

BREAKING PYTHON'S GRIP

INTRODUCTION

We have been dealing with spiritual warfare. We are in a great unseen spiritual battle. The devil and his hordes against God, His angels and His people. But we have the victory, we have the authority, we are overcomers and more than conquerors and the enemy is under our feet. Our future is heaven, the enemy's future is the lake of fire.

Unfortunately, satan is still the god of this world and his demons still wander around attacking Christians. Some of these demonic forces have characteristics and can be identified as a specific spirit. We spoke about the Jezebel spirit on Wednesday night and how to identify and stop tolerating it.

This morning I will speak on the spirit of python, how to identify its tactics and how to overcome them.

MESSAGE

What is the Spirit of Python?

Acts 16:16-18 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." 18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour.

The Greek words for "spirit of divination" is "pneuma puthona", which means a spirit of Python. This is a reference to the Greek God Apollos. In Greek mythology, Apollos killed the god Pythian. Because of this he was called Apollos Pythian. Apollos was also known as the god of truth. He was the most-high god to the Greeks. He was the god of light and there was no darkness in him. Do you see how the enemy has counterfeited the characteristics of the One true God?

The story goes that there was a woman who lived in the cave named Delphi, that Python supposedly lived in before he was killed by Apollos. The Greeks believed that she spoke words that Apollos gave her. She was known as the Oracle of Delphi. She was a very well-known person. Her words were considered the final say on any matter. Anything she said was supposed to be true and no one was supposed to speak against her. She was believed to be guiding the people in the divine will of the god Apollos.

The girl in Acts 16 was being used in this way by the men who owned her. The people in the area thought that she was speaking for Apollos. So when the girl with the evil spirit made the statement about Paul her **words were true, but they were also false!** Paul was indeed the spokesman for

Almighty God. But what she meant for the people to believe was that Paul was a spokesman for the Greek god Apollos. **This spirit was being used to deceive the people!** Just see how subtle it was. This is why, church, we need the Holy Spirit's gift of the discerning of spirits. Paul knew exactly what the spirit was up to and eventually cast it out!

Immediately we can see some of the characteristics of this spirit:

- It was a deceiving and lying spirit.
- It was a distracting spirit – That woman was distracting the people's attention from the Gospel message.
- It tried to divert the people's worship from the True God, to Apollos, a false god!
- This was not all it did!

THE NATURE OF A PYTHON

A python kills its pray by wrapping itself around it and constricting. Every time the victim breathes out, the python tightens a little more. It was thought until 2015 that the python suffocates the prey, but scientific studies shows that it actually stops the blood supply to the brain, resulting in a heart attack.

What is carried in the blood? Oxygen, so whether it stops you breathing or it stops your blood flowing, it still has the same effect – the victim dies from lack of oxygen!

Genesis 2:7 (NKJV) And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Leviticus 17:11 (NKJV) For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.'

Do you see this? Our spirit was given life when God breathed breath into our nostrils. But man's spirit died when Adam and Eve were deceived in the garden by what? A serpent!

God brought life back into man's spirit by the shed blood of Jesus Christ which made atonement for our sins.

The ultimate goal of the python spirit is to kill you – the devil comes to kill, steal and destroy – John 10:10. He tries to prevent the Holy Spirit's work in your life and nullify the blood of Jesus.

THE SERPENT

Satan is described as a snake in the Bible, The python spirit reflects all his characteristics.

The Greek god Python was a serpent, sometimes represented as a dragon, living at the centre of the earth, believed by the ancient Greeks to be at Delphi. Does that not sound like the devil?

In Genesis we read that the devil appeared to Adam and Eve in the form of a serpent.

Revelation speaks about the devil as a serpent: **Revelation 20:2** He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

We know from John 10:10 that the devil's goal is to kill us.

The word "breath" in the Bible represents the Holy Spirit and life. The Spirit of Python wants to choke off the anointing, and he wants to cut off the effect of the atoning blood of Christ in your life.

HOW DOES THE SPIRIT OF PYTHON WORK AGAINST THE BELIEVER ?

We already established three ways: Through deception, through distraction and by trying to divert the people's worship from the True God, to Apollos, a false god!

- On a larger scale, it will try to pressure, and push people out of a lifegiving Christian ministry in a region or a city God in a region or city. **Acts 16:18-19** (NKJV) But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. 19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.
 - This was an attempt to prevent the Gospel of Christ from being proclaimed by getting Paul and Silas thrown in jail.

SOME OF THE SYMPTOMS OF THE SPIRIT OF PYTHON AT WORK

Remember, the enemy works subtly, one constriction at the time, he tries to slowly squeeze the life out of you. Here are some symptoms:

- Distraction from serving the Lord – The woman with the spirit of python walked behind them for days screaming out – it must have taken people's focus off of the Gospel Paul and Silas were sharing.
- Missing a quiet time because of busyness or other distractions.
- When you once came to church at every opportunity, coming to church becomes a drag and slowly you reduce your involvement.
- Losing the desire to sense and be in the Lord's presence.
- Losing our joy.
- Choosing carnal pursuits rather than spiritual pursuits.
- When praise and worship was once important to you, you now prefer listening to secular music and singing its words... We were made to praise.

- When you find you are struggling spiritually and you can't seem to get the breakthrough - Jesus described this in the parable of the sower where seed is sown into our lives and we just begin to grow and then find the spiritual life being squeezed out of us. **Matthew 13: 7** And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.
- Replacing worship of God with love for other things!

Are you experiencing any of these symptoms today? It could be the spirit of python coming against you. Paul spoke one sentence and that spirit had to leave. We can take authority and free you in Jesus name this morning.

HOW DO WE DEAL WITH THE ATTACKS OF THE SPIRIT OF PYTHON?

1. Prayer & Praise

Acts 16:25-26 (NKJV) But at midnight Paul and Silas were **praying and singing hymns to God**, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

Prayer and praise is a sure way – look, as it said, “the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed”. Doors opened and chains loosed is absolutely symbolic of the hold of a demonic spirit being broken.

- Not only that but it said ALL the doors were opened and EVERYONE's chains fell off.
- And... the jailer and his family were saved...
- And... the magistrates were forced to humbly come and let Paul and Silas out.

When we come against the spirit of python with prayer and praise there is great victory. Why? Because Christ always leads His people in triumph!

When we are sitting at midnight, beaten and bruised by the attack of the devil, we can say to the Lord, “I'm hurting, but I praise you. I don't know why I'm going through this trial, but I praise you.”

The Psalmist writes that “the Lord indwells the praises of His people”. When we praise God, His spirit arrives on the scene, The *Ruach* or breath that the python spirit was trying to cut off is renewed and restored in us and it gives us joy and power.

2. The blood of Jesus Christ

Revelation 12:11 says they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony.

When we rely on the blood of Jesus, we are re-initiating that life-giving blood flow that Satan has tried to cut off. When we testify that Jesus Christ is Lord and put Him first in our lives, the distractions of the devil which were squeezing the spiritual life out of us are set aside and we are free all over again!

3. The name of Jesus

Acts 16:18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour.

We can rebuke Python's oppression or possession in the mighty powerful name of Jesus.

CONCLUSION

The Python spirit seeks to kill the life of the Spirit in us through deception, distraction and lies. Its purpose is to squeeze the anointing and presence of the Holy Spirit out of us and rob us of the atoning effect of Christ's blood in our lives.

God has given us the weapons to defeat the Spirit of Python. One is prayer and praise. Another is the blood of Jesus Christ. Still another is the Name of Jesus Christ.

We also have the spiritual gift of the discerning of spirits. We can identify this evil spirit!

- We must recognize the early warning signs that we are under attack.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show us ways we may have unknowingly given him access into your home or our life.
- Bring God's deliverance and restoration into every area of your life through prayer and praise and by drawing near to Jesus so that His atoning blood can flood life back into our spirit.

We are in the middle of an unseen spiritual war. Today God wants to break the coils of the Python spirit off our life. Let us cry out to Him and ask Him to help us breathe again.