

Spirit of Jezebel

Prayer

It is my intention today to briefly introduce you to the concept and the war we face in our churches today against the Spirit of Jezebel. It is bred in our culture and is a major stronghold and stumbling block for the western church. It is not something to be taken lightly.

The Jezebel Spirit is a spirit of control. It is prevalent in our churches today and it is an insidious attempt by the enemy to cripple the Church.

Since God wants us to put him and not ourselves in focus in our lives, the spirit of Jezebel is destructive to the church. It attempts to make us believe that we need to be in control instead of trusting in God. In some cases the enemy convinces people that they are the only person to hear from God or that they alone have special revelation.

Jesus was incarnated and walked with us as a man to give us the example of how to live. When he was here in the flesh the scripture is very clear that he was not here to fulfill his desires, he walked in the will of the Father. Our own agendas are not important, as Christians it is our responsibility to fulfill his will in our lives.

Jezebel gets in because of our fleshly desires. When I say this I am not speaking specifically about sex. I am talking about our wants and desires. What we want instead of what God wants. As we walk through the process of sanctification we give over areas of the flesh to God. We surrender ourselves to his will.

How many people here today know that God wants us to be strong believers? How many know that we are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ? That means that we must practice a discipline. Our discipline is obedience to the will of the Father. We are all called to learn his ways and to practice them.

Ephesians 4:11-15 (CEV)

Christ chose some of us to be apostles, prophets, missionaries, pastors, and teachers, so that his people would learn to serve and his body would grow strong. This will continue until we are united by our faith and by our understanding of the Son of God. Then we will be mature, just as Christ is, and we will be completely like him

Can you see this morning how a spirit of control, is contrary to God's plan?

So where does the term Jezebel come from?

It is the name of the wicked wife and Queen of King Ahab. It was because of the marriage of these two that Jezebel lead the people of Israel into worship of Bvaal.

Her tactics involved the use of illegitimate, manipulative and wicked control over people. It is for this reason that her name is recognized in this context.

Control is an aspect of our flesh that opens the gate for this evil spirit. The bible tells us in 1 Samuel 15:23a that rebellion is as witchcraft. Paul tells us Galatians 5:20 that witchcraft is a work of the flesh.

People feel that they need to control others and situations. When we cut through all of the reasoning and circumstance, it all comes down to one thing... Control is always motivated by fear and insecurity.

The name Jezebel actually means "without a dwelling and uncommitted." She lives with no one but herself. She worships her own self-will. She hates to repent, to be humble. The spirit will do anything to stand in the way of soul ties, strongholds and intercessory prayer. She needs stubbornness and pride in people to be effective.

When we see the Spirit of Jezebel it is almost always about ruling over and control of the people of God. She loves titles and positions. Character is not as important as position. For example when pastors are placed on a pedestal and revered regardless of character. They don't care who the pastor is, but because he or she is the pastor we will befriend them.

Here are some concrete yet generalized examples:

- A member of the Church disagrees with the Spiritual direction of the church so they say: "if you do this we will not tithe."
- A member says: "Do this or I will call a vote of non-confidence"
- A pastor says: "do this my way or you won't have spiritual covering"
- A boss says: "do this overtime or you can forget about that promotion."
- A wife says: "fine your sleeping on the couch"
- A husband says: "obey me or I'm leaving you"
- A spouse says: "I am tired of the way you are doing X, I'm taking the kids away from you"

These all show manipulation, bullying and intimidatory tactics...

The spirit of Jezebel will always escalate to get what she wants...

1 Kings 21:1-10

Naboth owned a vineyard in Jezreel near King Ahab's palace. One day, Ahab said, "Naboth, your vineyard is near my palace. Give it to me so I can turn it into a vegetable garden. I'll give you a better vineyard or pay whatever you want for yours." Naboth answered, "This vineyard has always been in my family. I won't let you have it." So Ahab went home, angry and depressed because of what Naboth had told him. He lay on his bed, just staring at the wall and refusing to eat a thing. Jezebel his wife came in and

asked, "What's wrong? Why won't you eat?" "I asked Naboth to sell me his vineyard or to let me give him a better one," Ahab replied. "And he told me I couldn't have it." "Aren't you the king of Israel?" Jezebel asked. "Get out of bed and eat something! Don't worry, I'll get Naboth's vineyard for you." Jezebel wrote a letter to each of the leaders of the town where Naboth lived. In the letters she said: Call everyone together and tell them to go without eating today. When they come together, give Naboth a seat at the front. Have two liars sit across from him and swear that Naboth has cursed God and the king. Then take Naboth outside and stone him to death! She signed Ahab's name to the letters and sealed them with his seal. Then she sent them to the town leaders. After receiving her letters, they did exactly what she had asked.

Jezebel took the authority to herself what she believed that her husband was not King enough to do...

Can you see the patterns of behavior that Jezebel starts to exhibit? She has no respect for Godly authority unless the perception is that she has it. When you get a Catholic Priest, A Pentecostal and an Anglican in a room do they recognize each other as men of God in a culture of honor across denominations? Better yet, when you get three Pentecostal pastors in a room and one is Four Square, one is CMA, and one is PAOC, do they recognize each other and treat each other as equals in a spirit of unity and brotherhood under Christ or do they disregard each other? The answer is it depends on the individual and whether or not they suffer from issues with the flesh and pride.

What is God's stance on this? Are we all loving him and believing in his Son? Is it the same team, different uniforms? I am not suggesting that we compromise one dot or tittle of the truth, just that we can be unified on who Christ is and how we are saved.

Jezebel is insidious... she will sometimes be behind the scenes instigating others to do her work. For example: "I can't believe that person is doing that can you? It must make you very angry because you are impacted. Somebody should do something about that. It's too bad nobody has the guts to stand up and say something." Or "you should go over there and tell that person that their singing is off key and they are disturbing the service."

She also loves to promote a sense of entitlement and self-focus... "I deserve for you to do this for me..." for example: "I expect you to make the coffee and have it ready for me when I get in to the service in the morning." As opposed to "I appreciate that you come in as a willing servant of the Lord and make coffee for the church"

Can you see the difference in motivation and intention this morning?

It is insidious... consider the person who says: "I come to church every Sunday and I believe that we should have communion on the third Sunday of every month... If that changes, I am not coming..." Jezebel loves to make us believe that we are holding on to a Godly principle, when in fact it is our own pride.

How many churches split up over issues that never ever should cause a church to split? It is simple... Do we believe Jesus is the Son of God and that it is through him we are saved? If the answer is yes, we can fellowship together. If the answer is No, we are not on solid ground for the establishment of unity in the church. How many angels fit on the head of a pin? Or the old post trib, mid trib and pre trib rapture arguments should never cause division. We should study the Word of God to get to know him and to understand him, but God himself tells us in his Word not to argue over doctrine it prophets nothing.

2 Timothy 2:14-15

Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth

Romans 14:1

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions

While it is true that Jezebel took authority that was not hers, it is also true that Ahab never should have relinquished his responsibility. He succumbed to the flesh and a man died.

How many of us admire a person who doesn't stand up for what they believe. How many of us admire a person who will compromise their convictions and beliefs. Do we expect our pastors, deacons, politicians and other leaders to give away their responsibilities and authority to please someone's selfish desires? When we hear of a politician who promises to do something to get into office and then because a large firm that supports his campaign is allowed to do something against the public good, how do we feel?

We must be true to our responsibilities and the authority we are all given. If we allow a spirit of Jezebel to corrupt us then any authority that has been granted to us will not be used appropriately.

We can stand up for ourselves, but we must watch our motivations...

Hear me... The difference between leadership and manipulation is one of motivation... I want that person to do this for their growth and development, because I want all that God has for them or I want them to do it because I want it done for my needs.

This is why I am dead set against volunteering as a standard practice in the church. I do not want people to do things just to fill a slot. If I need to have something done, I would love to put a person into that role because God has placed it on a person's heart to do it. I want to help them find their role and purpose in the church. I do not

want to guilt somebody into doing something because I need it done. Now the truth is that we sometimes need volunteers because no one has come up to do the job. That said... I firmly believe that what God has determined to do in this church he will resource.

Here are some real life examples of Jezebel.

“Woman go and do the dishes or I will give you what you deserve”

Most of us would recognize that as abuse, bullying and just downright wrong. Yet consider when a man gives into his wife when he knows what she is asking is wrong because he doesn't want to experience an interruption in his sex life.

Pastors that are people pleasers and don't preach the Gospel of Jesus because they are afraid of offending someone, are allowing the Spirit of Jezebel to reign in their churches.

Deacons that bully their pastors into certain behaviors are guilty of the same thing. Consider in a church where the pastor is forced by his board to preach on tithing once a month... Where is the focus? People will give, if they support the vision of what is being done. People will give if they are made a part of the vision. Haranguing people and laying guilt trips on people is manipulative and destructive. Gods plan is for a cheerful giver not one who gives from obligation. Jesus is not just concerned with our actions; he wants control of our intentions as well.

In the case of Jezebel, to me it is telling that she surrounded herself with eunuchs. These men had no authority and were stripped of their manhood.

What am I saying?

We cannot be weak and not stand up for what is right, but we also cannot let our flesh and our own desires convolute and polute what needs to be done. If we are being manipulative, bulling and controlling, that is simply not the way God operates and we can be assured that we are not walking in the will of the Father. The spirit of Jezebel is NOT standing up for what is right. It is being stubborn, it is bullying, it is manipulative, it is self-serving, it is prideful and it has its root in fear.

Why is this important?

The major mistake that we as Christians make is in confusion of grace. We are often too loving and compassionate. The spirit knows this and uses it to get away with whatever she can. These are good traits, but there are times when we must stand up for what is right!

When Jehu came in as king we see what is done with Jezebel... Turn with me to

2 Kings 9:7-10a

The young prophet left for Ramoth. When he arrived, the army officers were meeting together. "Sir, I have a message for you," he said. "For which one of us?" Jehu asked. "You, sir," the prophet answered. So Jehu got up and went inside. The prophet poured olive oil on Jehu's head and told him: The LORD God of Israel has this message for you: "I am the LORD, and I have chosen you to be king of my people Israel. I want you to wipe out the family of Ahab, so Jezebel will be punished for killing the prophets and my other servants. Every man and boy in Ahab's family must die, whether slave or free. His whole family must be destroyed, just like the families of Jeroboam son of Nebat and Baasha son of Ahijah. As for Jezebel, her body will be eaten by dogs in the town of Jezreel. There won't be enough left of her to bury...

This doesn't mean that we will run out and kill people this is 2014, but in principle it shows us how severely God feels about this... We cannot allow the spirit of Jezebel in our church.

Why am I saying this today?

I am teaching on this today so that we can be careful, watchful and diligent to protect the work that God is doing here in Salmo. Too many churches fall victim to her control. This spirit of control is most often used to drive the Holy Spirit out from the church. It destroys people's intimacy with God. It creates legalism and allows for a religious spirit to develop.

So what usually happens in these situations when Jezebel is exposed?

Let's look at the same example from the book of 2 Kings.

2 Kings 9:32

He looked up toward the window and asked, "Is anyone up there on my side?" A few palace workers stuck their heads out of a window, and Jehu shouted, "Throw her out the window!" They threw her down, and her blood splattered on the walls and on the horses that trampled her body

Do you see what happened? Those who were bullied, emasculated, and humiliated became the instruments of her destruction. But what damage occurred due to Ahab's lack of diligence? His household came to ruin, because he allowed the flesh and the spirit of control to run roughshod over it. We must be diligent and vigilant.

Now remember I what I said about intention. We must conduct ourselves, in the will, the nature and the principles set down by the Father. We must walk in his will.

Being a strong leader is Not the spirit of Jezebel, being a controlling, manipulative bully is...

So...

If we have a spirit seeking to destroy the church, families, businesses, relationships in fact our very lives, we need to be aware of what it looks like and we must ensure that we employ the spirit of God, in obedience to his will.

Elijah is a great example in contrast to Jezebel:

- Elijah demands repentance – Jezebel hates repentance
- Elijah speaks about freedom – Jezebel strives to control
- Elijah affirms righteousness – Jezebel opposes righteousness
- Elijah promotes humility – Jezebel appeals to our pride
- Elijah calls us to obedience to God – Jezebel is rebellious

The bible tells us that rebellion is as witchcraft...

So I said that this opens the door to a spirit of legalism. If a church does not read the Word of God and are grounded in it and they focus entirely on experiential things of the Spirit, they can be lead off track into mysticism. But if a church has only reads the Word and does not embrace the Spirit of the Word then they can become bound in legalism. Remember what I said about Jezebel? She does not want the Holy Spirit in the church.

- She wants to control and the Holy Spirit brings freedom.
- She wants to condemn and the Holy Spirit reminds us of Grace and forgiveness.
- She wants to restrict us but the Holy Spirit reminds us that Christ came to give us life and life more abundantly.

Jezebel fears reading God's Word, Speaking God's Word and prayer. Knowledge of God and his ways brings clarity and smashes down her best tool – fear. Prayer connects us with God and we get his perspective not hers. Speaking the Word of God is creative and she seeks to destroy.

We need to surrender ourselves to God and his will. It is essential. What did Jesus say? "...Thy kingdom come, thy will be done..." was he talking about our will or the will of God the Father? He asks that we are not lead into temptation, which is saying God please direct our path and he says: "...for thine is the kingdom, the power and the Glory..." It is God's kingdom not ours. It is not for us to take up illegitimate power and glory, we are the servants of God."

In our culture, it seems that there is very little in our control and so we strive to hold on to every aspect of control we have. In many cases our only control is in our own lives. This is an illusion. Adam and Eve in the garden wanted to be in control of their lives, they wanted to be like God. They wanted the knowledge of God, in contravention of his will. This is an area of our flesh that is worked on by the Holy

Spirit as we submit ourselves in obedience to God. So many of us will surrender portions of our lives to God. But we hold off areas and restrict access from God.

We don't trust God to know better than we do and so we maintain control based on our own experiences. Adam covered himself up. God said where are you Adam? God knew where he was - he was asking Adam where he was at... Dad was about to disburse some discipline...

They did not trust that God knew what was best for them and so they did not surrender their will to God. As a result they were disobedient, fell to the desires of the flesh and as a result they destroyed their peace and their paradise. They struggled, they strove and they suffered to be in control. They were rewarded with being in over their depth. We cannot replace God.

Christ came and shed his blood and made us right with the Father. We being born again have the opportunity to walk in obedience to the will of the Father. Make no mistake about it we are in a battle... Have you put on Christ? Are you wearing the armor of God? Have you subjected your will to his? Is he truly Lord of your life or are you vulnerable to Jezebel? Will you after hearing this word today be vigilant? Will you guard your heart?

The Jezebel Spirit is a spirit of control. It is prevalent in our churches today and it is an insidious attempt by the enemy to cripple the Church.

This is my prayer today, that each of us will embrace and trust the Lord. That we will be obedient to his will and resist the spirit of Jezebel.

Prayer