

The Twilight Zone

Introduction

New Years Resolution....What is God's New Years Resolution for you and me? When God looks at you and me....what does He resolve to address this year? If we truly surrendered, what would the Holy Spirit change in us?

What is on top of the To Do list that God has for you and me this year? Have you asked? How would you know?

God made it very clear in His Scriptures what He wants for every person and all who surrender to Him. My New Years Resolution has been exactly the same for years...

I want to surrender more so that God can do more in me and through me.

But to get to total surrender we must understand and deal with our problem...that is what this series is all about.

Our series...Jailbreak...is going to focus on one verse...A very powerful truth that Paul shared with the Corinthians and us. A truth that is the key to breaking free from the bondage of sin. What ever God wants to do this year in your life and my life, I guarantee you it involves freeing us from the sins that entangle us.

Paul was a traveling evangelist who eventually came to the town of Corinth...It was a crazy town...Every thing a debased human mind could imagine was available and openly pursued. The church at Corinth during Paul's journeys was the Church Gone Wild. Even church leaders seem to pursue the desires of their flesh.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (ESV) 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

We are Spiritual beings trapped in a flesh body and influenced by a debased mind. That problem...God calls sin...and it entangles us and imprisons us. Jesus said He came to set the captives free and we are those captives. Satan has us in prison...and here is the kicker...it is not a physical prison...it is only a prison of the mind.

Every human is born delusional, psychotic, and with a God complex. We live in a false reality...we don't see what is all around us...and we worship ourselves. The "normal human" is quite abnormal. Every human you have ever laid eyes on was born bat crazy.

And because we have decided that the abnormal is normal...The world that we actually experience is a Twilight Zone.

You are traveling through another dimension...a dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind. Next Stop...The Twilight Zone.

Humans live in an alternate reality but because everyone is born that way...we think it is real. Satan uses that deception to keep us from our jail break.

Notice something in this verse...we we discuss this all throughout this series...we are waging war...Our goal is to see strongholds destroyed...It will not only occur through the Spirit, but the power unleashed through us is not ours but rather God's. It is God that breaks strongholds in our lives.

We are in a spiritual battle against our debased and deluded mind...and the strongholds that imprison us cannot be destroyed by us. For us to be set free, God must unleash His divine power and change us.

Please hear this from the beginning...no matter how many books are written...or gurus Oprah parades out....there is no such thing as self-help.

Despite the growth of the sector, the data shows, growth in the number of published titles in self-help outpaced the rate of sales growth, with the number of unique ISBNs rising nearly three-fold from 30,897 in 2013 to 85,253 in 2019. This year we will spend 10.5 Billion with a b..dollars on self help books...and only one of them works and the Bible is not even included in the category.

Self help books... when it comes to strongholds in our lives...define insanity. Doing the same thing over and over with the same result. Offering at best, Lipstick on a pig

There is no self help book for the helpless.

The first step for finding a solution to a problem is to clearly understand and identify what the actual problem is. We live in a world that constantly asks...What is wrong with this world?

And every Christian should have this issue nailed down. We should be able to clearly explain to everyone what is wrong. It is not a task limited to Pastors, it is core competency of every believer.

If we can't clearly explain to the world what is wrong...how can we ask them to trust us with the solution?

I am going to spend the entire sermon today...explaining what God says about the problem in our world. We will spend the rest of this series on how to fix it.

Those who have been here a long time have heard this I hope at least 10 times. Now before you tell me I have preached this before....while this series is new..the problem in our world has not changed for thousands of years.

My challenge to everyone who claims to be a disciple of Christ....Could you explain to others what is wrong and why God's gospel is the only solution that matters. The only way out of prison.

The Problem

All of us struggle with sin. So you may just go ahead and admit it, embrace it, and understand it....What you cannot do and follow Jesus is to get comfortable in it. We must hate the sin within us and strive every day to kill more of it.

We woke up this morning and every morning so far in a war. A battle for the souls of mankind. Those of us who follow Jesus have gone to the other side. But every person you see is either a spiritual brother/sister or the enemy. Unlike those following Satan, we don't hate our enemy...we are commanded to love them. To help them join Jesus in the war for our souls.

All of us used to be on the other side and were loved in some way to surrender to Jesus.

So since we still have a sin nature...but now a Spirit that is renewing and changing us....we need to learn how to remove the remaining strongholds in our minds left over from our old way of thinking and acting.

This series, I believe, can help all of us to be set free from what remains of our imprisonment.

Let's dive in a bit deeper.

We may not all believe the same, but we all struggle with the same temptations, fears, insecurities and doubts. You have more in common with us than you might think. We are glad that you took a risk and came to church today. If you are new to church that may surprise you a bit. Often Christians portray themselves as having it all together. Trying to convince everyone that their lives are now wrinkle free in Jesus. We may clean up pretty well... But don't be fooled... We have some pretty impressive sinners at Remnant. And we are not afraid to admit it.... So if you are thinking that you don't belong.. You would probably fit right in. We freely admit that we struggle with sin... But we refuse to stay there...or believe that we cannot overcome our failures.

We have all seen it...haven't we? The Christian whose life you respected.... Maybe it was a family member...pastor...church leader...friend. And you hear them talk about Jesus.... Maybe they have told you how to live. And then you discover that they aren't walking what they are talking. Their lives...their actions...don't measure up to their claims of following Jesus. Maybe they are living a secret life...have a huge hidden secret.... Perhaps they....or others like them....have turned you away from considering Jesus.

"I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ."
Mahatma Gandhi

So as we begin this year...I began asking God...what is wrong with us? If we love you...if we try our best to do what you want us to do... Why do we keep messing up? Why don't we look more like Jesus? If we are disciples of Jesus.....shouldn't we begin to walk, talk and act like Him? Why do we seem to struggle with the same things everyone else does? I am not asking for wrinkle free lives..... But things could certainly smooth out a bit. Why can't we find victory over the sins in our lives?

God what do we need to do As your followers...as a church... To be a bolder... More authentic representation of you? What can we do...the help an unbelieving world....believe? You promise us...freedom...victory...over sin That we can live life abundantly That our burden can be light That we need not worry You tell us that you have given us incredible power.... Then why do we feel so powerless? I long to be set free.... From this prison..in my mind

Many of us have conversations with God like this...

I have done everything I can think of to do... I've done everything the self help books have said to do I've started 12 steps..maybe 12 times Prior to knowing Jesus.... I've followed the advice of my friends, my psychiatrist, My fortune teller, the psychic hot line and my horoscope I have read every book by every Oprah guru nothing worked Then I found you...I surrendered to You Jesus But my struggle with these sins continued I thought things would be different. I have asked for forgiveness a million times Asked my pastor and friends to pray for me Served out of guilt...trying to earn your favor I even increased my tithe...trying to buy peace from you And yet I still feel so powerless....so weak...so defeated What am I missing?

Lets begin with a brief review of how we were created and what went wrong. I know I have covered this a hundred times but we should all be able to explain to others when they ask What is wrong with this world? And each time we review it...someone is hearing it for the first time.

1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 (ESV) 23 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

To sanctify means to set apart as holy...once again notice who does it....Jesus Christ.

God created us in His image in 3 parts Spirit...Soul...and Body The Spirit- All things God. The Spiritual part of us that can connect to and be led by God The Soul- Our mind, emotions, and will The Body- our physical needs and desires We learned that all 3 work in concert together To allow us to be in the image of God God literally breathed His Spirit into us and we became Spiritual beings His Spirit in charge...leading us..guiding us and instructing us The Spirit controlling the Mind...The Mind controlling the Body

You know what happened God created a perfect being- that had his Spiritual life...His breath...His logic..His knowledge It was THE epic fail But Adam wanted more. He wanted to be God...To be in Control It is hard to describe the impact of his decision...but it affected all of us. Every person after that was born physically alive but Spiritually Dead He choose to be ruled by His Soul...rather than God's Spirit. He exalted his mind, emotions and will (his Soul) Over God's Spirit. Adam and Eve's Sin...essentially said to God... We don't need you to lead us and teach us... We can figure things out on our own...we know what is best and you don't Thank's God but you can leave.. And in that moment....The Spirit of God...God's Pneuma...withdrew from man.

Literally God pulled His breath from us...that the punishment of sin...is death. Not just physical death one day...but immediate Spiritual death. Our Sin...Our rebellion...left us

to figure things out on our own. This epic fail...was cataclysmic for Adam and for us. They became people not Spirit led...but led by their Soul...or mind

But our mind was made to process input Not create input.... Is that the Soul was designed to receive its wisdom, understanding and logic directly from God From the Moment God breathed Adam into existence.... He began to inform and instruct Him God spoke to Adam personally...God's wisdom and understanding... God's logic...was shared with Adam directly. Whatever Adam didn't understand...God would explain through Adam's Spirit. And then the Spirit would direct the Soul to store that information

God never intended that Adam should function intellectually apart from His Influence and Instruction Adam was not designed to be an independent thinker Instead...God gave His favorite creation...His own understanding of things....God's logic if you will God would explain in the Spirit the understanding of life, creation, the laws of nature, Himself.... In essence God's Wisdom was given to Adam...Adam had total access to the Logic of God... What the Bible calls the Word of God---the logos- God's words of wisdom, understanding and logic. The Word Logos means.... God's reason or intellect expressed in Human speech.

The English word for logos is Word In the beginning was the Word....The Word became Flesh and lived among us....My word endures forever The Word is everything God..His knowledge..His understanding...His reason...His rule..His character It describes the real source of what our intellect should be. There is no greater teacher in the universe than God. And for a while...He was Adam's instructor in the ways of life.

God told Adam That if he ate of the fruit...he would die... Yet two minutes later...and years later...they were still standing Ok they realized they were naked...but they sure didn't seem dead It took a moment for them to notice.... The Spirit of God was gone...God's breath sucked out of them Physically alive...but now Spiritually dead

Genesis 3:7 (ESV) 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

They suddenly knew things...nothing else had changed... They knew that they were exposed...naked They knew that they should hide from God They knew that they should blame someone else They knew that they should lie to protect themselves With the Spirit of God gone and no longer leading them They had to quickly start trying to figure things out on their own They were physically alive...but spiritually dead.... The Human Mind was now in charge... Heaven We Have A Problem

Adam and Eve's Rebellion

1. Adam is disconnected from his life source.

He will have to look within himself for life's origin and meaning Purpose will no longer be found in the Creator, he will seek it on his own. Eventually he will deny the existence of the Creator

2. Adam exalted himself above God

The pleasing and preserving of Self will now be his ultimate driving force. He will take God's place as the center of His universe. His total focus will be to please his mind. The human race would now be ruled by the Mind, which was controlled by Satan's inherited nature: pride and arrogance.

3. Adam's desires and appetite has lost their restraints.

The legitimate desires and hungers will no longer have God-given parameters. He will explore and experiment- all in the name of freedom. And when he tastes of life outside God's boundaries, His desires for pleasure only increase...constraint will be lost.

4. In Adam's mind, he believes that he knows more than God.

His entire system of learning...of processing information...of turning what he understands into logic...Has been turned upside down and is out of order. He will have to do everything from within. Using his limited cognitive abilities... He must figure the world out through trial and error and human reasoning. Everything will be based on human reasoning...on what he can discover. Rather than revelation...what God can reveal to him.

His understanding will flow from the natural world... Rather than the Spiritual realm. Logic will be human born, human centered...humanistic. Today we call it humanism. But it really is "Me'ism". Human thinking in control and their first thought is that they need God out of the picture,

We can live by the philosophy that if it feels good do it. If it seems right to me then it is ok. Issues like abortion are no longer about death. But rather about my body, my right, my choice. If the life in my womb is inconvenient- then that is just my problem.

5. Since Adam was created with a quest for knowledge and wisdom. And since these will always be unfolding...Adam will claim that there is no absolute truth.

And since these will always be unfolding...Adam will claim that there is no absolute truth. He will not understand that it is his understanding of truth that is unfolding... but instead he will perceive that truth is unfolding. As a result Adam will claim there is no absolute truth. He will believe that truth can change based on the situation. He will ignore God's laws and make his own laws. And since truth is relative...he will be able to justify anything and everything.

6. Adam is now a person controlled by his mind...He has misunderstood his world and his role in it...He is delusional, psychotic, and has no connection with God. He is helpless and hopeless.

As a result he only relates to the natural realm. And will struggle with faith, hearing God's voice, and anything super-natural. If he can't see it, feel it, naturally prove it...he will have difficulty believing in or relating to it. Separated from God...Adam must find his own purpose... Based on what he can figure out on his own.

7. Adam...while created to serve God...Is in Complete Rebellion

Adam was created to serve God in the Spirit.. But is now in complete rebellion and in complete control. God's great challenge is not forgiving Adam.... But rather saving and taming his soul

While Adam has done all of these things...His actions were the result of the deception of another...

So soon after the Human Mission Launched The Message was sent..."Heaven...We have a problem"
The Problem...With the Exit of God's Spirit from earth There is a new ruler...a new prince ruling earth... Look closely at this passage.

2 Corinthians 4:3–4 (ESV) 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Satan is given the title of little g god of this world. With the removal of God's Spirit...Satan's restraint is no longer in place... Satan has no chance against God's Spirit...He has already been defeated in the Spirit. The only place Satan can impact us is in our minds... We will come back to this again Satan is defeated in the Spirit He has no power against the Spirit of God His only influence is on the human mind And without God's Spirit overseeing and protecting our minds.... He has been given, for a time, free reign to wreck havoc on earth...without God we are gullible and self destructive and Satan knows it.

Not God's Plan...ours We choose him when we rejected God. When we reject God we remove the protection of His Spirit over our lives The god of this world indicates that Satan is THE major influence on the human mind

He will become the primary influencer of the human mind Setting our ideals, opinions, goals hopes and view of the majority of people. His influence will manifest in the world's.... Philosophies...education...and commerce. His lies and deceptions lead to false thoughts...ideas...speculations... and false religions that are under his control and rampant

So when the Bible says Satan is "the god of this world" It is not saying that he has ultimate authority. It is conveying the idea that Satan rules over the unbelieving world in a specific way The unbeliever..or natural man...is helpless to resist his agenda. His agenda is to push a false philosophy that blinds the unbeliever from the truth of the Gospel. Satan's philosophies and lies are the fortresses that imprison people. The Strongholds that keep us from experiencing true joy, peace and abundant life

2 Corinthians 4:3–4 (ESV) . 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

This verse tells us that Satan has veiled the truth

Interesting that the word for veil or cover used here... Carries both an meaning and an emotion. The meaning implies not being able to see through darkness or of something hidden in smoke The emotion of that word is self-conceit and pride So the natural man...the soul led man...without the Spirit of God lives in a spiritual fog...thickened by his pride That keeps him

from truly seeing the truth of God.... Or ever understanding Spiritual things. And notice where the damage was done...he has blinded their MINDS

OK Time Out

If God's Spirit has gone...and all we have is our minds If Satan is the ruler of this world... If he has veiled the truth from us. If he dominates our mind... If he twists our understanding of God If I am incapable of receiving spiritual truth.. understanding Spiritual things... If I am disconnected from God's Logos...His Word Then How I ever decide to become a Christ Follower?

I made a decision to follow Jesus.... Remember? I have decided to follow Jesus...No turning back...? I connected to God because I decided to...My mind pursued Jesus Well Actually Not Exactly The decision to follow Jesus Comes not from the mind... But from God Himself

Let's go to a moment Jesus had with His Disciples Specifically with Peter....in a place called Caesarea Philippi Jesus led them to a place that was considered the gates of Hell It was a pagan worship site...a disgusting place...full of sexual worship...an orgy to a false God. Look at the question Jesus asks the Disciples...

Matthew 16:13–14 (ESV) 13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

What Jesus asks them is so powerful... What Jesus is saying is this... Ok you have seen me...you have walked with me...you have seen the miracles... You have seen the things of God...I told you that if you have seen me you have seen the Father So...using your mind...and not being aware of Spiritual things... What have you come up with? Who do people say that the Son of Man is? What is the world's conclusion about me? Limited to your understanding...What is the best that you guys have come up with?

Matthew 16:13–14 (ESV) 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

A prophet...maybe John the Baptist reincarnated... Maybe one of the old prophets that returned to earth... Note that no one...said Messiah. Satan had veiled them to that truth.. Then Jesus begins to narrow the focus...

Matthew 16:15 (ESV) 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

I have often wondered how long the pause was before Peter blurted out.... Remember ...the disciples were also trying to figure Jesus out with their mind They constantly seemed to not understand what Jesus was talking about. He talked about Spiritual things...they had no ability to connect Spiritually Jesus once told them...

John 3:12 (ESV) 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

Several times Jesus frustrated with His Disciples... When will you get this stuff? They were hoping I think that Jesus would answer this one for them I think they were looking at their

sandals... Kind of trying to find the answers...so not John the Baptist...Elijah...Jeremiah
And then Peter belts out....

Matthew 16:16 (ESV) 16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

And immediately I think Peter thought...where did that come from? I have never thought that in my life Fortunately Jesus explains it to him

Matthew 16:17 (ESV) 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Woa....Woa...This idea didn't come from your mind Peter it didn't come from human logic...Human observation...Human understanding... You just had a Spiritual Revelation from God... The Spirit of God has revealed or unveiled who I am

Peter you would never have come to this conclusion on your own... Satan would have blocked you from it... Peter the only way...you know what you just said is true.. Is because God the Father revealed it to you...Spiritually.

And so it is with us So were we...we never decided that Jesus was the Christ in our minds One of the lies that we have bought as Christians... Is that the understanding of who Jesus is comes from our mind...our understanding. But if Peter couldn't figure it out on his own...in His mind...what makes you think we can? The only way the Spiritual Truth of God can be revealed to us...in In the Spirit. You and I use our minds to better understand Jesus... But the awareness of who He really is...is revealed to us only by God

John 6:44 (ESV) 44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

No one...unless the Father draws....or reveals

Acts 2:39 (ESV) 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

We learn and understand about God.. 1 We ask questions...we probe with our ability to understand Scriptures But that knowledge only gets us to know ABOUT Jesus There is no human logical argument to prove the existence of God or Jesus

Isaiah 55:8–9 (ESV) 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

We can learn about God...but the relationship with Jesus Truly knowing Him...comes from a Spiritual Revelation from God Then and only then Do we truly surrender to Jesus We are reborn...because the Spirit of God came upon us... Not because we figured out in our minds... Some cosmic puzzle.

That is why Paul James and others say we can't be arrogant about it... It is by grace that you have been saved God bestowed upon you a gift... You didn't do this...HE did.

It is by grace...God's unmerited favor Why did He decide to reveal the truth about Jesus to you? It is a gift...of His grace to you... He reveals Spiritually to you who Jesus is and you accept it in faith. You didn't earn it...or deserve it...by grace you have been saved.

Matthew 16:18 (ESV) 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The rock that is the foundation of the church is this supernatural revelation to us of who Jesus is. It is a spiritual truth...that makes no sense to the natural man... It is not a logical conclusion that we come to... It is a gift from God...to you It is a Spiritual faith step...from the Father..through Jesus..to us. It is a gift to us...not earned...not logically deduced... So that no one can boast.

God in his Grace revealed who Jesus is to us. Jesus is teaching that the church will always be built on this revelation.

The Spirit of God revealing what the mind of man could never understand.... One believer at a time. One gift at a time

Closing

We are all born into the Twilight Zone...an altered reality that in some way seems normal to us and at the same time not right. We all know something is missing...we just can't quite figure it out.

Over 85K Self Help Books proves that point. We don't have the capacity to understand the Spiritual things of God.

God has to save us...His Spirit must reveal to us His truth...We begin the jailbreak but understanding why we are imprisoned and how to be set free...We don't leave Satan's prison through our cunning and ingenuity...Our jailbreak is Spiritual and completely dependent upon God...Every sin we struggle with remains because we have not surrendered to the Spirit of God in that area of our lives. In the weeks to come, we will learn how to position ourselves in order to experience the freedom that Jesus promised. He came to set the captives free. Let's Pray