

The Gospel According to
Luke

“S.W.A.T. Training”
(Spiritual Weapons And Tactics)
Chapter 22:47-53

Introduction

Michael Mitchell entered *Randall's Firearms Inc.* in Seminole, Florida, and tried to steal a gun.

Randy McKenzie, the owner of *Randall's Firearms*, said Mitchell pulled out a box cutter and broke the glass on a couple of display cases.

McKenzie said he then pointed his own gun at Mitchell and ordered him to lie on the ground. But Mitchell fled out the store's back door before police arrived.

Mitchell was later arrested in a parking lot. He was held on \$125,000 bond on charges of attempted armed robbery, aggravated assault and criminal mischief, officials said.

The moral of the story: **Don't bring a knife to a gun fight!**

If you are in a fight, you want the appropriate superior weapons that you are properly trained to use.

When you become a Christian, you find yourself in a fight. We commonly refer to it as spiritual warfare. We have spiritual enemies who employ sinister techniques to defeat us. The most well-known passage is found in Ephesians chapter six where you are told to beware of the wiles (or treachery) of the devil, because,

Ephesians 6:12 ...we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

How can you fight the devil? Not with any conventional weapons and tactics. You need **spiritual weapons and tactics** - what we're calling S.W.A.T. training.

Jesus and His S.W.A.T. team were in place when their enemies came against them in the Garden of Gethsemane. The disciples tried to fight using the wrong weapons and tactics, and were defeated.

Jesus remained in control. Though He was arrested, and would be crucified, He won the spiritual warfare by utilizing the appropriate superior weapons.

We'll organize our 'training' around two points: #1 You Are Surrounded By Spiritual Warfare And Treachery, and #2 You Are Supplied With Spiritual Weapons And Tactics.

#1 You Are Surrounded By
Spiritual Warfare And Treachery
(v47-50)

Spiritual warfare is always a hot topic among Christians. We normally think of the most extreme examples – like cases of demonic possession that require exorcism. Lately it has become popular to engage in a technique known as **spiritual mapping**. You 'map' an area by researching it to see what kinds of evil practices have occurred there historically. The idea is that you must identify the spiritual strongholds in each home and neighborhood to be able to properly pray against them and tear them down.

Certain key questions must be answered. For example, How and why did the city begin? Who were the founders and what were their intentions and spiritual condition? What presently characterizes the city, or, what is it known for? The latest demographic study of the city should be analyzed. The history of race relations must be studied along with any traumatic event the city had experienced like an earthquake or a flood. Only then can the demonic spirit(s) in control of the city be identified and their power be broken.

It's a bogus technique with no biblical basis. While we are establishing a Neighborhood Watch for demons, the devil and his pals are at work in far more subtle, and therefore treacherous, ways.

You see it in the Garden of Gethsemane. True, Satan had entered Judas Iscariot. True, Jesus called the episode the **hour of the power of darkness**. But the attack itself came in a way totally unexpected by the disciples of Jesus. His own friend betrayed Him with a kiss.

Luke 22:47 And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him.

The disciples with Jesus had no idea, no indication, that Judas was the traitor. He had been one of them; he was trusted with their treasury; even after Jesus had pointed him out at dinner, and Judas had left to get the arresting authorities, the disciples thought he was just going out to get additional supplies. A **kiss** was the common form of greeting. The disciples surrounding Jesus would have thought Judas had returned just in time to help them in their fight against this multitude.

You don't need to be demon possessed to be a tool of Satan. A verse in Second Timothy describes unbelievers as caught in the snare of the devil. It says that they are (and I quote) **taken captive by him at his will** (2Timothy 2:26). They are not possessed by the devil. But they are influenced by him to make life difficult for Christians.

Let's say you are having trouble at work. Your boss is a jerk. Have you considered that you are involved in a spiritual skirmish? If you recognize it as spiritual, then you will want to proceed spiritually. Rather than put in for a transfer... Or start looking for another job... Or file a grievance... You might suddenly become overwhelmed with compassion for the person – realizing that he or she needs to see the love of Jesus Christ in you in order to come to repentance and be saved. You might begin to utilize the spiritual supplies at your disposal to deal with the attack.

It's the same at home; or at school; or even in the Church. The conflicts you experience there are spiritual in nature; so you need spiritual weapons and tactics to defeat them.

Jesus put the Judas-kiss in its proper context when He said,

Luke 22:48 But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

It was a clear announcement to all of the disciples that Judas was the traitor. There was also a tenderness in Jesus' words. It was a question that, if answered from the heart, could have brought Judas to repentance and faith. Even as He was about to be arrested, leading to His violent treatment and death on the Cross, Jesus was loving Judas.

There was a battle going on all around the disciples. It was a spiritual battle. How would they fight it?

Luke 22:49 When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?”

Their very first inclination was to strike out and strike back in a manner similar to their attackers. **We want to fight back.** We demand our rights; we defend ourselves. There are times when God will allow us to use means at our disposal, if our motives are right. A couple of times at least in his ministry, the apostle Paul mentioned the fact that he was a Roman citizen. But in those instances, it was to further the Gospel and help others – *not* to defend himself or demand his own rights.

Recognizing you are in a spiritual battle is not enough; you must return fire with spiritual weaponry. One of the disciples did not understand this, nor even wait for the Lord's answer:

Luke 22:50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

The Gospel of John tells us that this disciple was Peter. Let's not criticize Peter. Peter illustrates our normal, natural response in a

spiritual attack, as we counter-attack with the wrong weaponry and tactics.

Look at the situation they were in: They were eleven men who had two swords among them, facing an armed multitude who had come with the authority of the religious leaders. **There was no way they were going to win a sword fight!** It shows you how foolish it is to engage your enemies on their terms. They always have superior numbers and earthly advantage. As soon as you fight back on their level, you've already been defeated.

In the midst of it all, there was Jesus. Although He would most definitely be arrested and taken away, He defeated His enemies every step of the way. So can we.

#2 You Are Supplied With Spiritual Weapons And Tactics (v51-53)

Jesus gave them instruction and He provided an example of how to fight a spiritual battle.

We looked at some of His instruction in our last study in Luke. In verses forty and forty-six, just before the brunt of the attack came, Jesus told them to be men who were **praying**.

Jesus knew the attack was coming. His solution wasn't to relocate to a more secluded spot. It was to meet the onslaught head-on, but to be prepared for it through prayer.

You and I don't know where the attack will come from, or when. Jesus does. He doesn't necessarily want us to relocate to avoid or avert the attack. If we stay in prayer, we will be prepared when trouble comes. So we would put the habit of prayer right on the top of our list of spiritual weapons and tactics.

One other observation from the verses we've just studied. The disciples asked the Lord what they should do, but then acted before they were answered. **Waiting** is an important weapon in our arsenal. We must wait on the Lord, for His direction and instruction.

The next thing Jesus did was to cover for Peter's mistake:

Luke 22:51 But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And He touched his ear and healed him.

The phrase, **permit even this**, has several possible meanings. Jesus could be talking to His disciples, telling them to permit His arrest. Or He could be talking to the mob, telling them to wait while He heals the servant's ear. The grammar could support either interpretation.

The servant is identified in the Gospel of John as Malchus. Jesus healed His ear. That tells us two things at least about our tactics in spiritual warfare:

1. First: If you blow it, and counter-attack on the level of your enemies, Jesus can cover for you; you can recover.
2. Second: Even though you are being attacked, and are a soldier in a battle, you are to think of yourself as a medic or corpsman who can bring healing to those who have come against you!

Jesus faced His enemies:

Luke 22:52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs?"

Jesus was not a **robber**. Their assault and arrest was not justified. It reminds us to live in a manner pleasing to God, so that when we are attacked, our enemies have nothing with which to accuse us. No one is perfect, and we all make mistakes. But we can nevertheless strive to live lives that are above reproach. It takes the edge away from our attackers.

Jesus mentioned their weapons – **swords and clubs**. It emphasized that He had neither. Even though Peter had wielded a sword, the Lord had overcome Peter's mistake. He would not be brought down to their level; He would not return fire.

The disciples found it easier to fight in the flesh than to endure suffering. One author remarked that Crusaders are always more numerous than martyrs. Jesus' refusal to use **swords and clubs**

symbolizes the whole realm of suffering hardship; of patiently enduring your trials; of counting it all joy when you fall into various troubles.

It is our unwillingness to suffer that often defeats us in spiritual warfare.

When Jesus called the apostle Paul, and saved him, He said of Paul, **I will show him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake** (Acts 9:16). Paul would go on to encourage new believers by explaining to them that it is through much tribulation that we enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22).

Battles are won or lost in your attitude toward suffering, trials, troubles, and hardship.

Jesus again addressed the attackers:

Luke 22:53 *When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."*

Let's focus on just two things in this verse:

1. First of all, Jesus spoke of His **daily** routine. During that last week, He was **daily in the temple** teaching the people. You and I should have a daily routine of serving others for the Lord with all the time, talents, and treasures He has supplied us.
2. Second, there is a wealth of teaching in Jesus' words, **this is your hour, and the power of darkness**. The word **hour** is a concept that tells you that what was happening was all by God's divine permission. Before the world was ever created, He had set in time a particular **hour** when **the power of darkness** would come against Jesus and take Him off to be crucified.

When you are attacked, it is by divine permission. You have not been abandoned; God has not left His throne. It is all for your good, and His glory, as He supplies you with grace that is sufficient for anything you are called upon to endure.

The **power of darkness** is itself limited. Satan was cast out of heaven, but still has access to God. During the future Great Tribulation, Satan's access to heaven will cease; he will be confined to the atmospheric heavens above the earth. Then he will be cast down to the earth to wreak his havoc. When Jesus returns in His Second Coming, the devil is captured, chained, and thrown down into what is called the Bottomless Pit. After one thousand years, Satan is let out to lead a final rebellion on the earth. He will be foiled; he will finally be thrown into the Lake of Fire for all eternity.

Evil is always fixed within boundaries God sets. We may not like the boundaries; but we can know they are there and draw spiritual nourishment from the confidence of knowing God remains in control.

It's clear that Jesus won this opening skirmish. As we continue, and see Him mocked, beaten, tried, and crucified; He wins all those as well. His death on the Cross was a victory over the power of darkness, sealing their defeat and doom. His resurrection from the dead sealed your destiny.

Applying the Word

If you are a Christian... You don't need to be overly worried about demons. You don't need to be researching the ownership of your home, or neighborhood, or city, to 'map' the demonic principalities and powers at work around you.

You simply recognize that your in a spiritual war, then respond using the kinds of spiritual weapons and tactics Jesus recommended and modeled as the powers of darkness came against Him in the Garden.

If you are not yet a Christian... You are taken captive by the devil. You can be set free. Jesus defeated Satan in the Garden, and on the Cross. His death and resurrection make it possible for you to receive the forgiveness of your sins and to be born-again.