper perspective.** In our struggle against sin, the world and the devil, John reminds us that greater is He Who is in us, than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). That Person is the Holy Spirit.

Is this true for you? If not, it's not God's fault; it's your own fault. Seek the face of God and be filled with His Spirit so that you might find victory. You have the greatest Ally on your side.

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