

Call to Obedience #306
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org

On Confronting Evil

By Reimar Schultze

“And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him: and there came a voice from heaven saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness 40 days, tempted of Satan: and was with the wild beasts: and the angels ministered unto him.”—Mark 1:10-13

Looking at all of the gospel accounts of this story, we can say that the Holy Spirit was leading Jesus out of the Jordan valley, where He was baptized, into the mountains of Judah to be tempted. However Mark uses the phrase *"immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness"* (Vs. 12). This indicates to us that there was urgency for Jesus to go into the wilderness to be tempted. There was to be no delay in this matter. Before he could ever preach the gospel to humankind, God drove him into the wilderness to what was perhaps one of the greatest battles that was ever fought in the history of mankind: Jesus confronted the Devil head-on and defeated him in every single area. This was not a short battle of a few hours or a few days, but it endured for 40 days without interruption. Again, remember, this happened immediately after the Holy Spirit descended upon him like a dove. You have to recall that it is said in the Epistle of John that Jesus came to destroy the works of the Devil (1 Jo. 3:8). As soon as Jesus was ordained for his public ministry he was driven to confront the powers of evil. Jesus had to wait 4,000 years after the fall of man to confront Satan and defeat him.

My friend, this is the first thing you need to do when you are born of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit wants you to confront evil. Before you can have a ministry, evil has to be dealt with. Many Christians lose out early in the Christian life because, rather than confronting that which they now recognize as evil, they accommodate it or they are diplomatic about the management of evil. Again, the moment the Spirit of the Lord comes into your life, the first item of business is for you to confront evil.

First you need to confront the evil of not **speaking up for Jesus**. When you get up from the altar where you made your commitment to the Lord Jesus, you need to stand up and say for the first time, "I am born of God" or "I thank God that Jesus has now become my Savior," or "I am a child of God." You need to testify. You see those words have never, never, ever come from your lips all your life and it's time, my friend, now to warm up your lips and to begin to fashion the Word of God audibly in the presence of the saints and also in the presence of the unbelievers. If you are not doing this, then, my friend, you are immediately defeated by the powers of hell who want you to keep your mouth shut about this great salvation.

Now another thing that the Holy Spirit wants you to do in confronting evil, He wants you to **have prayer every day**. He wants you to have prayer frequently throughout the day. He wants you to "pray without ceasing." He wants you to go to a prayer meeting. I am talking to you about confronting evil. There is no greater power than the power of corporate prayer. It is in prayer that you attack evil within you and around you in the church and in the world. If there is no prayer meeting that you can attend in your church, then try to get together with another person and pray with that person at least once a week.

Thirdly, to confront evil, you need to **read the Word of God** and get it into your heart. The Bible says *"and take on the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God"* (Eph. 6:17). It also tells us that the Word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12). It is an offensive weapon against the powers of evil.

Jesus was driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil, that is, to confront evil. Your calling is not any less than his. *"It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master"* (Matt. 10:25). Furthermore, as soon as you are born of the Spirit, you need to confront the evil within you because, although your sins are forgiven and removed as far as the east is from the west, you still have a carnal, sinful, self-seeking nature and you need to be sanctified and cleansed of this nature. And, if you do that, by the power of the Spirit of the Lord, He will **confront evil within you**. He will confront pride, jealousy, selfishness, lust, criticism, greed, anger and impatience residing in your heart. As the Holy Spirit drove Jesus to confront evil, so he will try to drive you to confront evil as well.

Next, as a new Christian, you must **confront evil in your home**. You must put aside all ungodly books, all ungodly magazines and make a commitment that you will never again turn on an ungodly television program or play ungodly music that will, my friend, bring lukewarmness to your soul. You must not only go against that which is clearly evil, but also that which has the appearance of evil (I Thess. 5:22).

And then, my friend, you want to **get rid of all ungodly friendships** and replace them with godly friendships (Ps. 1). You will no longer go where your ungodly friends are going, but you will invite them to go where you are going: to church, to prayer meeting, to revival services. Share your faith with them, but do not fellowship with them, only bring them the good things that the Lord has done for you.

It says, *"And the Spirit driveth him."* The first business of the Holy Spirit when He gets a hold of you is to declare war on all that is evil, again not to accommodate it, but to confront it and conquer it. Oh, my friend, there are millions of Christians who have been saved, but to this very day, after 5, 20 or 40 years, they have never confronted evil, they have only accommodated it so the power of the Spirit of the Lord left them seconds after conversion. The Holy Spirit will not dwell in people who do not wear the armor of God. Indeed, right after Jesus' baptism when he received a new anointing of the Spirit, wouldn't it have been wonderful if he could have gone to a nice resort area like Engedi at the Dead Sea to refresh himself and celebrate his new anointing. But, no such opportunity was given to him, nor did he desire it, for he had been waiting for thousands of years to come to earth and destroy the works of the Devil. He had been wait-

ing, my friend, to get into the battle. He was ready to go. He had no interest in a celebration.

Oh, how we like to celebrate these days, but the Holy Spirit says, let's go on with the business of saving the world, cleansing the church and confronting evil; but, unfortunately, the church wants to celebrate the Lord without dealing with the evil within her, without confronting and conquering it. I have been to many youth conventions, camp meetings and revival meetings where the band was rolled out with the speakers turned up and there was a fiery evangelist who kept everyone on the edge of their seats. The whole crowd was electrified and magnetized, but nobody's sin was dealt with, evil was left alone; the Devil was allowed to keep his territory. This ought to make us mad. Jesus conquered evil. He conquered evil on every level, so that you and I can conquer it like he did so that we might never have to say, "This temptation is too strong," or "There is a legitimate excuse for me having given in to this temptation. I didn't want to give in to it, but I had no choice." Friend, these excuses are no longer valid for us. You and I can never excuse ourselves when it comes to sin, never! Because Jesus was tempted in every single area possible and because he conquered in every area and because he lives in us, *"we are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us"* (Rom. 8:37).

I like the benediction of Jude at the end of his letter, *"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."* Oh, yes, you'll be tempted, you'll be tempted till the end of time but as Jesus had angels ministering unto him during his hours of temptation, so will the angels be with you to strengthen you and help you to make it through. Yield yourself to him, stop letting your hands hang down and make war on evil.

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