

**“The Primary Battlefield”**  
**Mark 6:6b-13**  
**January 21, 2024**  
**Faith Presbyterian Church – Morning Service**  
*Pastor Nicoletti*

**The Reading of the Word**

We return this morning to the Gospel of Mark, as Jesus here continues his earthly ministry – hearing now from, Mark 6:6-13.

Please do listen carefully, for this is God’s Word for us this morning.

Mark writes:

<sup>6:6b</sup> And he [Jesus] went about among the villages teaching.

<sup>7</sup> And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. <sup>8</sup> He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— <sup>9</sup> but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup> And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. <sup>11</sup> And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” <sup>12</sup> So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. <sup>13</sup> And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

This is the Word of the Lord. (Thanks be to God.)

“All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” [1 Peter 1:24-25]

Let’s pray ...

**Prayer of Illumination**

Lord, we ask that your steadfast love would be upon us,  
according to your promise.  
Take not your word of truth from our lips,  
for we know that our hope is in your revelation spoken to us.  
Help us to keep your commands continually,  
to walk in your ways in all areas of life,  
to speak your truth to the people and the powers around us,  
to find our delight in your testimony to us,  
and to love your revelation to us.  
Grant this now as we turn to your word together,  
and all the days of our lives.  
In Jesus name, Amen.  
[Based on Psalm 119:41,43-47]

## **Introduction**

There are a number of interesting themes in this passage that are worthy of consideration.

There's the topic of the call of the twelve and Christ's commissioning them to preach on his behalf as his ambassadors. There's the theme of money, with the call to the twelve to be content with what they are given, and the call on those they minister to, to support them and supply their needs. [Horne, 103] There's the importance of Christian fellowship seen in the fact that Jesus sends them out in pairs, rather than alone. Each of these themes could be a sermon ... but each is a theme we have also touched on recently in our morning or evening sermons.

And so this morning we'll turn to another theme we see here that we haven't spoken on as recently, and that, in general, we don't speak about that frequently: the spiritual warfare that's at the root of the Apostles' calling and ministry here.

And to do that we're going to ask four questions this morning. We're going to ask:

- 1) What is the primary battlefield of our lives?
- 2) What are the strategic implications of that?
- 3) What is our primary technique for battle? And
- 4) Where is our primary hope?

## **The Primary Battlefield**

So first, what is the primary battlefield of our lives?

And I say battlefield because the scene here seems designed to evoke Israel's past battles.

Jesus gathers twelve men and sends them into the promised land. Such an action would evoke the story of Moses, sending twelve men into Canaan, to spy out the land before Israel invaded. [Leithart, 207]

It would also evoke the scene of Joshua organizing the twelve tribes of Israel and carrying out the conquest of the land. [Leithart, 204] (After all, Jesus's name in Hebrew was Joshua.)

Consistent with that theme, Jesus sends the Twelve out not so much with abstract ideas to spread among the people, but with "authority" and the ability to "cast out" those who should not be there – as verses seven and thirteen highlight.

To a Jew who knew their Bible, this must have sounded like an invasion. And that would be all the more exciting because it was happening at a time when the Promised Land was once again held by pagans – pagans who now served as the oppressors of the Jews.

So the scene evokes a sense of battle and warfare.

But then the battlefield that Jesus directs them toward is not what most Jews probably expected. The battlefield Jesus highlights is the battlefield of spiritual warfare with Satan and his demonic forces, at the level of each person's heart.

That's what we see in verses seven, twelve, and thirteen.

Jesus sends the Twelve Apostles out to fight demons ... and not demons among the pagans ... but demons in and among the people of Israel – demons encountered in the personal lives of ordinary Jews. Demons who seem to be linked, we read in verse twelve, with their ordinary, personal sin.

The primary battlefield Jesus identifies here is the battle with Satan's forces that is going on at a personal level, in the hearts of God's people. That's the primary battlefield Jesus identifies here. The focus here is on our personal battle with the devil and his demonic forces.

Now pause there ... and take a minute to reflect on how you that statement makes you feel.

My guess is that just me talking about Satan and demons as if they are real things is enough to make many of us uncomfortable. If you're not a Christian, you may find yourself thinking right now that these Christians are even weirder than you had thought. If you are a Christian, you might believe these sorts of things about demons and devils on paper ... but if you're honest, you might also find it a bit embarrassing and mostly you just don't think about it. And if you invited a friend to church today, you might be absolutely horrified that this is what we're going to talk about. Simply speaking of Satan and demons without a knowing smirk or a bit of irony in your voice can feel awkward and uncomfortable for many of us.

If that's you ... take a moment with me just to question your assumptions.

Think of world history. Think of the news we read, of events around the world in our own day. Think of the way that one act of sin – of evil, of cruelty, of selfishness – of how one such act by one person so often leads to another, by another person. Think of how that works in generational lines. Think of how that works in nations and cultures. Think of the hateful and absurd sorts of things people have believed about one another throughout history. Think about the hateful and absurd sorts of things people believe about one another still today. Sin and evil and cruelty and selfishness spreads and morphs and grows and metastasizes like cancer. Do you really think it does that on its own? Do you really think there's no one guiding it?

If you've ever read a good novel or seen a good movie that is essentially a tragedy – where one misdeed leads to another, and sets off another, and so on, until a final disaster is reached – then you know that as we read or watch such stories, we can marvel at the cleverness of the author for arranging things just so, and giving each character just the right prompt to amplify the damage and disaster further.

But we see such well-crafted cascades of evil in the world as well, in real life. We see them in conflicts – both international and domestic. We see them in cultures. We see them in the news. We see them across family generations – maybe in our families, maybe in someone else's. Sin and selfishness set off further sin and selfishness, in so many creative ways – sometimes so astoundingly that if we had read it in a novel, we'd find the connections far-fetched. But it happens in real life.

There seems to be a guiding force in and behind such events.

When we see what looks like the guidance and the amplification of good in the world, many people – even if they're not particularly religious – are prone to attribute that to some sort of good spiritual force in the world ... one that is even sentient and divine.

And yet, when we see what looks like the guidance and amplification of evil in the world ... it's taboo in our culture to attribute that to an evil spiritual force – particularly one that is sentient.

And yet the Bible tells us that that's exactly what we should do. Evil is shepherded in this world. It is prompted. It is provoked. It is nurtured. And there are real, sentient, spiritual beings in the universe who do this.

And we don't even have to look out in the world to observe this. We can see it in our own hearts as well.

You know your sins and struggles. You know the ways that your selfishness or foolishness or anger or cruelty or enslavement to some pleasure or form of escape, or something else has caused problems in your life. Think of some of those struggles. Think of some of those times those sins – those problems that come from you – have especially caused damage to you or to others.

In those situations ... your sin was yours – you did the thing that caused those problems. And yet ... even as you made that choice ... you can still feel like you were, at the very same time, tricked into it ... led along to it. The gravity that brought you down may have been your own sinful heart or desires ... but at the same time it felt like you fell into a trap. You didn't just grab a thorny branch, but you were snagged by a baited hook.

In the moment, the circumstances that led to your misdeed can feel so implausible that you curse your luck. You marvel at what enticed you to think so foolishly. You consider the past events that made you vulnerable to committing such an act. And the coincidences of how these elements all came together can seem astounding ... almost too much to believe.

And the Bible agrees that it is too much to believe that it's all a coincidence. The Bible's answer is that it's not a coincidence. The Bible's answer is that there are very real, sentient spiritual beings working to try to bring such events about.

When we consider this world ... so full of brokenness and cruelty ... when we consider our own hearts ... is it really that hard to believe?

Theologian Herman Bavinck writes that if we were to survey the whole of Satan's work, "one would undoubtedly discover a plan of attack and defense in the history of its struggle." We see this, he explains, "in the sinful life of the individual," but we see it even more in the sinful life "of families, generations, peoples, and humanity as a whole throughout the ages." For, among the devils, he writes, "there is a deliberate methodical opposition to God and all that is his." [Bavinck, RD 3.189]

"Thus," Bavinck explains, "Holy Scripture teaches very clearly that Satan with his demons wages war on the church, prosecutes a guerrilla war, as it were, to inflict harm in all kinds of ways and by all kinds of means, both individually and collectively, assaults them and seeks their downfall. Satan is the author of all temptation." [Bavinck, RE 1.453]

Now, to be clear, these malevolent spiritual forces are not equal but opposite counterparts to God. Satan and his legions are created beings, angels who rebelled against God, and who will be defeated. But for now, they continue to seek to degrade and destroy the work of God, hating everything that he loves.

Again ... is that really so hard to believe? We may not see the Devil. But we certainly see the fruit of his work ... don't we?

We may feel embarrassed to take it seriously, but the Bible tells us that there are such beings at work in the world: Satan and his demons are real, they are personal, and they play a role not just in history but in our very lives.

And they are significant enough that they are where Jesus focuses the attention of the Twelve when he first sends them out. When first sending out his Apostles, Jesus tells them – and with them us – that the primary battlefield of our lives is with spiritual forces of evil, on the personal level of our own hearts and our own sin.

That's the first thing we see here in our text.

### **The Strategic Implications**

The second question for us to ask is: What are the strategic implications of this?

If the primary battlefield of our lives is with spiritual forces of evil, on the personal level of our own hearts and our own sin, then what are the strategic implications for us and for how we live our lives?

And one key strategic implication is that while other battlefields may be real in our lives ... they are also secondary in their overall importance.

The advance of the Kingdom of God touches every aspect of life – it touches the family, it touches the workplace, it touches economics, government, politics, culture, education – we could go on and on. It touches all things, and it should transform all things – every aspect of human life.

But what we are reminded of in our text is that the root of that transformation – the primary battlefield that must be won in order to transform all other aspects of life – that primary battlefield is with spiritual forces of evil, on the personal level of our own hearts and our own sin.

Other battlefields may be very important. But they're always secondary. And if we fail to see that, if we make some other secondary battlefield primary in our approach to life ... then we can be more easily overtaken in this spiritual battle.

And this was a problem for Israel at the time of Jesus's ministry.

As I mentioned a few weeks ago, Israel, at the time of Jesus's ministry, was a mess. Tensions and distress were extremely high. Jerusalem was a powder keg. And if you asked most Jews what the biggest problems were, they would give you two answers: First, Rome. And second, other Jews who were responding wrongly to Rome.

The first problem many would identify was Rome. After all, Rome was an occupying force in Israel. They were absolutely pagan and absolutely brutal. The Jewish distress at the Roman occupation was, for most Jews, obviously the biggest problem in their lives.

But the very next problem that so many Jews would identify was other Jews who were responding wrongly to Rome. There were deep divisions in Jewish society over questions of how to deal with the Roman occupation and oppression. But despite those disagreements, so many still agreed that the biggest issue facing Israel was the presence of the Romans, and the next biggest problem were Jews who were responding to the Romans wrongly.

And first-century messianic movements focused on the very same themes. Many men rose up at this time claiming to be the Messiah. And each time, they shared the concerns of their age: that the biggest problems to address were the Romans, and other unfaithful Jews.

And it's into that situation and that expectation that Jesus arrives – another one claiming to be the Messiah. And he gathers his followers. And he sends out the Twelve – he sends them as his ambassadors, extending his ministry and his message. He sends them out as forerunners – as an initial invading force – into the land. And as he does, what does he, and what do they, identify as the chief threats to those they speak to?

Satan and the people's own sin. The enemy that Jesus and the Twelve focus on ... is Satan and personal sin.

That's what we see here.

He doesn't send them out with authority to gather a militia or to organize a rebellion against Rome. He sends them out with authority over unclean spirits, we're told in verse seven ... over demons, we're told in verse thirteen. Jesus tells his followers to be more concerned about the demonic influence in and among God's people, than they are about Rome or other Jews.

And with that, Jesus sends them out not with a message designed to help believers identify what other people are doing wrong ... but with a message about the need for them to repent of their own sin – that's what we're told in verse 12. That's what they needed to hear.

And people back then and people right now are not as different as we often think. We tend to share an assumption that we are the good guys. It's other people who are messing things up. David Brooks writes: "Most people see themselves living on an island of intelligence in a sea of idiocy. They feel their own lives are going pretty well, even if society as a whole is going down the toilet. [...] Their own values are fine, even if civilization itself is on the verge of collapse. We all live in Lake Wobegon because we are all above average. We are all okay; it's the vast ocean of morons who are [messing] things up." [Brooks, 74]

Most first century Jews believed they were the good guys. It was other Jews who had messed things up.

But the message Jesus sends the Twelve out with – we read in verse twelve – was a message to each of them that they should "repent."

Jesus didn't focus them on political or cultural or personal enemies. He told them to focus on themselves. Where many Jews in his day would have identified the biggest problem in their lives – the biggest battlefield in their lives – as other people (in one form or another), Jesus redirects them to the battle of sin and temptation in their own hearts.

And we often need the same kind of redirection.

Because we can often fall into the same sort of error on a personal level. When we think of the biggest problems – the biggest threats or hurdles – in our lives we tend to focus on other people around us.

Maybe it's a co-worker or boss or employee we keep having difficulties with. Maybe it's a parent or a child we find ourselves always butting heads with. Maybe it's a spouse in a marriage that has grown cold or combative. Maybe it's a person at church who's frustrating us. Maybe it's a neighbor who's giving us trouble or a friend who's betrayed us. Maybe it's someone else in some other sphere of life – but either way, we often have that other person in mind, who we see as our primary struggle in life right now: if we could just deal with and overcome them, then we'd be okay.

The Jews had the Romans. You maybe have Fran, your office manager. Or a domineering father. Or a selfish spouse. Or a meddlesome neighbor. And when you put it like that, it might sound petty – but the struggle is real.

And yet ... at the very same time, Jesus says the biggest threats you face are not those other people, but Satan's work in your soul, and sin's hold in your heart. He says that however problematic that other person at work or at home might be ... the bigger threat to you is the voice of Satan whispering in your ear angry and malicious things about them. Jesus is saying that however real their sins might be against you, the greater threat to your soul is your sin against them – whether in thought, word, or deed.

Or maybe you focus less on the people immediately around you, and more on the cultural and political dynamics of our country and our world.

After all, it's a presidential election year. It's primary season. So get ready to be bombarded with dire apocalyptic predictions from all sides! This will be the election to decide the fate of America and maybe humanity, forever! Just like the last election was! And just like the one before that!

And yes, I'm teasing. But I'm not teasing because politics or government don't matter. They do matter. I'm teasing because, like all things, when the political realm overstates its cosmic importance, it makes itself into an idol and a caricature, rather than serving the role God intended it to. And it's a common problem for us today.

The Jews couldn't ignore the presence and the threat of the Romans. And we cannot ignore the presence or the threat of political issues in our own lives.

But if Jesus was right that the Romans were not the primary threat to the first-century Jews ... then neither can your political opponents be the primary threat to you or to the Church today.

This isn't about identifying what is or isn't a concern for us. Rather, it's about identifying which concern should be our top priority, and making sure we don't neglect that for something else.

I told this story to you just a couple of years ago, and so many of you will remember it. But I always find myself reflecting on it when this topic comes up. It's a story about my alma mater.

In February of 2009, about 70 students at New York University (NYU), where I had attended, stormed the cafeteria in the student center, barricaded the doors shut, and declared that they were staging an occupation, and that they wouldn't leave until NYU met a list of demands that they had.

Now, I had graduated a few years earlier, but when this all happened, I followed it closely – it was covered in some national news sources at the time.

The occupation had its drama. But it also ended about 40 hours after it began. On a Friday afternoon the remaining students who had taken over the cafeteria saw security guards and police approaching the doors. They gathered around the jumble of tables and chairs they had piled up at the two doors that went directly into the cafeteria from the hallway. They were ready for a struggle.

And as they stood there, bracing the barricades at these two doorways, they suddenly heard the clang of a metal gate. And they turned their heads to see what was happening.

Because, you see, besides those two doors, there was another entrance way into the cafeteria. It was through the area where food was normally sold. There were actually three ways into the cafeteria. There were those two sets of doors that the students had barricaded so thoroughly, and then there was the much bigger entrance through the area where you could buy food, and go from there into the cafeteria. During the occupation, that entryway was blocked by a pull-down metal gate – like the kind you see at the entrances of stores in the mall before they open.

Now, the students, for their occupation, had thought to block the two regular doors that entered the cafeteria. In fact they had quite a big pile of chairs and tables there to block those doors. But it apparently had not occurred to them to do anything about the really large, gated entrance by the cash registers. So when security and police decided to put an end to the occupation, they merely unlocked the metal gate, lifted it up, and walked in through a big, unobstructed entrance, while the protesting students stood by their barricades at the other doors, surprised, confused, and with, I imagine, not so bright looks on their faces.

As an NYU graduate, this was not my proudest moment for my alma matter.

But my point is that somehow, with all their planning, and with all their work to keep their opponents out, the NYU students had missed something important. They failed to see the biggest entry way into the place they were trying to barricade. They overlooked a majority of the battlefield. And as a result, they were overtaken easily. Embarrassingly easily.

And again, it wasn't an either/or issue. If we were rooting for those NYU students and their occupation, we wouldn't tell them not to barricade the doors. But we would want to point out that doors were not their most vulnerable point, as they had supposed. The large gate was where they were even more vulnerable. So they needed to attend to both – but also to give even more time and attention to the large, gated opening.

The same can be true for us.

We see it in the midst of a conflict. When we are in conflict with someone else – whether it's a friend, neighbor, family member or coworker – we usually see the threat they pose to us. That's the door we are focused on. And we barricade it with attacks on them, and extensive arguments of self-defense. We focus on that door and the threat of that other person. But the Bible tells us that often, at the same time, there is another entryway that threatens us, that we often fail to see. There is the gate of spiritual warfare and temptation. And through it the demons who serve Satan can whisper their temptations to us – temptations to anger and slander, temptations to hatred and pride, temptations to arrogant refusal to see our own faults, and petty vindictive need to feel superior to

others. And through that gate of temptation the devil strolls into our hearts, and often does far more damage to our souls than the person we're arguing with ever could.

Sometimes, we don't even need a conflict. But if the devil can focus our attention on some external threat, and goad us to see it as the chief – even the only – threat of real concern to us, then he can nurture other vices in our hearts, without us even noticing: greed and gluttony, pride and entitlement, lust and selfishness. He strolls in the side gate to ensnare us in sin while we are focused elsewhere.

In your day-to-day life, do you consider, as the Apostle Peter says, that the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking to devour you? [1 Peter 5:8] Do you hear the Apostle Paul's exhortation not to be ignorant of the devil's schemes? [2 Corinthians 2:5-11] Do you remember, as Paul writes elsewhere that our primary battle is not "against flesh and blood, but against [...] cosmic powers [...], against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places"? [Ephesians 6:12]

Scholar Hilda Graef summarized the thinking of Gregory of Nyssa on this topic writing: "The Kingdom of God among men [involves] relentless warfare on the battlefield of the soul." [Graef, 11] That's the battlefield the devil would like us to ignore: the battlefield of our own souls – where he tempts us towards sin and away from God.

How much intentional thought do you put into resisting, and avoiding, and fleeing temptation to sin? How thoughtfully do you strategize against the sort of temptations you know you are likely to face? Or do you treat your temptations like the base impulses of a dumb animal, rather than the assaults and attacks of a thoughtful spiritual foe?

The devil would love for us to neglect the battlefields of our hearts and the temptation to sin. But the strategic implication of this text is that we need to treat that battlefield as primary, and be actively engaged with the struggle in our hearts between good and evil – between sin and righteousness – that occur in decisions we make all the time.

That's the primary strategic implication we see in all this.

## **Our Primary Technique**

That brings us to our third question: In this central battle of our lives, what is our primary technique?

How do we do battle with the forces of Satan? What is our part in battling the unclean spirits and demons of this world?

The answer we're given here is very simple.

We read in verse twelve: "So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent."

To battle Satan and his demon hordes, the people are not given an incantation. They're not given a talisman. They're not given a ritual of exorcism. They are given a very simple task: Repent.

The word means to turn. It's a call to turn away from sin, and towards God. It's a call to reject the way of living, and way of treating others that the demons delight in – a call to turn away from

ways of life that would deny, discard, or deface the good things of God – whether it’s his name, or people who are made in his image. We are called on to turn away from such things.

So where do you need to follow this Apostolic call? Where do you need to repent?

In what area of life have you failed to repent – have you maybe even stopped trying to turn away from sin and selfishness? Maybe it’s an area that’s secret and hidden from others. Maybe it’s an area that everyone can see, and people have confronted you about, but you refuse to see it, and simply deny it when others bring it up. Where has the devil gotten hold of you, and you need to turn from his ways, and towards the living God?

Maybe you’ve given yourself to sinful anger or bitterness towards someone else. Maybe you’ve turned to created things for ultimate purpose and comfort, instead of to your God and Father. Maybe you’ve embraced sinful pleasures that degrade you or others. Maybe you’ve been ignoring the Lord. Maybe you’ve been fleeing from your responsibilities. Maybe you’ve neglected those close to you, withholding your help, or your affections. Maybe you haven’t taken the Lord seriously in quite some time.

Whatever it is: Where have you made peace with the forces of spiritual darkness in your life?

The Apostles here call you to turn – to repent.

And repentance isn’t something we grow out of in the Christian life at some point. We don’t move past it to bigger and better things. In this life it is usually the means by which our spiritual battles continue to progress if they are going to progress at all.

As Martin Luther wrote: “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ‘Repent’ (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.”

Wherever we see sin in ourselves, wherever we have followed the ways of the devil, wherever we have rebelled against our Maker and Lord, the Apostles call us to repent – to turn from our sin and toward God.

That is the act – that is the “technique” – they call us to in this spiritual warfare with sin and Satan.

That’s the third thing we see: the call to repent.

Repentance is key. But it’s also not sufficient. It’s not enough. And that brings us to our final point this morning.

## **Our Primary Hope**

Fourth and finally, what’s our primary hope in this battle?

As I’ve argued this morning, we face a battle against superhuman spiritual forces of evil – against demons and devils. It would be insane to think we could defeat them with our own power.

Repentance is essential. But our repentance, as a simple human act in itself, cannot possibly be more powerful than the millennia-old spiritual beings of darkness that we face.

So where then is our hope in this spiritual battle?

Our hope is found in the reality that in Christian repentance we're not just turning away from something. We're turning towards something. More accurately, we're turning towards someone.

What is it, in the end, that defeats these demons at work in Israel? Who is it that conquers them?

The answer comes in verse seven. It was Jesus who possessed the power – who had the authority – to drive out and defeat the forces of Satan. And he administered that power for the deliverance of his people. But that power came from him.

And he still has that power today.

The sins in your life – the demonic temptations and battles you face – they might seem overwhelming to you. They might make you acutely aware of how weak you are. And the battle might feel impossible.

And for you it is. But it's not impossible for Jesus. He is stronger than even the strongest force of spiritual darkness, and he has already overcome them on the cross. And so, he can overcome them in your life too.

So don't just turn away from your sin. Turn towards Jesus, and seek him and his power. Ask him for his help in prayer. Seek his guidance in his Word. Look for his assistance through his people – the Church. Don't just flee from sin, but by every means of grace flee to Jesus.

## **Conclusion**

The primary battlefield in our lives is not out in the world, or between us and some other person. It is in our hearts. It can be terrifying that the battle between good and evil is so close to us. It's even scarier when we recognize that our primary battle there is not against flesh and blood, but against cosmic powers of darkness – against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. [Ephesians 6:12]

But even so, we need not fear. Because Jesus is with us. And he has overcome the devil.

Let us see the battlefield of our hearts. Let us recognize its importance in our lives. Let us repent of our sin. And let us flee to Christ for victory and protection.

Amen.

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***This sermon draws on material from:***

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Note: In my preaching I often cite and draw from a range of sources, which includes material from Christians within my theological tradition, Christians outside my theological tradition (in keeping with our church's core value of "Reformed Catholicity"), and also (following the Apostle Paul's example in Acts 17) non-Christians who are well outside of Christian orthodoxy and orthopraxy. And so, when I cite an author or a source, that citation should not be understood or construed as me necessarily agreeing with, endorsing, or recommending to others anything else from that author or source, except for what I explicitly say I agree with, endorse, or recommend. When engaging with different materials and thinkers, all Christians must exercise wisdom and discernment to determine what is helpful, appropriate, and edifying for each person, taking into account their current needs, wisdom, and spiritual maturity.

This sermon draws from portions of my 7/16/17 sermon "The Overlooked Battlefield" and my 1/16/22 sermon "Spiritual Warfare on the Overlooked Battlefield"