



# DETOURS

OVERCOMING SPIRITUAL  
ROADBLOCKS IN  
MINISTRY

## Devotion #10 - The Enemy's Camouflage


Read: Acts 27 (the Story of Paul's  
Shipwreck)

November 2021

The apostle Paul often found himself contending with the enemy throughout his ministry. The devil established strongholds, which are human systems compromised by the enemy. These strongholds attempted to hinder Paul from preaching about Jesus. They blocked Paul's efforts and even tried to take his life. God empowered Paul to see beyond the physical reality of the human systems to the spiritual forces at work, as it were, behind the scenes. This is why he told the Ephesians:

*"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:12)*

While Paul was able to discern what was happening, most of the people around him were unaware. The enemy blinded them, so they could not see the truth of what was happening or what the enemy was planning. It was as if the enemy had an invisibility cloak or a camouflage net that covered the stronghold. It prevented people from seeing the reality of the enemy's plans.

We can see this blindness in the Roman centurion who escorted Paul to Rome. Paul knew he was going to Rome; Jesus had told him (Acts 23:11). But Paul would have to endure two years of imprisonment before the way was opened for him to travel. The enemy was able to use a stronghold around Governor Felix to keep Paul in jail. The enemy used Felix to block Paul from traveling. However, it backfired as Paul was able to use this time to write some of his letters. Once Felix was replaced by the new governor Festus, Paul seized his chance. He appealed to Caesar and was shipped off to Rome. He was placed in the care of a Roman centurion. 



### Rest Stop

For Paul, there was a time delay of two years from when God told him he would be going to Rome to when he finally began his journey. Have you ever experienced a delay between knowing what God wants and being able to do it? What was the cause of the delay, and how did you feel during this time?

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The devil did not want the gospel reaching Rome, and again he tried to prevent Paul from getting there. Delays happened, and time was lost, which is often a strategy of the enemy. The centurion could not see the enemy's strategy. But Paul was aware of the journey becoming increasingly dangerous and challenging. He tried to warn the crew and the centurion that things were not good (Acts 27:10), but no one listened to Paul.

The centurion was blinded to the danger as was the ship's captain, who you would have expected to be more knowledgeable about the hazards of winter travel and the potential for storms. The enemy prevented them from seeing the danger. Perhaps the enemy stirred up pride in the captain to think he was more skilled than he was, or maybe it was greed for the payment he would receive from his cargo. As a result, they found themselves in the middle of a massive storm, which kept the ship tossed about for two weeks.




### Rest Stop

How has praying about a challenge that you have faced made a difference in that situation?  
How did praying change you?

While Luke does not tell us what Paul was doing during those 14 days at sea, prayer and intercession were probably an essential part of his days. Perhaps Paul was praying, as Elisha did for his servant (2 Kings 6:17). Was he praying for the eyes of the centurion to be opened? Or perhaps he used the time to witness to the centurion about Jesus. We don't know. But when the decisive moment came, the centurion chose to listen to Paul and not his fellow soldiers. The prisoners were not killed, but instead, as Paul had predicted, every person made it safely to shore. 

Our enemy, the devil, still works through these demonically influenced human systems, and he still seeks to camouflage them so that they can't be seen. He blinds people to his plans and schemes. Hindsight can show us how well this blinding works.

For example, in the late 1930s, people inside and outside of Germany could not see the dangers of Adolf Hitler and the ideology of National Socialism. Even as the truth began to be exposed, many were unable to accept it. The enemy had blinded them. 

This demonic cloaking or camouflage of the enemy prevents those inside the stronghold from realizing what they are involved with. ...



### Rest Stop

What are some of the challenges you are facing as a church diaconate? Are these challenges just physical, relational, or could there be a spiritual component?

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At the same time, it prevents those outside from seeing the real danger and the purpose of the stronghold.

Fortunately, we are not defenseless, nor are we unaware of how Satan operates. The Lord has given believers the mighty weapons of prayer and intercession. Through prayer, demonic cloaking can be pierced and exposed. The truth can be revealed so that the stronghold can be dismantled and God's plans and purposes are not hindered.

Prayer can reveal a stronghold that has been hidden, and the Holy Spirit can give strategies for prayer and action that can contend with and demolish Satan's schemes so that God's purposes and glory can be revealed.

**The Scenic Route**

(Preferably done as a group)

Think about a challenge that you face as deacons within your church or community.

- Take some time together to pray for this challenge.
- Ask the Lord to show you what's happening spiritually that you are not able to see.
- Pray for the Lord to pierce any demonic cloaking that hinders you from seeing what the enemy might be doing
- Spend some time quietly listening to what the Lord is saying to you. Invite him to give you directions about how to pray for the circumstances.
- Then pray as the Holy Spirit leads you.

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