

Spiritual Warfare and Deception

by Jim Cymbala

Spiritual warfare is a real and present danger, and we must be aware of the enemy's tactics of deception and seduction in order to live a life pleasing to God.

Duration: 42:07

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 11:13

Topics: "Gibeonites"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a personal story about encountering wolves in the South. He emphasizes the importance of not judging things solely by their appearance and highlights two mistakes made by Joshua in the Bible. The preacher also discusses the tendency to make decisions without seeking God's guidance and warns against the potential consequences of such actions. Additionally, he mentions a situation where someone falsely claimed that God had sent them to take over the preacher's church, causing him distress.

Transcript

In the New Testament it says that we are in a wrestling match, but we don't wrestle against, what? Flesh and blood, but we wrestle against principalities and powers. In warfare, human warfare, there's two kinds, basically, and it's the same is true for spiritual warfare, and we're all involved in it today. And I believe the Lord has laid this message on my heart from his word, because he knew today somebody desperately needed to be reminded of this.

When Israel went into the land to possess it, they were led by a man named Joshua. Joshua was the successor to Moses. Moses had led the people for 40 years in the wilderness, but when he died on a mountain, Joshua became his successor.

And Joshua led the people over the Jordan River, moving from east to west, and then God had divided the land of Canaan, Palestine, Israel, call it what you will, into 12 parts, basically. The tribes were allotted geographical space with limits and borders, and they were to go in and possess the land that God had promised. But like with everything in life, even though God promises it, you and I must possess it by driving out the enemies that are there blocking us from God's plan for our life.

This is where spiritual warfare comes in. God has a plan, God has said, I've given you this, but it doesn't mean that we sit on a sofa and just inherit it, you got to go out and fight the good fight of faith. They went

into the land, and they faced two kinds of warfare.

One was head-on, confrontational, I'm going to knock you out warfare. We know what that's like in our lives, don't we? They were fighting against kings and armies and generals and cities that were walled. They were confronting enemies who were coming at them with bows and shields and chariots.

It's the same in our lives. You face certain things in life that you know, this is the devil, the bottom falls out, your mind is attacked, your heart is attacked, you feel like you're going to lose your faith, your heart is broken in 1,000 different pieces, people who you care about and trust let you down, you're discouraged by what another believer does. I mean, it is just absolutely confrontational.

There's nothing subtle about it. It is just in-your-face warfare. And you realize, according to Ephesians, the sixth chapter, that having done everything, you have to stand.

You got to stand in the day of evil. But there's another kind of warfare that's much more dangerous. Israel learned when they went in the land that as long as they were right with God, walking in the light, confessing sins, walking in fellowship with him, no one who attacked them could overcome them.

But they came up against somebody smarter than them. They came up against somebody who tricked them. And here's how it happened.

Joshua 9, now when all the kings west of the Jordan, in the land that they had to possess, heard about these things, what things? Crossing the Jordan, Jericho, Ai, the battles Israel had won, those in the hill country, in the western foothills, and along the entire coast of the Great Sea, that's the Mediterranean, as far as Lebanon. These were the kings of the Hittites, the Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. They came together to make war against Joshua and Israel.

Hold that, that's your old-fashioned smash-mouth warfare. Me against you, mano a mano, and we're going to go at it. Ah, but somebody else had something else in their mind.

However, when the people of Gibeon, also called Hivites, when the people of Gibeon, who were just a few miles north of where Israel was, when they heard about what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they resorted to a ruse. You know what a ruse is? It's a trick, it's a masquerade, it's deception. What did they do? They went as a delegation, whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended.

The men put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. The name of this message is called Old Clothes and Moldy Bread.

Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, we have come from a distant country, lying through their teeth. Make a treaty with us, just make a treaty. Let us live with you in peace.

The men of Israel said to the Hivites, that's the people from Gibeon, but perhaps you live near us. They do. Perhaps you live near us.

How then can we make a treaty with you? Because God had said, you can't make a treaty with any of the tribes that are in Canaan. Why? They were so idolatrous, they were so evil, that God said, you're to drive them out, exterminate them if you have to, but I'm using you, I've given them 400 years to repent. They

haven't repented, and recent historical studies have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that among the worship of Baal, Asherah, and all the Canaanite gods was child sacrifice, like there was no tomorrow.

Children being handed by their parents as a sacrifice thrown into the fire and celebrations going as the baby is burning. And they would play loud instruments to drive out the noise of the children screaming. And God said, I've given them 400 years to repent, so now you drive them out.

You make no treaties with anybody in the land. Now if people are far, far away, you can make a treaty with them, but you make no treaties. That's why Joshua's asking that.

How do we know you're not from close? No, they said, listen, we are your servants. But Joshua's asked, who are you and where do you come from? They answered, listen, your servants have come from a very distant country. Because of the fame of the Lord your God.

Now they're buttering him up, giving him praise. For we have heard reports of him and what he did in Egypt and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, Sion, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashteroth. And our elders and all those living in our country said to us, take provisions for your journey and go and meet them and say to them, we are your servants, make a treaty with us.

That's what they're asking for, make a treaty. This bread of ours, it was warm when we packed it at home. On the day we left to come to you.

But now see how dry and moldy it is, and it was. And these wineskins that we filled were new, but see how cracked they are. And our clothes and sandals, we got them at Nordstrom's before we left, but now look at them.

They're worn out by the long journey. The men of Israel sampled their provisions, but they did not inquire or ask God what was going down. Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath.

Three days later, after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors living near them. So the Israelites set out on the third day, came to their cities, Gibeon, Kephara, Biroth, and Kiriath-Jerim. Gibeonites were living in four major cities, but the Israelites did not attack them because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the Lord, the God of Israel.

And from that moment on, nobody can tell the havoc and the deprivations morally that was done by these people living there among the Israelites, and they never could get rid of them. They stayed there forever to cause trouble. That's the other kind of warfare.

Some is front on, come on, come out of your corner and we're going to fight. Then there's another whole kind called deception. Pretending to be something you're not, wearing a mask.

And they came to Joshua, who was nobody's fool, and they said, no, we've come from far away. You can make a treaty with us. Notice what their goal was.

Just don't drive us out. Make a treaty. Make a treaty with us.

That's all they wanted. Didn't want money. Just let us live in your life, in your land, with you.

How did they do it? What was their strategy? The strategy of all Gibeonites. Lie after lie after lie after lie. And clever lies.

Look at our sandals. Look at this moldy bread. We've been, what do you think, we're from nearby? We're from like, you don't even know where we're from.

We're from so far away. And here's the proof. Look, here's the bread.

It was fresh, and now it's moldy. And our clothes were brand new, off the rack. And now, look, all torn up.

This has been a miserable journey for us. And now comes the fateful verse. They sampled their provisions.

They went by their senses. Eye, ear, story, taste the bread. Use your eyes to look.

And then use the scientific method. Proposition, make an experiment. Let's test it, look at it.

Sure enough, this is old, and here's the story they give. It must be. Let's make a treaty.

And nobody knows the trouble that's come. Nobody knows, down through history, what those Gibeonites did. Imagine, they worshiped those foul gods, and now they were in the midst of the Israelites.

And their children, who were taught that nonsense, grew up and started to date the Israelites. And they started to intermarry. And God said, I want it to be pure, and I want you to have the land.

But they compromised, because not of warfare. They beat everyone they fought. But they were seduced.

They believed lies. They believed something that looked good, but wasn't good. You know, when the devil attacks us, and tries to destroy us, most times he does not say, yo, this is the devil coming.

I'm going to try to destroy your life, and kill your children, and ruin your marriage. Are you ready? I'll be there in about 45 minutes. Are you ready? He does not do that.

No, there are frontal attacks, frontal assaults. But the hardest things in life, to be able to discern and deal with, are the seductive ones. Ones that look good, feel good, seem good.

And justify themselves by saying, hey listen, there's no problem. There's no problem. We're harmless.

But don't get excited, and don't believe some crazy preacher, and don't go looking in your Bible. It's okay. Look, we're harmless.

But they're not. Whenever you go fishing the old-fashioned way with a hook, you don't put on that hook a sign, so the fish can swim by and read. This is a hook.

Please bite it so I can eat you for dinner. Nobody, no. What do you put on a hook? Bait.

And the worm looks good, and the worm is wiggling. Or the lure is even wiggling in the water. And the fish, the fish never dreamed that there was a hook in the bait.

That's how Satan is in life. A lot of the things that he uses to trip us up, young people, adults, senior citizens, is a teaching, or a minister, or a religious group. Looks good, smells good.

You know the old saying, if it walks like a duck, and looks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, what? It ain't a duck, it's a gibbonite. Because the gibbonites look like a duck, smell like a duck. Let's just look in the New Testament and make brief application, then we can pray, in case somebody here is being snagged by a gibbonite.

See, they come not only in Bible teaching, they come as a girlfriend. They come as a boyfriend. Some guy and some girl just figures, look, Pastor, I know, I'm single, I'm tired of being alone.

I know, but is he a Christian? No, he said he would go to church. But Pastor Simbala, he's so fine. The gibbonites look fine.

But not everything that looks fine is fine. What's the old saying? You can't tell a book by its cover. Now Joshua only made two glaring errors in the whole book of Joshua.

His life, he's one of the great leaders. He made two mistakes, both times along this line. He went into a battle without asking God whether he should fight it.

That was Ai, and there was sin in the camp, and they shouldn't have fought because they got their heads handed to them. And that rumor spread that they could be beaten. That caused havoc in the history of Israel.

But now people weren't so afraid of them. In this case, Joshua sampled the provisions, but didn't pray. Isn't that something that's so easy for all of us? We make decisions, change jobs, go to a job.

Well, the pay is better. Yeah, but what's the environment like? God might wanna warn you that you're gonna go under in that environment. You can't handle that environment.

He knows what's waiting in that place. But we just make decisions using what we call common sense. And there's no verse that says I shouldn't do that.

Listen, there are no verses about a whole lot of things that'll get you in trouble. Let's look at what Jesus said when it comes to spiritual Gibeonites, because they're all over the place. I rarely talk about them, but today I wanna address them for just a moment or two.

Look what Jesus said. Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly, they are what? False prophets don't come saying, hello, I am a false prophet.

I wanna rob your money and lead you astray. Would you please tune in? No. They dress up like sheep.

What are sheep known for? Innocence and gentleness. They seem innocent and gentle, but inside, Jesus said, they're ferocious wolves. Not just wolves, ferocious wolves.

Have you ever been around a ferocious wolf? I have, down at the prison in Angola in Louisiana. It's larger than the island of Manhattan with 5,000 and over 200 now inmates, the warden tells me, who's my friend. And mostly all murderers, rapists, and repeat felons.

The average sentence is 91 years for those of you who know nothing about this place. They have a dog kennel there with all kinds of dogs. Drug dogs, attack dogs, smelling dogs if someone tries to run.

It's a huge place with cattle and horses and inmates and lock up and dorms where the trustees who are more trusted can live. And then there's death row where they're locked up 23 hours a day, every day. They also have a pen there with three wolves in it.

And I went there a couple years ago on one of my trips and the warden said, Pastor, Jim, I want you to see my wolves. He's from down south. He loves to just get me involved in all kinds of things that I never have been involved in.

If you live in New York, you know about two-legged wolves, but you don't know about the four-legged ones they got down there. Well, I went to this pen and there's these three humongous wolves running around in it. And one of the wolves came near and I looked at him and he just looked at me and stared and I could see the reflection of his eyes, that light that shines off of their eyes.

And he must have picked up my fear, which was a lot at that moment. And he picked it up and he just started moving towards me and the fence was blocking us. Vicious.

My heart started pounding, but I couldn't let on. I had to act like I was born and raised in Brooklyn. I can handle anything.

I'm not afraid of your wolf. One of the inmates, who's a friend of mine, who's a Christian in there for murder, but has found the Lord since then, serving forever, double life sentence or whatever. He went, because he works there on the dogs and the wolves, he went and got the wolf on some kind of leash.

And while I'm talking with the warden and some of the other people, the next thing I know, that wolf, that wolf, the one that looked at me, is walking towards me, pulling this guy who's like 240, six foot two, and he's pulling that guy like he's a toy. And the guy, you know, like, oh, he seems to like you. And I went, no, he does not like me.

He does not like me and I do not like him. I wanted to tell him that. And then he said to me, do you want to pet the wolf? And the warden said to me, pastor, come on, pet the wolf.

He's harmless and the wolf is just looking at me, like I know you're afraid of me. I'm going to bite your head off right now. And I'm just trying to maintain my cool.

I wanted to run and cry and scream, but I said no. I said no, I passed it up. And they said, you're not afraid of that wolf, are you? What, me? Afraid of that wolf? From Parkside Avenue in Brooklyn, we're not afraid of wolves.

What are you talking about? The thought of being an animal and running from a pack of those. Jesus said that's how some preachers are. Ferocious wolves.

Going to take your money from you before you can even get it out of your pocket. Brothers and sisters, listen to me. Number one, you got to read this book every day because how would you know wolf teaching and Gibeonite teaching from the true if you don't know the true? Come on, can we all say amen to that? Let's put our hands together.

We got to read this book. Know what we believe. When you hear a guy every meeting, some of these televangelists, everything's about money.

Every sermon ends up seed faith. You give the money to me and you'll be blessed. Not to your church, not to a mission program.

To me. Come on. That's Gibeonite teaching.

That's a wolf. It's after your money. But Pastor Simbala, he mentions Christ.

He preached Jesus. He quotes the Bible. Well, of course he does.

Listen to what Paul said about these Gibeonites, these wolves. Look, for such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading. Masquerading as what? Not demons.

They don't put on a demon costume. They put on an apostle of Christ costume. And no wonder for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

Satan doesn't come and say, I'm the devil, I want to destroy you. He comes as an angel of light and says he got a better life for you. How do you think he seduces people? By scaring them or by seduction? By seduction.

By wearing a mask. By presenting someone to you that looks right, seems right, and that person will destroy your life. Bad company corrupts morals.

So Satan imitates an angel, masquerades as an angel of light and these false apostles masquerade as apostles of Christ. They, of course, they mention Jesus, but not the Jesus of the Bible. Of course they mention some verses.

They're not quoting from the Quran. They're quoting from the Bible, but they're not going to give you the whole Bible. They're not going to focus on the major themes of the Bible, the blood of Christ, his death on Calvary, you must be born again, holiness of life, reading the word of God, being filled with the Holy Spirit, loving other people, being racially colorblind, and loving everybody the same.

They're not talking about those important things that have eternal value. They're talking about a buck. Their life is unearthly things.

Their mind is unearthly things. And they masquerade. What does masquerade mean? Halloween, get it? Costume.

And it could seduce any of us. It could trick any of us if we're not full of the word and don't prayerfully go to God and say, God, what's going down here? And I want to proclaim to all of you, you don't listen, you don't accept anything I say to you. You don't listen to anyone who speaks from here unless it's from the word of God.

Come on, let's all put our hands together. It's not from the word of God, get out. Some people walk out during a service because it is the word of God.

And they don't want to hear that. They want to go to a church where they can hear what they want to hear. But if a man is a true man of God, a woman is a true woman of God, they're going to speak God's word.

They're not going to wear a masquerade. They're not in it for the dollar. They're in it for your soul, your growth, your maturity.

Masquerading as apostles of Christ. That was going on in Paul's day. False prophets, Jesus said there would be many and they would increase.

And here's the Gibeonite talk. You want to know Gibeonite spirit? Here's the way it is. Pastor, we really shouldn't judge anyone.

Yes, we should. Yes, we should. The Bible says test everything, hold on to what's good.

Test everything, not judging their eternal salvation. No one has a right to do that. No one has a right to say you're going to hell.

But what we can do is rightly divide this word of God and say that's junk. I'm not buying that, that's not. I don't want that in my life.

You're a Gibeonite. You're wearing a masquerade. This church almost was destroyed when it was young.

Maybe God saw down the years and saw all of you people gathering and saw all the missionaries that would go out and how the choir would be used for the glory of God. Maybe God saw all of that. The devil saw it too.

And I wasn't in the Brooklyn Tabernacle for a year and the church had grown from 18 people to 50 or 60 people. My wife and I working second jobs because we couldn't take a salary. There was no money.

When offerings are 85, \$100, \$85, the total tithes on a Sunday, you're just hoping you can pay the mortgage and the heat. I get a call out of nowhere on a Sunday night, 11 o'clock, strangest thing. I was living in New Jersey then.

My parents bought us our first house. This is the good old days. My mother and dad gave us \$8,000 for a down payment on a \$32,000 house.

Were those not the good old days? 32,000, four bedrooms I'll have you know. So then we were in that house and now we had to move back to Brooklyn because this is where God, we felt, sent us. So I get this call and this minister with a nice meek voice says, Pastor Jim Simbala, yeah.

Never did find out how he ever got my home number. I'm Reverend So-and-so. I pastor, gave me the denomination, pastor a church in South Dakota, but the Lord has spoken to my wife and I that we're to leave where we are and come and help you and serve under you.

We will be armor bearers. We will lift up your arms as they lifted up Moses' arms during the battle. Really, you would come to Brooklyn, leave South Dakota? Do you know we're right downtown? We got a rundown building.

The pews are broken, everything. No, when God leads, he leads in strange ways, his wonders to perform. I went, okay, don't leave, don't do anything.

I gotta think about this, but I didn't pray. I just couldn't believe anybody would wanna come and help me do anything. I had deep insecurity complex.

The church, no money, nothing. Why would anybody wanna come? I didn't wanna go and I was in charge. That's not a good sign.

There was nobody answering the phone because no one called. We had nobody there. There were no employees.

There's no employees. Here's a man who's gonna come. We gotta be an answer from God, right? The minister called me, didn't talk about money or anything.

Next Sunday night, he calls me and I'm about to tell him, well, look, I've been thinking about this, but he says, we're already on our way because you gotta follow the cloud wherever it leads you. He comes, he gets in like on a Friday afternoon. My wife and I, we didn't have much money and I went down to supermarket and I bought Chuck steak.

That's the cheapest. It was on like way down. But it was something and some peas and she made some potatoes and we just served them and they had two little kids.

Sunday, he's there in church and he's staying in an apartment with his wife there that they had in the church. Some other people live there, a woman from Trinidad and her daughter. He's greeting the people.

He doesn't preach, just there, greeting me, just every, and his wife was one of these spiritual people that when you just shook her hand, sometimes she would get like a blessing and you would just like shake her hand. She'd go, ooh, hallelujah. Or like that, a very strange thing.

Anybody ever meet anyone like that? Ever meet anybody? They get a quickening over like anything. So I was like, just sweet as pie, so sweet. So then I get a call eight days later and a woman calls me from the church.

She said, pastor, you know I love you, right? Carol, I said, yep. You got a problem. I said, I don't have a problem.

She said, yeah, you got a problem. You know this man that's here with his wife? He's listening in to phone calls that are made into the church that we make out. He sneaks into an office.

I hear the click and my daughter has seen him and then he puts it down silently. He's listening in to every phone call. Plus, he went to an elderly woman in the church and said that your days are numbered here that God has sent him to take over.

I went, no, he wouldn't say that. He was a skinny little white guy. We wouldn't, I mean, just, he looked harmless.

On Monday night, before I would go into work on Tuesday, I started to pray and the Holy Spirit came over me and as God is my holy witness, I started walking in between my living room and dining room in that house and I couldn't stop praying. You ever have something come on you where you can't stop praying? It's not a thing like I got to pray today. It's you can't stop praying.

A real spirit of prayer from the Holy Spirit and I would just pray. Now, I found myself crying and I found myself just praying in the Holy Spirit, asking God for help and strength. I started to get agitated, something, it wasn't mental.

I wasn't thinking about anything. It was something inside of here. I walked and prayed from nine o'clock, 10, 11, 12, one, two in the morning, 2.30 in the morning.

I hardly slept that night. I ended up the next morning in the apartment above the church on Atlantic Avenue and I sat, everyone had left to go to work except for this couple and their two children and I sat down at the table. I was sleep deprived.

I was nervous. I was so young, so naive, so stupid. Oh, isn't it wonderful how God has mercy on us when we're stupid? Excuse the use of that word.

How many have ever been stupid and God looked out for you? I'm not the only one, right? So I sat them down at the table and they were just like, she was still, whoo, yeah, and he was all sweet. I said, listen, I have a little problem because I heard this report about you picking up the phone. I hate to even say that.

You got to picture me, I'm so young. This is so many years ago. My voice is breaking.

I never done this before. I confronted people on the basketball court. I knew how to shake and bake and shove people in the park.

I never, as a minister, what do you do in this? On top of that, you told a woman that my days are numbered, that I'm never going to preach again, and that God has sent you to take over the church. You never mentioned that to me. Did she say I said that? Honey, did I ever say that? So now, in that kitchen, I can see myself now.

I got a bad feeling every time I tell this story. That's how, when this story is over, ask my wife, she's my witness, if she was here. I laid, there she is.

Right, Carol, you remember this story? I came home and laid on the sofa for a week. I couldn't get up. So I said, well, I just heard these things, and I just want to know, are they true? Because they sound true to me now.

I've gotten witnesses. And he looked at her, I can see it. He looked at her and he said, do you want to tell them, honey? And she said, no, you tell them.

And all I needed to hear was, da-na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na. And he looked at me and he said, you'll never preach in this building again. And then he went, ha-ha, ha-ha-ha-ha-ha, ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Yeah, you all are laughing. I wasn't laughing. I went totally on guard.

And I started to plead the blood of Jesus Christ. It was like two people could attack me. How could two little people, I could have picked them both up and thrown them out the window.

But there was a power, there was a power. There was a power, and they started laughing and saying things that I panicked inside. They were total Gibeonites.

They were total Gibeonites and they were there to destroy the church, little church that it was. And the Lord spoke to me and said, get them out now, get them out now, get them out now. That's all I could hear.

Get them out now, no matter what, get them out. So I said, you're going to leave. No, we're not leaving, you're leaving.

I said, no, you're going to leave. I said, no, you're leaving. No, you can't force us out.

I said, yeah, how about this? I'm going to call the police. You're going to be thrown out of here. You wouldn't do that, we have two little children.

Then I looked out the window, it just started to snow as God is my witness. Now I'm going to throw out two people with their children. God said, throw them out with the snow, with the children, with the mother, with the father, with the lady going, ooh, like that, throw them all out.

They're Gibeonites, they're Gibeonites, Gibeonites. At one point, I was standing against the wall talking to an elderly lady who lived up there and was the only one home in that building. And I said, is it true that he told you that? I want to just confirm that.

And she went, yes, and I believe him. She had, he had turned to her. And he was at the door, and he looked at me like some kind of horror movie.

He looked at me, he went, ah, and he started running at me full speed across the room as God is my witness. And I had to think, like, what do I do? If he hits me, oh God, can I kill him, please, if he hits me? That's the truth, I'm telling you the truth. And he stopped, it looked like he was going to strike me, and he stopped, like, this far from me.

I finally got him out without having to call the police. He drove away. It was like I had fought Mike Tyson, Muhammad Ali, and Hulk Hogan all the same time.

Spiritually, I was drained. I never thought I'd stand in front of all of you. I never thought that.

Satan sends Gibeonites into your life. Listen, I'll fight with you, I'll fight for you. Listen to me, woman, if that guy's not from God, you got to get rid of him.

Listen, listen, I prayed up on that Sunday night where they put me, my heart was broken. I'm praying for people who come to get anointed with oil and prayed for, and they're going to consummate a relationship with a total non-believer. No, but he treats me nice.

That's a Gibeonite, of course he's going to treat you nice. Not going to treat you evil, he's going to treat you nice, but he's going to throw you under the bus in a second. When he's done with you, he will get rid of you.

Listen to me. It could be a friend for one of your children. We got to pray about that.

We need discernment. No, just go by the word, no, you got to pray. Joshua got fooled, you got to get God's discernment.

How many believe God can give warnings about things that look right, but they're not right? They're not right, Gibeonites. That's how Israel got their first defeat in that longstanding sense. Not because of frontal, it was seduction, lies.

Gibeonites. Did you know what that skinny guy did? He left and went to Teen Challenge, and applied for a job, and used me as a reference. And I got a call the next day saying, Reverend so-and-so is here, he wants to work at Teen Challenge, he put you down as a character reference.

I said character reference, are you kidding me? Full of the devil. I could have avoided all that. Had to learn the hard way God had mercy.

I didn't pray, didn't ask God. Listen, if you can't bring your boyfriend or girlfriend to meet me, they're not a God. I had someone tell me the other day, no, I'm going to marry this guy.

What church is he, does he come here to church? No. Does he go to another church? No, pastor, I could already tell by the body language where we were going. No, pastor, but everyone worships God their own way, he says.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. If they're from God, they'll come front and center. And they'll lift up their hands and they'll praise God.

Come on, can they, won't they? Every friend. This is who you befriend on the job. Bad company corrupts morals, say it with me.

Bad company corrupts morals, say it again. Bad company corrupts morals. Going into business with people, striking up close friendships.

There's Gibeonites everywhere. The devil will lie to you and put on a mask and say, don't listen to the minister, don't listen to the word of God, don't get totally sold out to Jesus. Don't get consecrated, don't go like full blast, join the choir or be in the prayer band or whatever.

Don't do that, don't do that, that'll ruin your life. Just, you know, lay back a little bit. It's okay, it's okay.

Now, the minute you make up your mind, no, that's a lie. If Jesus would give his life for me, I'm going to give my life totally for him. The minute you do that, he's a double Gibeonite.

He goes on the other side as an angel of light and he pretends to be the Holy Spirit. Ask my wife, she's a witness. There's a woman, young woman at that time in her father's church.

We were teenagers. The woman went on a fast. The woman wouldn't stop the fast.

People tried to talk to her and said, you're looking terrible. How long you been on the fast? Three weeks, four weeks, okay, 32 days. They told her, you got to stop the fast.

She said, no, the Holy Spirit told me if I eat, I'll sin and God will kill me. And guess what? She went to over 40 days and her mind snapped and she never was the same. Am I right, Carol? Never was the same.

That's why in the multitude of counselors, there's wisdom. You got to talk to people. You got to bring things into the light.

You got to say, come on, let's pray. Come on, let's all put our hands together. No Gibeonites.

Okay, close your eyes. Close your eyes with me. I don't want to shame anyone right now if you're here today and you, listen, you call me, I'll meet you at two in the morning at a diner somewhere, but don't give in to the fear.

Don't give in to the Gibeonites. Don't make that treaty. Don't say, I'll let you live.

I'll hang out with you. If you're here today and say, pastor, that message was for me in a way that you don't need to know, pastor. That's all.

God brought me here today to warn me about Gibeonite seduction, Satan's masks and masquerades and deceitfulness, filthy lies. You just stand where you're sitting. No altar call.

Just stand where you're sitting. I'd like to say a prayer over you. Anybody here say, that was for me? I need a word from God.

I need God to show me about a situation. Someone up there on that balcony, my left, your right, up in that balcony. Ma'am, please, listen to the word of the Lord.

Listen to what God is saying to you. God loves us so much. You think he's gonna keep us from something good? No, he'll keep us from something bad.

Ah, no, but it looks good. It feels good. Listen, it's not good if God's not in it.

All of you that are standing, just lift your hands up. Father God, in the name of Jesus, I pray that you will open the eyes of our heart that we might discern your perfect will for our lives. Protect us from the Gibeonites.

Protect us from the masquerades and the false charlatans and the fake preachers and the fake apostles masquerading as apostles of Christ. Help us to treasure every real man of God, every woman of God. I thank you for all the churches that love you around the country and around the world, but God, protect us from the wolves that wear sheep's clothing.

They're ferocious wolves. They come to seek to steal and kill and destroy, but you've come that we might have life. God, if some relationship has to be broken, even an engagement, break it today in Jesus' name.

Break it today, Lord. If it's not of you, give a warning, give a sign. Give wisdom, give insight.

Make us careful about every business association, every move to a new job, buying a house, moving, anything we do. Help us, Lord, just because it looks good doesn't mean it's good. Give us discernment.

Help us to do what your word says, test everything. Hold on to what's good. Everybody stand.

It's the benediction, and now let your face shine upon your people. Make us glad today with the joy that only you can give. We thank you for what Pastor Tim said.

If the world didn't give it to us, the world cannot take it away. And we rejoice with great joy today that you are the God of our salvation. Bless us.

We pray this in Jesus' name. And everyone said. Come on, turn around, hug somebody.

Bless somebody.

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