
RECOGNIZING AND ADDRESSING A SPIRITUAL ADVERSARY

The “Pasha” Spirit

by Daniel A. Brown, PhD

The following is an edited transcription of a staff meeting where Daniel was alerted to a spiritual danger lurking in the staff.

INTRODUCTION

We are at a tremendous turning point as a people and as a church; doors are being opened to us collectively, and as individuals, that cannot be stopped by human hands—believing we are following the Lord’s leading. However, with great opportunity there is also great personal cost. We need to start thinking of ourselves as waiters with our assigned section of tables: Are we willing to labor over our patrons, even to the point (as Paul writes in his letters to the churches) of exhaustion and agony, so people may be served with everything God has charged us to offer them?

Each of us has the option of saying “No, I’m not ready for what might be asked of me on the other side of this present door—not right now anyway.” God, in His mercy, will still offer you another door later, but be mindful—it won’t be exactly the same door, and what joy and fruitfulness you would have known on the other side of this one will be lost to you. The choices we each make at this juncture are very significant in shaping our future.

We are looking at a new church. Although it’s called “*The Coastlands*,” we are at the starting block. God is asking, “*Who will go for Me? Whom shall I send?*” Those who say, “*Here am I, Lord—send me*” will be charged to run the race ahead as one who is determined to seize the prize...for the Lord and not for men.

A PUBLIC APOLOGY TO ALL THE INTERNS

You came to be disciplined, trained, and poured into, but instead you were used the same way the Japanese used the women of the nations it conquered in WWII. We have trained people to hate ministry, and my deepest apology goes out to all of you. Certainly no one wanted to do this to you, but we humans tend to cycle back to our low point; and I, for my part, have failed to protect you. I am profoundly disappointed in my staff for how they've treated the interns, and profoundly disappointed in the interns' response to it. If I cannot fix what's wrong with our Intern Program, we won't have one.

For now, I want to make this a standard: no one can use an intern for anything that disrupts their regular schedule without first clearing it with the Intern Director. Make sure that your touch upon them leaves them better, stronger, larger. They are not here for our convenience.

Any one of us who thinks ill of another person on staff has fallen under the sway of the demonic giant that we'll be discussing. Check your own heart. Be assured that there's no condemnation in this—but repentance is critical, so you can be ready to move ahead. *“Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner”* is the posture that takes us somewhere new.

A QUICK REVIEW OF JEZEBEL

Years ago we were almost undermined as a church by (what we eventually learned was) the spirit of Jezebel. What we learned during that difficult season has become a recording that still tops CTW's best-seller list—because churches around the globe continue to find themselves nearly derailed by it. The particulars of Jezebel—its accusation, blame, silencing of the true prophetic voice, its belittling posture, challenging godly leaders, mocking correction and making others feel unspiritual/unqualified—are similar to what we're facing now, although the demonic principality we're currently up against has a different flavor. As with Jezebel, however, we need to resist it with a firm resolve or it will derail us even as Jezebel has sought to do.

TWO KINDS OF BONDAGE

There are a couple of ways that spiritual oppression can affect you. In one, the devil taunts and mocks you as you reach desperately for the freedom that's just beyond your grasp—sort of like that scene in the *“Pirates of the Caribbean”* ride at Disneyland, where the poor saps behind bars are trying to cajole the dog to come a little closer so they can grab the keys it has in its mouth.

In the other, you're behind bars but you don't even see the jail cell; the devil creates a filter in your heart, distorting everything you see about yourself and your circumstance. What you think is true of you is not the same you and everyone else can see. The spirit we're addressing here tends to take us to the latter kind of place.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE “PASHA” SPIRITUAL GIANT

Judgment

The *Pasha* spirit (a name derived from a Swiss slang expression for a lazy man who always wants everything to be done for him) will tell you that the problems all lie with other people: “*My lot would be better if they would only get their act together*” and/or “*I could do this so much better if I would only be permitted to do it my way.*”

It spawns critical thoughts toward others, especially leaders whose “*mistakes*” cause you inconvenience, and it causes you to lean back like a recalcitrant mule, instead of leaning forward to help pull the whole ministry forward. When asked to “*move*” or “*get up*,” this feet-dragging spirit offers lots of proof of others’ failures as a justification for not rising up. Pasha breeds a dissatisfaction that turns the looking glass off of paying attention to the condition of our own heart. Then we slip into judgment and laziness.

Pasha interprets a hard life (i.e., being “*overwhelmed*” with work, getting sick, or disagreeing with some instruction or correction) to mean that God is *not with us, doesn’t care or isn’t real*. In other words, we evaluate whether God is real (or whether He loves us) upon His willingness to fulfill our desires for comfort and success.

The spirit can very quickly and convincingly call into question everything we’ve come to believe and live for (everything from the validity of the Bible to whether we really want to have spiritual responsibility). Although the questions feel honest and sincere, they are categorically demonic—tearing at the very fabric of our soul and personality. We end up becoming someone we’re not: depressed, moody, irritable, unhelpful, etc.

Confusion

It’s the dust stirred up in the trail of this spirit. “*For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder (confusion) and every evil thing*” (James 3:16). Ambition here is the same spirit of pride that made Lucifer desire to usurp the place God had given him; it is unhappy in the position where it finds itself and insists it should be promoted. Thinking too highly of itself, this demon-spirit fosters a deep dissatisfaction concerning where “*the lines have fallen*” (refer to Psalm 16:6), and tells you that “*they*” have treated you unfairly.

In hundreds of subtle and not-so-subtle ways, Pasha whispers, “*You deserve better, easier, more convenient, more satisfying, more significant...*”

Spiritual Laziness

“*This is too hard, too much for me.*” It wants to make you feel victimized and overwhelmed so you don’t want to go into spiritual battle. Proverbs is full of instruction on this kind of laziness; basically, it will convince you that you don’t really have to put out 100% because someone else can take up the slack. But remember:

If I don’t do what God has called me to do, someone else will have to do what God has NOT called them to do. And that is the #1 cause of burnout in the church at large.

Pamela: God doesn’t seem to address our questions and arguments about our unfair lot in life. Instead of asking Him, “*Why?*” it might be more fruitful to ask ourselves: “*Do I really believe God works all things together for good?*” And, “*Do I want Him to use this ‘too hard’ thing together for good in my life?*”

Daniel: If you’re willing to wrestle these things through, you’ll end up with a confidence in the sovereignty of God that cannot be shaken. Remember—everything that CAN be shaken WILL be. That’s why things are being shaken up even now. It will be worth it to you to work these things through.

Self-Pity

Pasha interprets everything in the light of “*poor me,*” that something is either being taken from you or done to you. It will blind you to the good that is really there for you. One way that we put our trust in man is that we blame others by saying, “*It’s your fault that I’m here.*” As soon as we trust in man, we depart from the Lord and won’t be able to see when good comes.

Pamela: The Book of Jeremiah is very instructive about this. The Lord truly knows what’s going on, even though I don’t. How empty our life becomes when we trust in something other than Him! And what a promise of security He offers in the midst of hard things (draught, heat—the stuff I’m not very excited about) when we choose to believe He is for us even when it’s easy to believe He’s not.

“...Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart departs from the Lord. For he shall be like a bush in the desert and shall not see when prosperity comes, but will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, a land of salt without inhabitant.

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord. For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit.” ~Jeremiah 17:5-8

Defensiveness

Pasha will get you postured to bristle when you're corrected. It makes for an un-teachable stance, and postures us to rebuff instruction and input from others. Consider these counter-measures if you want to have your eyes opened to just how fooled you have been by Pasha's refusal to heed correction: read Proverbs about receiving correction and instruction, AND seek out 4-5 people to ask, "*What do you really see in me? Please love me and have courage to hold a true mirror up to my life. Do you see anything specific to this bondage?*"

Decide ahead of time that you won't "*make them pay*" for being honest with you. This exercise in trust and teachability will be fruitful for all of us, because by and large we've lost our determination to take risks with people this way—on both the speaking and receiving end.

Pamela: Psalm 141:5 offers so much life:

Let the righteous strike me in kindness and reprove me; it is oil upon the head; do not let my head refuse it, for still my prayer is against their wicked deeds. Psalm 141:5

Daniel: And also Hebrews 12:5-7.

"...And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons, 'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be faint when you are reprov'd by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.' It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?"

Remember that the Lord's love for you is defined by His correction. It's how you receive it and it ends up being fruitful.

THE ANTIDOTE TO THIS SPIRIT

Having said all of this; let me give you some instruction as to how each one of you can kick this thing in the teeth. In Joshua 17, one of Israel's tribes had a complaint about its allotment. They weren't happy about their leader's solution because they considered it "unfair" and "too hard." They felt like they deserved more/better; the land they were offered was heavily forested, and the enemy within it was too powerful.

"Then the sons of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, 'Why have you given me only one lot and one portion for an inheritance, since I am a numerous people whom the Lord has thus far blessed?'"

Joshua said to them, 'If you are a numerous people, go up to the forest and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the Rephaim, since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for you.'

The sons of Joseph said, 'The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the valley land have chariots of iron, both those who are in Beth-shean and its towns and those who are in the valley of Jezreel.' Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, 'You are a numerous people and have great power; you shall not have one lot only, but the hill country shall be yours. For though it is a forest, you shall clear it, and to its farthest borders it shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, even though they have chariots of iron and though they are strong.'" ~Joshua 17:14-18

The promise from the Lord is that they will be victorious—there will be hard work and serious battle along the way to clearing the land and ridding it of enemies, but the outcome is not in question. The only question centers on their decision as to whether or not they will rise up and go for it!

God told us a few months ago that there are still enemies and giants in the land. Welcome to our warfare. This really isn't Daniel's war, per se. If we will end up with a legacy and a group of people, it will be because we have paid the price and cleared our own land. Start cutting trees and we will clear the forest. We will defeat the chariots.

This is a crucial moment for each one of us to grasp that the personal cost will be very high. That's why I'm shaking things up. What we're headed for isn't for everybody. BUT—if you decide that you believe these words, and that they're for you, I can assure you: you WILL clear your forest; you WILL defeat those chariots; and you WILL need to work.

A FIRM WORD OF CORRECTION

What's happening in our staff right now is destroying the culture I have paid a lot of hell to establish. It's vital that you understand the reason I have such a big staff: it isn't because I "need" one, it's because I choose to make a place for you so that you can make a place for someone else. The people and the structures we have here exist for only one reason: to love more people, to mend them, to train them, and to promote them into greater touch upon others.

That is the one and only "job" of this church. If need be, I can start the whole thing over with no staff at all. I don't necessarily want that, but our assignment from God is paramount.

There's an expression circulating among us that I want to correct: "This is working on your character." It may not be untrue, but it's too religious, too half-baked. It doesn't offer life or sustain

the weary. It's an example of the kind of stuff most of us don't even recognize is creeping into our culture. What we want to communicate to people will sound more like: *The Kingdom breakthroughs and the fruitfulness that's ahead of you will continue to evade you until these issues are addressed in your heart.*

So, if you think that simply getting your job assignments done is truly “*doing your job*,” you are terribly mistaken. If you don't translate your place on staff into making a place for someone else—if you don't make it your highest priority to prefer others, to sustain the weary with a word, to cultivate the tongue of a disciple—then you are not doing your job at all.

Jesus didn't die for your “*job*,” He died for the people you can touch through whatever place you find yourself in. It depresses me when you think you've done your job, when all you've done is “*do your job*.” Find others to invest yourself in. That's the only place you'll discover the thrill and the adventure of this ride.

Think of this church as a steamship. I've been stoking the fire for a long time—while some of you are still complaining that the shuffleboard sticks aren't in place. We won't get to our destination with that kind of crew. So I'm yanking the wheel as sharp as I can get it to the right, at *full steam ahead* speed, with the intent that everyone who isn't hanging on for dear life will fall out. Should you end up in the water, we'll toss you a life preserver, and we'll welcome you back on board if you want that. But be assured—the crew that continues on to the next port won't look or feel the same as the one we have now.

STAFF PARTICULARS

I want to hear from each one of you within 24 hours where you're at with all this. Be honest. Do you feel you want to stay on board under the parameters I've just re-established? If you feel like something is being demanded of you or taken from you, know that there is total freedom for you to be loved and released.

I am choosing to remove myself completely from every aspect of administrating and running the church, and placing these things 100% under the purview of the people I've been loving/mending/training for the past many years. It's time to “*send*” them into places of greater influence for the Kingdom. No one in the congregation will likely notice this shift—I'm not physically going anywhere (did I say that we live at the end of a cul-de-sac?) and I will still preach on weekends.

What it means for the staff is that the budget/salaries for each department will no longer be under (Leader) and my determination. I'm now giving our various pastors complete responsibility for overseeing everything and everyone under their care. This means I'm not your boss any more.

One of the people listed below has just become your employer. In a sense, I'm "firing" all of you. So that each pastor overseeing your department has complete freedom to place you as he/she sees best, I want you to approach him or her (personally or via email) also within the next 24 hours. Tell them you're available (or not) for "re-hire." In the next few weeks you'll be working directly with them to refine or redefine your staff responsibilities. Changes will be made in partnership with your department Pastor.

- (Pastor Couple): Overseeing ICU's, Clusters along with (Leader Couple) and (Leaders Couple); Admin/Finance/Operations/Office.
- (Pastor Couple): Grades 4-5, Jr. High, High School, College, and Youth outreach, and for now, campus/grounds.
- (Pastor Couple): CM, Koast Kids, Interns/Residents, Graphics, IT, Website, VBS, Red Zone, CTW.
- (Pastor Couple): Visibility and Outreach.
- (Pastor Couple): God Rocks.
- Daniel & Pamela: Missions, Practicums, Outside Events, along with (Leaders).

WRAPPING IT ALL UP

(Pastor): Having been on staff about as long as anybody (along with Leader), I've been through some significant seasons of transition, correction and change. Somehow, it always feels like the first time—"Whoa, this does not feel good!" That unsettling, challenging, scary, uncomfortable feeling is pretty normal.

But I have also tasted what these seasons have produced! There's a freedom and a joy that comes from our willingness to open ourselves to the fresh things of God. Being OK with the awkwardness of the transition gets us to the delights ahead. Having questions and wrestling it through is not a bad thing—but land in the knowledge that God will brace and bandage you in the process. We endure things now, but we bear the fruit for eternity!

BE ENCOURAGED

This is all about the great thing God is prepared to do in and through us.