

No Trespassing VIII: “Gates & Grounds”

1. Review

- a. We have been speaking for nearly 8 weeks now about the spiritual realm of existence.
 - i. We have learned that we are spiritual beings but we live in a physical world with physical bodies.
 - ii. We have learned that we cannot see the spiritual realm but we can interact with it.
 - iii. We have learned that there is a spiritual war going on in that invisible realm – a war between God and Satan; a war that God decisively won when Jesus went to the cross and took our sins.
 - iv. But we also have come to realize that our enemy would like us to never experience the fruits of that victory.
- b. Last week we examined how the determined enemy would try to sideline the most powerful, most adventurous, most daring warriors...the men of a church.
 - i. And we learned that the method for doing so would be simply to make the environment of a church so “sweet” and so “safe” that anyone who felt inclined to be a risk taker or a warrior would feel like they didn’t belong.
 - ii. That method would focus on growing a “socialite Christianity” as opposed to “battleground Christianity.”
- c. “No Trespassing” revisited.
 - i. Now when we began this series, I started off by comparing our Christian life to the concept of owning property and having to deal with trespassers on that property. I would like to elaborate on that today.
 1. In the 19th century, a common problem for land owners were a group of people who became known as “squatters.”
 2. They would set up homes on ignored or neglected portions of people’s land and use it as if it were their own.
 3. Eventually, they would gain the legal deed to that land they used through something called “Squatter’s rights.”
 4. According to the Legal Database (<http://www.legal-database.net/squatters-right.htm>)
 - a. **Squatter's Rights** are a laymen's term for something called *adverse possession* in the legal world. Under the doctrine of adverse possession, a person can legally lose the rights to their property.
 - b. If property was abandoned or neglected, and someone else "squatted" on it for a number of years, the squatter could gain legal control over that land.
 - c. But under the law of adverse possession, it's not as easy as just pitching a tent on a piece of land and after a certain period of time has passed claiming that it is yours.
 - d. During that time, the person must hold the property **hostile** to the owner's rights - in other words, the person can't be there with the permission of the owner.
 - e. The possession must also be open and notorious so that the possessor is saying by their uncontested actions, "This land is mine!"
 - ii. Now let me ask you something. Does that sound like something the devil, our adversary would like to do with your life? You bet it does!
- d. Explanation:
 - i. Before we became Christians, you and I were once under the influence of the devil.

- ii. Our lives mimicked the devil. Our life goals were selfish, destructive, and certainly not God honoring.
- iii. But when you became a Christian, the ownership of your life passed from the devil to Jesus Christ. You were “*bought with a price.*”
- iv. When Jesus came into your life, you began to experience the blessings of being a child of God – of experiencing the inheritance that Jesus promised; of peace, joy, eternal life, of finding purpose in your life. You began to experience the life changing influence of God inside your life.
 - 1. But the influence of your past still exists. Satan uses every means to gain and hold ground in your life so that his sphere of influence remains.
 - a. We can liken this to what happens after war has been won.
 - b. Even though the conflict may be officially ended, enemy snipers refuse to surrender, so they must be hunted down.
 - c. Their right to remain may be *technically* voided since the territory is under new control, but that doesn't mean they leave automatically or give up easily.
 - d. We must enforce the terms of victory.
 - e. If we don't, we neglect the land and allow the enemy to build up strongholds and to hold ground through squatter's rights.
- e. I have been reading in Joshua this month in my quiet time.
 - i. In Joshua chapter 1, God outlines the physical territory which he is giving to Israel --: *"from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates -- all the Hittite country -- to the Great Sea on the west"* (Joshua 1:4).
 - 1. In fact, during Joshua's time the people didn't actually set their feet on all this.
 - 2. But most was under Israel's control by the time of David and Solomon.
 - ii. In Joshua 10:40, the writer summarizes the victories of the nation:
 - 1. “*Thus Joshua struck all the land, the hill country and the Negev and the lowland and the slopes and all their kings. He left no survivor, but he utterly destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded.*”
 - iii. This story of Joshua (whose name is very similar to that of Jesus: Yeshua)— is about the conquest and possession of the promise of the “land” that God had made to the Nation of Israel.
 - 1. In fact, the entire Exodus and the conquest of Palestine provides us a shadow of the Christian life:
 - a. Exodus from Egypt – leaving behind our bondage and slavery to sin.
 - b. Journey in the desert – where our old man is reckoned dead
 - i. In Exodus, the entire adult generation died in the wilderness – because the old cannot coexist with the new. The bible says that *“former things have passed away, all things have become new.”*
 - c. Crossing over the Jordan River into the Promised Land – is the shadow of baptism into the new life; the entry into the promises of God, which includes eternal life.
 - d. Conquest of the land – is a picture of our lives as we begin our walk by the spirit and in victory.
 - 2. I would like you to look at your life and where your journey is:
 - a. There are great tracts of "land" God would give you that are now occupied by the enemy.
 - b. That “land” is a word picture for possession of the riches of God and His wonderful plan for your life.
 - i. They don't belong to the enemy.

- ii. They belong to you.
- iii. God has given them to you.
- iv. When you became a Christian, the legal title to those areas of your life were transferred to you by the work of Jesus.
- v. But, they remain to be taken possession of.
- vi. There's a saying in legal circles: "Possession is 9/10ths of the law."
 - 1. The enemy has "squatter's rights."
 - 2. He will remain as long as he is uncontested.
 - 3. When you -- with God's help -- push the enemy off your inheritance, you can possess it, and experience its blessings.

2. This morning's sermon title is "Gates and Grounds."

- a. We have got to get practical and try to make this subject real and not just theoretical to you.
- b. The reason that I have given it this title is to try to illustrate the "gates" that we leave unlocked or open for the enemy to enter, or the grounds he can remain on, and thereby influence our lives."
- c. None of us would intentionally leave our home unlocked...but we might by accident, or not realize that someone knows where we hide the key to the back door.
- d. When we talk today about "gates" we will be talking about the actions we take that have the *effect* of leaving a door open and unlocked, and in themselves, amount to an invitation to Satan and his hosts to come in and influence our lives.
 - i. I hope this is making you feel a little uncomfortable.
 - ii. I wonder if you are thinking right now..."aw come on...Satan can't enter my life, I belong to Jesus."
 - iii. You are right in that Satan cannot penetrate your spirit. But he can gain access and a degree of control over your mind and emotions by the doors you leave open.

3. Did you know that Satan can control the thoughts and speech of a Christian?

- a. Open your bibles to Matthew, chapter 16:21-23.
- b. *21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. 22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" 23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."*
- c. Jesus had just finished His explanation to His disciples on the real nature of His earthly mission - that He must suffer and die (verse 21).
 - i. Peter immediately spoke up in an effort to dissuade Christ from going to the cross: "*Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you"* (verse 22).
 - ii. The response of Christ seems awfully harsh. "*Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men"*
 - 1. Whoa! Do you think Peter needed some counseling after that rebuke?
 - 2. Imagine if you are walking down the road with Jesus and He called you Satan?
 - 3. That must have felt like a crushing blow.
 - 4. If I said that to someone today, I am sure that folks would probably tell me that that I wasn't being very Christ-like saying something like that. Yet Jesus said it.
 - iii. I don't believe that Jesus was suggesting that Peter was demon possessed.
 - 1. Jesus was telling Peter that he was being **influenced** by Satan to such a degree that he was speaking the very words that Satan wanted him to say to dissuade Jesus from embracing the cross.

- d. What this passage illustrates for us is the power that Satan retains over our minds, our belief systems and our emotional triggers.
- i. It is for this reason that Romans 12:2 tells us *“do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.”*
 1. When you are saved, your “position” before God is changed (from condemnation to acceptance, from sinner to saint) but there remains a lifetime of change in your “practice.”
 2. In fact, our lives are spent learning to make our practice match our position in Christ.
 3. That is, in effect, what it means to be “possessing the land” of our spiritual inheritance.
 - ii. People who may be saved but who resist the scriptural plea to surrender their lives and the daily conduct to Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:3) will find they have demonic insurgents harassing them from their pre-conversion lives.
 - iii. The church has too many folks who are suffering the "hangover" of Satan's influence from their former lives of sin and wonder why or how they remain in this condition.
4. Gates (entry points) As I mentioned earlier, there are specific things that have happened to us or that we have done or said that have the net effect of opening doors to demonic influence.
- a. **Wounds of the Mind:**
 - i. **Words** Mt. 5:33-37
 1. *33 "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' 34 But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; **anything beyond this comes from the evil one***
 2. Inner vows – a determination set by the mind usually in early childhood to resolve a certain matter or reconcile a issue “from now on.”
 - a. “I will prove to everyone that ...”
 - b. I will never let anyone in authority ever hurt me again”
 - c. I will never be like...
 - d. **Vows tend to resist the maturing process that God has planned for us.**
 - i. Ie. a vow against my mother comes out against my wife, or against my dad comes out against my pastor or my boss.
 - ii. This is because I cannot unconsciously break a vow I have made earlier in my life – it has become a part of my being, my personality and my make up.
 - 3.
 - ii. **Deceptive Lies** – are beliefs that influence our behavior away from the truth.
 1. These are belief systems, false beliefs, that affect us and cause us to behave differently than God intends.
 2. Satan has worked through the world system, through the nature of sin, and through the wounds of life to teach us lies about ourselves, God and others that have the net result of keeping us from becoming what God made us to be.
 3. These lies can only be dispelled by the truth (Romans 12:2) which will conform us to Christ’s image instead of the world’s image.
 4. *Lori Hejduk* sang a powerful song on Sunday night called “the stronghold of my heart.”

- a. Most of us know Lori and the wonderful work God has done in her life.
 - b. The most powerful work was the smashing of the lies that she believed about herself. Her song is the testimony of that.
 - c. Her life is the proof of what God is doing as He sets her free from the deceptive lies that she spent a lifetime believing.
- b. **Wounds of the Will** (self-inflicted wounds) ~ I will touch on a couple of these next week in depth.
 - i. **Unforgiveness** (Mt. 18:21-35)
 - 1. Refusal to let go or excuse a debt owed by another.
 - 2. Holding on to an offense.
 - 3. In Mt. 18:34) Jesus tells us what happens when we refuse to forgive others. *In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.*
 - 4. Failure to forgive will result in us being turned over to tormentors!
 - 5. I believe that **when we refuse to forgive, we open the doors to demonic torment.**
 - ii. **Willful Sin** – (1 Sam 15:22-23)
 - 1. Any act, attitude or action in direct disobedience to the word of God.
 - 2. Willful sin creates the FOUNDATION for strongholds of sin to be built in our lives. Its result is that sin becomes demonically *addictive*
 - 3. When we cannot resist a particular sin, we can be sure that there is a stronghold behind it; and there was in fact an entry point, a place at which it began.
 - 4. Confessing the sin will not be sufficient to freedom.
 - 5. Many times repentance is not enough, because we fall back into the same sin over and over and repent over and over; leading us to hate ourselves.
 - 6. Deliverance prayer by Godly men and women is needed along with a confession and renunciation of the original entry point sin.
- c. **Wounds of the Emotions** (Emotional trauma inflicted by others) Lk 4:18
 - i. A wound that is caused by a physical or emotional shock that causes lasting damage to the psychological development or health of that person.
 - 1. Like a Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome.
 - 2. Like a sudden move, uprooting from our friends, supports.
 - 3. **The wound becomes the ground for intrusion because they lead us to false beliefs about the world, others and about God.**
 - 4. You may know someone who harbors wounds from their past. Maybe you are one of them.
 - ii. We may have been VICTIMIZED but **it is our CHOICE to remain a victim.**
 - 1. We are not responsible for what others do to us, but we are responsible for how we respond to it.
 - 2. To avoid leaving this door open, it is important for you to understand that God is sovereign. He is in charge. He has always been in charge. He saw you when you were hurt. He has not left you. He will never leave you or forsake you. He wants you to be whole.
 - 3. Overcoming:
 - a. Counseling is a vital tool to overcoming these wounds because counseling exposes the false beliefs concerning the wound. It is rarely enough.
 - b. Deliverance – power and truth combined!
 - c. Renunciation of the false beliefs and forgiveness is a tool in overcoming these wounds.

d. Occult entanglement gives legal rights to the property of our lives to another.

- i. Deuteronomy 18:9-14.
 1. Children and teens sometimes wonder why we tell them not to go see certain movies, read certain books, watch certain tv shows, play certain games (D&D, Doom, etc).
 2. They call their parents old fashioned, prudish, superstitious, etc.
- ii. But when we become involved in the things that God says "do not do" it is like signing a legal and binding contract with the forces of darkness.
 1. Satan is the smartest lawyer that ever was, and if he has a legal right to torment you, you cannot stop him until you take away that legal right.
 2. I have seen too many adults, who have become Christians, who are carrying baggage and a heavy load that is the direct or indirect result of their involvement in occult activities.
 - a. We cannot minimize these things.
- iii. What are these things?
 1. Some of the most common are: horoscope, oujia boards, water witching, fortune telling, psychic healing, tarot cards, séances, out of body experimentation, and mental telepathy
- iv. Have you ever wondered why God told Israel to destroy some of the cities completely when they came into the land of Canaan or Palestine?
 1. He said to destroy all belongings, all cattle, all people, men, women and children, all their gold and silver, every thing that they owned.
 2. It was because some of these people were so corrupted by occult sins and demon worship that God knew if His people saved any of their belongings or lived in their cities, they would become corrupt also.
 3. God knows the contaminating nature of the demonic and occult involvement.
- v. Taking the legal right away...
 1. This is done by asking forgiveness from God. But that is not enough.
 - a. For too long we have treated forgiveness as some form of amnesic denial.
 - i. We assume automatically that God forgives us when we confess our sins, and He does.
 - ii. Forgiveness is not enough for occult sins.
 - iii. We must close the demonic doors that were opened many years ago in our lives.
 - iv. We must make a distinction between redemption and spiritual warfare.
 - v. When you confess your sins, it's over with in the eyes of God, but not necessarily in the demonic realm.
 - vi. It's not necessarily over in the terms of demonic access to your life.
 - vii. Repenting and being forgiven of something many times is not the same as slamming the door in the devil's face and sealing it with the blood of Jesus to make sure he can never open it again.
 2. Our spirits are saved and on their way to heaven, but many times our body and our soul are still tormented by the occult spirits that we have made a *legal and binding contract with*.
 - a. The contract must be broken.
 - b. The contract must be voided.
 3. How do we void the contract?

- a. If an occult ritual was performed over us, it must be undone.
 - b. This is done by **renouncing** the things of the occult and turning from them to God with the whole heart.
4. We do this by saying, *"Jesus I renounce all the occult involvement (name them). I repent for turning to your enemies about things in my life. I ask you to forgive me and cleanse me from all occult activity. I break any bonds or ties to the enemy that my rebellion and sin has created. I renounce this evil. In the Name of Jesus.."*

5. Grounds = strongholds.

- a. **Strongholds are places in our lives where Satan has been able to fortify his work in us so that we resist repentance in that area.**
- b. Strongholds are systems of belief and thought that are contrary to God's word and truth.
 - i. This allows demonic spirits to hide and work undercover, in our "blind spot."
 - ii. Strongholds are generally built on the foundation of **CARNAL** sin.
 - iii. They are bound together with **the mortar of lies and deception.**
- c. Satan holds us captive with accusation, fear, deception and lies. 2 Cor 10:4-5, 6
 - i. Ground may be viewed as a foundation for a stronghold
 - 1. If you tear up the ground under a stronghold, or remove the ground and the stronghold will fall.
 - 2. Look at where the stronghold is built (what ground is it on).
 - a. Ask why do you think the enemy chose that ground?
 - i. Was it because it was territory that might be in question on who owns it?
 - ii. Was it because the trespassing was uncontested?
 - iii. Was it because the ground was "given" to the enemy through some kind of action?
 - b. The answers you give to these kinds of questions also provide guidance to your response to the stronghold.

6. Breaking Free (PRACTICAL STEPS TO FREEDOM)

- a. Bondage essentially is demonic influence.
- a. We will say, "Not me!" I don't have a demon!
 - i. No, but they have you because You are a captive to their lies.
 - ii. Just like someone convincing you to join a cult, brainwashing you to believe that they are someone they are not, and that you cannot do the things that you once were able to do.
- b. Getting free from such a stronghold requires:
 - iii. First **get away from the source** of the controlling and brainwashing influence.
 - 1. That is the first step of deliverance.
 - 2. Just as counter brainwashing for cults does this, so we also must do this to find freedom.
 - 3. If you have a stronghold you are aware of, get out of the arena of influence that you are in so that it can lose its power over you.
 - a. If it is a tongue that is out of control either through language or gossip... change your company.
 - b. If it is computer pornography – get rid of the internet.
 - 4. Get to a place where its lie cannot be repeated over and over to you. "Flee youthful lusts."
 - a. We don't flee Satan. We flee the temptation.
 - b. Get away from the source of the lie.
 - c. Break your ties with the lie.
 - iv. Second, **confess the truth that God says about you, and replace those lies with the truth.**

1. The enemy cannot stand the truth.
 - a. "It is written!" It strengthens you and opposes the lies.
 - b. 2 Tim 3:16 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,*
 - c. Speak the promises, pray the promises!
- v. Third, expose your life to the light.
 1. The enemy cannot stand light.
 - a. You bring it into the light through letting someone else know about your struggle. Talk to a close friend, a pastor, your shepherd. Ask for them to walk along side you in your struggle.
 - b. Once exposed, the stronghold becomes like dew before sunlight. It dries up and it loses its power.
- vi. **Learn to walk by the Spirit!**
 1. Walk by the spirit and not by the flesh. Something we have spoken about repeatedly here. Learn to walk by the Spirit. The bible says, "*If you walk the by the spirit you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*"
 2. Very simply, practice listening to God's voice, look for His gentle nudge, and when you hear Him and feel His touch...obey Him.

7. Decision Time:

- a. Have you been living far short of the promises of God for a Christian? Have you been down, discouraged, wondering what your purpose in life is...it might be that the enemy has repeated his lies so often that you believe them instead of what God has promised for you.
 - i. Won't you come up for prayer and God will free you for what He made you for!
- b. Perhaps you have been struggling with some form of sin or habit that will not let go. No matter what you do it never seems enough. You keep falling back into the same pattern.
 - i. Come today for prayer.
- c. Perhaps you recognize that you have left a door open in your life because of a sin or something you have done, and now you want to close it so you can get on with God. Come today for prayer.
- d. Or maybe your life is heading in the wrong direction and you have realized that you haven't been following God after all. Maybe you have substituted religion for a relationship with Jesus Christ. Come today for prayer.

Don't stay where you are. Come for prayer.

1. Deliverance and Recovery

- a. We see in Jesus' ministry some dramatic examples of exorcism, casting out of demons. But let's not be naïve. People who have lived under a demonic delusion or obsession for a significant period of their lives need a period of recovery, even though the root demonic cause of the problem has been dealt with. Let me explain. In order for a person to live with the demonic delusion or obsession, he is forced to develop a whole series of coping mechanisms that aren't appropriate to the free and open life of a Christian. These coping mechanisms must be gradually unlearned. They didn't develop overnight and they seldom disappear overnight. I believe that counseling by skilled, trained, and committed Christian counselors, pastors, or laypersons can be extremely helpful to help delivered people experience full recovery. The Body of Christ is not a place where we are to judge our recovering brothers and sisters, but to love and encourage and bear with them. The church is supposed to be a supportive, loving environment where people -- including you and me, my friend -- can find full healing from sin and deception, and their entrapping consequences.
- b. Power and truth are needed together.
 - i. Counseling alone will not free you.
 1. Jesus came teaching. Teaching the truth. And we are to continue this, for teaching is not weak. The truth we share has explosive seeds in it that can break people free. Paul instructed his protégé Timothy:
 - ii. And while the power of the Spirit can free you from the enemy's power, it is not enough by itself. Truth is needed to unwind the lies you are wrapped in.
 1. and Jesus also cast out demons.
 - iii. He did both. We need to have both at work in the church and our lives as well.
 1. "And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will" (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

In Relation to the Unbelievers

In relation to unbelievers **Satan blinds their minds so that they will not accept the Gospel** (2 Cor. 4:4). He often does this by making them think that any way to heaven is as acceptable as the only way. Again, a counterfeit. This blindness attacks the minds of people, and while unbelievers may think and reason, a power greater than Satan must remove that blindness. Human reasoning and convincing arguments have a ministry, but only the power of God can remove satanic blindness. Sometimes the devil comes and takes away the Word people have heard in order to prevent their believing (Luke 8:12).