

Week 2

Authority of the Warrior

**Day 08: Jesus Paid It All***Monday, October 7th*

“You are going to make it. You and your family will be just fine. Just stand and let God fight this battle.”
Toby Mac, 2019, American Christian Songwriter



Today's Challenge: Pray for the People in your Sunday School Class or Small Group.

“First Sergeant, I thought it was supposed to be hot in the desert.” the Human Resources Sergeant asked as he and the First Sergeant neared the Command Trailer of Camp Virginia. The temperature was a cool 52 degrees in Al Jahra, Kuwait. “Yeah that’s what I thought too.” the First Sergeant grumbled as he shook off the desert cold. The First Sergeant had made a mistake by telling the unit to pack both of their sleeping bags in the connex (huge, metal, shipping containers, that were brought to Kuwait via transport ships). The unit had also brought little in the way of warm clothing and the past 9 days had been a bit uncomfortable.

The First Sergeant hoped that today might be a higher point for unit morale. It was the 25th of December and everyone in the camp was missing their families. The internet cafes and phone banks were full, with long lines and wait lists of Soldiers trying to contact loved ones back home. The Post Command Staff had received Christmas Gifts from the United Service Organization (USO) for each Soldier in the camp. The First Sergeant’s had been ordered to assemble with their mail clerks to pick up the packages to be delivered to their troops. The First Sergeant had thrown together a make-shift Christmas Tree in the middle of the unit’s large, open tent yesterday in hope of creating a more festive mood.

Upon returning to the unit, the First Sergeant rallied all of the Soldiers together inside the relative warmth of the tent to hand out the packages. The gifts were all wrapped inside a weaved, brilliant colored, bag and seemed to be well received by his Soldiers. Even though each gift was small and somewhat insignificant the Soldiers, who had been cut off from their families right after

Thanksgiving, were appreciative for what they were receiving. The First Sergeant was glad to see attitudes improve within the tent. He knew that this boost in morale would be a plus for what they would face tomorrow. The next day they would be moving North to Camp Buehring, to execute the final step before entering Iraq. Located just 40 miles from the Iraq border, Camp Buehring was where they would test fire their weapons and conduct their last convoy live fire drill, before proceeding North.

The mode of their transport remained unclear. They would either convoy North across the border and then North to Baghdad or they would travel to Ali Al Salem Air Base where they would fly from Kuwait directly to their final destination. The units final stop would be one of the largest United States Positions in Iraq - Balad Air Base, specifically the Army post that surrounded the air base, Logistics Support Area (LSA) Anaconda. Over the next 12 months, the unit would travel all over Iraq to evaluate the force protection and anti-terrorism programs at every U.S. installation in Iraq...

“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the LORD Jesus has given me-the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.”

Acts 20:24



Daily Reading

Just as the unit prepared for its pending departure to go to Iraq, to assume authority over its mission, we must understand our authority in Christ in order to fight this battle.

Currently, Satan is in charge on Earth. We are told in Genesis that Adam failed the test (temptation) and allowed Satan to take control. In this failure, physical and spiritual death passed to man and the world began to deteriorate. However, in John 12:31, we have the promise that God has said that man will reign on Earth by “the Prince of the World (the Devil) being driven out”. So this might lead us to ask the question, how do we get passed the curse that Adam brought upon us?

We get passed this curse with Jesus! Hebrews 2:9 tells us, “But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” In this, the crucifixion, He became the ultimate sacrifice for our sin. So with this answer, we are led to ask some additional questions about our authority:

- Where do we find the authority to fight the battle?
- How can we stop being defeated?



In the course of our discussion, over this week, we will answer these looming questions in regards to authority. We must note that it is our inability OR unwillingness to see or acknowledge Jesus that limits our authority in the spiritual realm.

In our acknowledgment we need to understand these three things about Jesus:

Jesus was a PERSON! He came from a woman's seed (Eve's Offspring). We are told this in many verses in the Word, however I like the way that Galatians 4:4-5 paints this picture for us, "But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship." This means until Jesus came there was no eternal atonement for sin. Sacrifices and offerings as they are detailed in Genesis, Deuteronomy, and Leviticus were required to atone for sin. We must become familiar with the theological concept of the Hypostatic Union to fully understand how Jesus the person existed. This union is how God the Son (Jesus Christ) took on a human nature (human seed), yet remained fully God (Deity) at the same time. Jesus always had been God as is detailed, John 8:58 & 10:30, but at the incarnation (when the Word became flesh (John 1:1 and Phillipians 2:5-8), Jesus becomes a human being (John 1:14). The addition of the human nature to the divine nature is Jesus (the God-Man). A Godly kind of man that would ALWAYS do the right thing! This is expressed again in MANY verses throughout the bible, but the one that resonates with me the most is in Matthew 4, where Satan tries to curse Jesus in the Wilderness. We can see where Jesus clearly uses the "Authority" of God's Word against him! All that Jesus did, He did in accordance with God's Will, to destroy the "Devil's work" (1 John 3:8). He depended upon God at every turn to ensure victory in all situations. But just because the Devil could not trick Jesus into failing (the way he did Adam), that does not mean that he just gave up. His plan was to kill Jesus, so he sent Judas Escariot.

Jesus was the PAYMENT for our sin! In order to conquer Satan He had to conquer death, which is Satan's weapon. Death, as separation in the bible is defined in two ways: the physical death is the separation of the soul from the body, and spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God. Death is a consequence of sin, so sin must be conquered to conquer death. The ultimate way to conquer death, was through Jesus' Resurrection. We must understand exactly how serious death is. Ephesians 2:1-2 tells us, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins," and "you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient" or Satan. Romans 3:23 reveals that none of us are exempt from sin. It is because of our sin that Jesus had to make the payment. God deals with sin and forgives us all through Jesus' death, as detailed in Colossians 2:13 "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,".

Jesus holds the ultimate POSITION of authority! To sit at one's right hand means a place of authority. It was a place of honor. It meant dignity and headship. This is language describing a certain characteristic of God and His divine actions from our point of view. This term at the "right hand of God"



points to the exalted position that Jesus now occupies. This term in prophecy refers to the Messiah, to whom is given the power and authority to subdue His enemies. In the final chapter of the Gospel of Luke we see Jesus ascend in victory into Heaven, but that's not where the story ends. This is where Jesus is given all authority in Ephesians 1:21-22, "far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church,". Paul tells us in Hebrews 2:14-15 that as a result Satan is powerless. In Revelation 12:11, it personifies that through Jesus' power and authority we find our authority to fight the battle. Just as we saw with the Archangel Michael, when he fought Satan he did not try to fight the battle alone. He called upon the name of the Lord to ensure victory, not through his own strength and power, but through the power given to him by Jesus. This is the way that we must approach the battle when we fight.

In this fight we cannot win without His authority. As long as Humanity is separated from Christ we cannot win...



Kid Friendly Ideas

Notes:



Day 09: The Agency of Authority

Tuesday, October 8th

“A new understanding of the concept of bravery was taking shape in my head. I had always wondered if I would be brave enough to perform admirably in a combat situation, something that every Soldier questions at some point. What I came to realize is that courage isn’t something that you are, it’s something that you do.”

Chuck Holton, 2003, American Christian Author, “A More Elite Soldier”



Today’s Challenge: Pray for the Nation

On the units last day at Camp Virginia, the First Sergeant had been challenged to a soccer game by British and South Korean Units. After their success at Camp Buehring the day before, the unit was running on all cylinders again. This was perhaps the perfect way to spend part of their last day in Kuwait. The First Sergeant was sure that his Soldiers, American Soldiers, could defeat their opponents. The British troops were all skinny and looked weak. The troops from the Republic of Korea (ROK) looked even weaker. The First Sergeant crossed his arms and nodded to the British First Sergeant with a cocky grin. He left the dining facility and went directly back to the tent where he found most of his Soldiers resting before the big push.

Within a half an hour he had rallied enough Soldiers together to be more than a match for their poor coalition partners. ‘This should be too easy’, he thought as they all neared the soccer fields that the ROK troops, who were stationed as post support at Camp Virginia, had constructed. He looked over the Soldiers, none of which stood much taller than about 5 foot, five inches tall, as his arrogance built. They all took the field against the short men from Korea and prepared to dominate.

Later back in the tent, the all mighty, American Forces nursed themselves and licked their wounds. The “battle” had gone very differently than the First Sergeant had anticipated. His Soldiers were superior in the ways of the warrior, but left a bit to be desired in the ways of the athlete. The British and ROK troops had been in Kuwait for nearly 2 months and were well acclimatized to the high humidity and severe temperature fluxuations. In addition to this fact, the First Sergeant had learned

that many of the ROK troops were amateur athletes at playing soccer back in Korea. The First Sergeant, who had never been drawn into an ambush, could not say that anymore. It had been a classic “baited ambush” and the Brits and ROK troops drew them right in.

After eating his “humble” pie the First Sergeant returned to the area where his British allies were rallied, celebrating their victory over the “Yanks”. The British First Sergeant offered the First Sergeant, a beer, but he respectfully declined. US Forces were subject to disciplinary action if they drank alcohol anywhere within the Central Command Theater of Operation. He did take a coca-cola. Raising the coke can into the air the First Sergeant shouted, “A toast to the fidelity and (he cursed) kicking ability of our coalition partners, the British and ROK Armies!” To his surprise many of the Soldiers cheered and came over to shake his hand. The British First Sergeant smiled and said, “You’re alright Yank.”...

“The LORD's right hand is lifted high; the LORD's right hand has done mighty things!” Psalm 118:16



Daily Reading

Pride. it is the root of most sin. It was Lucifer’s downfall. In this case it was the First Sergeant’s downfall, as well. Just as the First Sergeant allowed pride in his superiority to cloud his ability to see the situation as it is, we must be vigilant to practice humility daily as we take the hills God places in our lives. The Agency of Authority in this battle is the Church! The church is “that which would dethrone the evil one, based on the work of Christ” (Evans, 2007).

The church has been delegated spiritual authority by Christ! When I picture this delegation from my small, frail, Human point of view, I remember the words that are written in Matthew 16:18-19, “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” I cannot imagine what the Apostle Peter must have thought when the Master of Universe spoke these words to him. The honor that he must have felt. For the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to bless him in such a manner must have been staggering. In order for the deeper meaning of this scripture to be understood it is imperative that we understand what the meaning of the word “Peter” or “Petra” (in the Greek) means. This noun is simply defined as the word “stone”. So in most cases people gloss over this scripture thinking that Jesus was simply saying that He would build the church upon the man that was named Peter. This scriptures broader context informs us that the church will not be built upon a man, but upon

rock. Built upon a rock solid foundation which will anchor the church throughout the entirety of Linear Time.

In 1 Peter, one of the books written by the Apostle named after stone; in chapter 2, he describes how we are to live Godly Lives in a “Pagan World”. In verse 11 we are called to fight (or abstain) from the “sinful desires, which wage war against your soul”. He follows in verses 13 and 14 saying that we must, “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by Him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.” In verse 16 Peter tells us, “Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves.” And in this slavery to God we are as verse 21 describes, “called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.” In short as a church we are to follow Christ's example (Ephesians 5:1).

Ephesians chapter 2 tells of what the church must do in order to stand in authority over the evil one. We as a body of believers must cross the lines, which society tries to use to separate us (gender, race, color, creed, ethnicity, culture, social and economic classes, etc.) to come together, and proclaim that Jesus is Lord! In a study that we did at Crosslife called, “Letters to the Church”, we read a book by the well known author and Pastor Francis Chan. In this book Chan challenges us of the church saying “We’ve strayed far from what God calls the Church. We all know it. We know that what we’re experiencing is radically different from the Church in Scripture.” (Chan, 2018). First and foremost as we have been reiterating through the study this week, Christ is THE Authority! We must never lose sight of this fundamental truth or we risk losing the authority that can allow us to overcome spiritual forces that stand against us. So how do we know if our church is the church that God spoke of in the scriptures?

Firstly, Hell cannot stop it! At Crosslife we conduct a Homeless Ministry Outreach monthly. It can be the hottest day in July or the coldest day in January and we will still go into the fight. We are always ready to hand out a meal and a bottle of water to less fortunate members of society. But we do much more than just simply hand out meals. We bring Hope. Now why am I highlighting a ministry of our church? Am I trying to make readers outside of our church think that I am touting the laurels of our members? Certainly not. I have watched faithful brothers and sisters take a homeless person's hand and lift them up in prayer (stepping out in BOLD faith) on multiple occasions during these outreaches. I’ve witnessed my 8 and 9 year old sons walk right up to these people and pray out loud for them. Hell cannot stop our prayers!

Secondly, Hell cannot overpower the church! Some days it may seem like it does; but, my friends, I can assure you that it just seems that way. When a church is one that is truly, wholeheartedly, serving the Lord, Satan cannot defeat it! This leads to our third and perhaps most important point.

We must be members of a church! Now when I say we must be members, please do not read into what I am saying. The legalistic term “membership” means that you must formally declare that you



are a “member” or a “part of” a local church body. I went to an Evangelical Christian Church for almost 9 years. In that 9 year time frame I saw many people and families come and go. Some of which had claimed membership in that church. In the 9 years that I worshipped with that body of believers many just took it for granted (because I had been there for so long) that I was a card carrying member. I never “joined” that church. What I am saying about being part of a body of believers is that: you attend, you share struggles with each other, you worship together, you disciple each other, and you serve God’s Kingdom together. It is more important that you show up and love the people that you worship with. Legalist membership is not required to do what the Lord Wills for your life. As we talked about last week there are Christians Warriors that become Prisoners of War (POWs). Most often these POWs are Christians that have become isolated from a body of believers. Within the church, we as a body are made stronger. Strong enough to storm the gates of Hell and win!...



Kid Friendly Ideas

Notes:



Day 10: Going on the Offense!

Wednesday, October 9th

“God apparently believes that souls are worth saving, even at the cost of great personal discomfort, or even death. And one day when we stand in His Presence, we will know how much we *could* have accomplished for eternity - if only we’d taken the risk.”

Chuck Holten, 2005, “Bullet Proof”



Today’s Challenge: 5 Minute Meditation

Today, don’t empty your mind, but fill it with the promises of God! Set a timer for 5 minutes and think about all of the things that God has promised you and take heart!

A lone C130 Cargo Aircraft sat on the runway of Ali Al Salem Air Base. The cool Kuwaiti night air tore against the fuselage of the beast of a plane. The First Sergeant and all his Soldiers sat in the uncomfortable, webbed seats, tightly strapped in, ready to endure the next hour and a half of air travel; that would take them across the 610 mile stretch to Balad Air Base in Iraq.

The flight seemed to drag on much longer than 90 minutes and the First Sergeant had become a bit air sick. He was not looking forward to the landing. The C130s entering Balad Field, were required to make immediate combat landings, where the aircraft, for all intents and purposes was crashed onto the runway. This would keep the slower moving cargo plane from being hit by a Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG).

As the aircraft neared the airspace above Logistics Support Area (LSA) Anaconda it abruptly dropped in altitude. This drop coupled with the plane going into a tight port-side turn, thrust the Soldiers from side to side and caused the lights in the cargo area to flicker. The First Sergeant looked to his right to see one of his Soldiers who appeared to be quite terrified. He gave her a confident nod, tapping her across the front bulletproof plate of her body armor. The First Sergeant looked to the rear of the plane hoping that they had done their job securing the units equipment into place. ‘If not, I guess we’ll just all get crushed’ he chuckled as he thought to himself.

The aircraft swerved several more times. Each time the lights would flicker, and the cargo and troop areas were totally dark. He could hear an overall increase in the respiration rates of his Soldiers. He could almost sense the fear within the plane. Then he noticed that his breathing had increased as well. He had not noticed until now due to silently praying since the aircraft made its first altitude drop, during descent.

After a “roller coaster” ride of turns and altitude drops the aircraft hit the deck, banging several of their heads together and sending a single duffle bag hurling through the cargo area. They had made it to Balad. In one piece. Now their mission would soon begin...

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast.” _ Ephesians 2:8-9



Daily Reading

Just as the First Sergeant and his unit went to begin their mission in Iraq, we must from this day forward begin our mission to win the spiritual battle. Sometimes it might seem like we are on a roller coaster, like when they were in the plane doing its combat rolls. As we will continue to study today, God is in control and the Church is his Authority in the battle.

It was once said that “The best defense is a good offense.” That quote, attributed to Vince Lombardi, the legendary 20th century Green Bay Packers coach, can actually be traced back to William Harrison "Jack" Dempsey, a professional boxer, years earlier. In our case it really does not matter who said these words, what is important is that they were said. We will speak at some length about Offensive and Defensive Operations in spiritual warfare in a later devotion; however, you must understand, you cannot win the battle fighting a defensive campaign!

Jesus is on the offense! Instead of getting bogged down focusing on what Satan is doing, we must concentrate on what Jesus has DONE. When we understand this we can transit from being on the defensive and begin to fight an offensive campaign. Once we are on the offensive we must go to arguably one of the most critical verses in the whole of scripture regarding spiritual warfare - Ephesians 6! In this chapter Paul introduces us to how we must fight as a church.

In Ephesians 6, we are told about “the day of evil”. This is Satan’s strategy to defeat us. All of the schemes, tactics, and wrong doing that he has executed or will execute during Linear Time, summed up into the example of “One Day”. So you ask how do we stand on the day of evil? One way is to know that we have been given the “keys to the Kingdom.” We talked yesterday in Matthew chapter 16 about how

Jesus had built the church on “rock” or “stone”. Continuing in that same passage of scripture is where we find in Matthew 16:19 that we have been given these, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Jesus's words meant that Peter would have the right to enter the kingdom himself, that he would have general authority symbolized by the possession of the keys, and that preaching the gospel would be the means of opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers. The words “bind” and “loose” were common Jewish legal phrases meaning to declare something “forbidden” (bind) or to declare it “allowed” (loose). Today when we seek our authority in Christ we share in this possession (or access) of the keys to spread the good news to all the world.

Now some might be led to ask, “Why is Satan allowed to unleash HORRIBLE things into the world?” or “Why do BAD things happen?”. I am often reminded of a quote by the late Billy Graham, that he delivered shortly after the events of September 11, 2001, regarding one possible answer to these questions. Standing stoic, on September 14, 2001, at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C.; surrounded by many world leaders, Reverend Graham said, “I have been asked hundreds of times why God allows tragedy and suffering. I have to confess that I do not know the answer. I have to accept, by faith, that God is sovereign, and that He is a God of love and mercy and compassion in the midst of suffering” (Graham, 2001). Continuing on in this great sermon of Faith he said, “We've seen so much that brings tears to our eyes and makes us all feel a sense of anger. But God can be trusted, even when life seems at its darkest” (Graham, 2001). Reverend Graham went on to say, “We’ve always needed God from the very beginning of this nation. But today we need Him especially. We’re involved in a new kind of warfare. And we need the help of the Spirit of God.” That help which comes from the Lord, as King David wrote in Psalm 121:2, is all the help we need! And be assured that for everything that Satan unleashes, there is a Divine response!

With all this being said we must understand in acknowledge in order for us to apply this authority we must take collective (as a church body) and personal responsibility. In Matthew 5:24-25 and again in Luke 9:23, we are told that we must DENY ourselves and pick up OUR CROSSES. That in order for us to “save” our lives that we must “lose” them. So what does that mean or what does that look like to us as a church or as individual Christians? First denying ourselves means that, in God’s grand scheme, what we *want* is irrelevant. Now does this mean that we should feel guilty about wanting certain things, possessing certain things, or doing certain things? Absolutely not. Some of these things are things that God laid upon our hearts to want to greater accomplish His purpose. This denial of or to self comes when we submit ourselves (or as a church body) to God’s Will in our lives. When we pick up our crosses is when we take responsibility! Sometimes those crosses can be very heavy. Sometimes we are tired. Collectively picking up a cross (within a church body) can be exceptionally difficult, especially if members cannot agree on which shoulder to carry it on. After we pick up our crosses we must act! Saying Amen is not enough without a willingness on our part to act. After saying Amen, we must step forward in Faith to prove to God that we believe in Him enough to act.

In Phillipians 2:9-11 we see as a church, where Jesus is in charge! “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.” Did you catch that one phrase? “And under the Earth”. Yeah that’s right, Jesus has been given dominion over the evil one and of Hell! This authority was established at the Ascension of Christ. So if you ask, “If Jesus is the head of the church and the church derives its authority from Jesus, then why does my church appear to be powerless against the TERRIBLE things that Satan is bringing against us?” If you find yourself asking this question, take a look at the church. Is the church serving the right master? Ephesians 1:19-23 can give us a perspective into the answer to this important question:

“and His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength He exerted when He (God the Father) raised Christ from the dead and seated Him (Jesus) at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion (Satan), and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age (Linear Time) but also in the one to come (Eternity Future). And God (the Father) placed all things under His (Jesus) feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.”

Hooah (Army slang that has multiple meanings, depending upon what context it’s used for, but in this case means Amen!!!!!!) Who’s ready to go sleigh giants with me now!!!!? Christ is in control. Make no mistake, Jesus hold all of the keys to Heaven. The Devils keys were removed when Christ took possession. Satans was rendered powerless! Because of this lack of power Satan exists in a lie. If you or your church are living without power, you are living in that lie. If you are living in sin, then you have bought into those lies. But the great promise for those of us who believe is that we are not trapped in the lie. We are free in Christ!

Join us tomorrow as we conclude the study on the authority of the church...



Kid Friendly Ideas

Notes:



Day 11: In Christ Alone!

Thursday, October 10th

“Uncommon valor was a common virtue.”

Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, 1945,
speaking of valorous action taken by the US Marine Corps during the battle of Iwo Jima



Today's Challenge: Talk to someone about Jesus.

In today's challenge simply bring up the name of Jesus in a conversation with someone. You can witness if the Lord leads, but what we are hoping here is for you to have enough boldness to simply tell someone about your gratitude to Christ and mention Him by name.

After being in Iraq for roughly two weeks the unit was finally ready to assume responsibility for their mission in a ceremony called the RIP/TOA (Relief in Place/Transfer of Authority) Ceremony. This was a time honored ceremony in the American Army between two units that symbolizes the completion of one mission and the beginning of the next. The two units stood side by side with the First Sergeants and Commanders in front of each formation. The Commanders posted themselves adjacent to each other and rendered hand salutes ending the ceremony.

It was all up to them now! The First Sergeant looked to his Human Resources (HR) Sergeant who stood beside him with the units flag called the guidon. The ceremony sparked in his mind a touching event that had happened to them at the Fort Harrison Post Exchange in Indianapolis, just days before they deployed. He and the HR Sergeant were shopping, after a meeting they had attended, and had the pleasure of meeting an elderly couple. The elderly man had served in the Army for nearly 30 years and retired as a Master Sergeant (a Sergeant of executive-level rank in the US Army). He was a veteran of the first Gulf War (Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield) in 1991. He briefly spoke fondly of his

experiences in Iraq and thanked them both for their service with a firm handshake. Then after the veteran had stepped away his wife lagged behind. “Yeah, my husband did his time. It was all up to him then... but now it’s all up to you.” the elderly lady spoke with a smile, walking away from the two Sergeants. The First Sergeant and HR Sergeant looked at each other having some clue at the responsibilities that had just been brought to their attention.

The First Sergeant now knew exactly what the elderly woman meant by her somewhat cryptic comment. He now, more than then, felt the weight of the immense responsibility that had been laid upon his shoulders. The responsibility that through the elderly woman; mothers, fathers, wives, husbands and children of his Soldiers, had charged him with. Even though he had trained his entire life to be right here, in this place, at this moment, a slight sense of doubt befell him. ‘You’re an expert at your craft; the art of war, of taking care of Soldiers, of leading them! God will not let you fail!’ the First Sergeant thought looking back over his shoulder at his Soldiers who stood proudly 10 steps behind him...

“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD Himself, is the Rock eternal.” Isaiah 26:3-4



Daily Reading

Assuming responsibility for anything can cause even the most confident warrior to have some doubt or anxiety. But we learned in yesterday’s study that it is an essential part of being a warrior. When we think about the study of the Authority of the Church we must realize where our authority comes from, how to use that authority, and the exact right time and place to use it to defeat our enemies. In today’s study we will wrap up the authority that has been given to the church.

We have already spoken at some length on how Satan will use deception and lies against us. The Apostle John wrote of the ways that Satan will come at us in 1 John 2:16-17, “For everything in the world-the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.” The Apostle James warns us, where the sin that John spoke of, will lead if we give into the Devil’s schemes in James 1:14-15, “Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

In order for us to fight Satan and take the hills God has laid before us, we must remember that our authority is in Christ alone. In the Christian Contemporary Song, “In Christ Alone” by Michael English, the song writer reminds of of this in a powerful way:



“And as He stands in victory
 Sin’s curse has lost its grip on me,
 For I am His and He is mine –
 Bought with the precious blood of Christ.
 No guilt in life, no fear in death,
 This is the power of Christ in me;
 From life’s first cry to final breath.
 Jesus commands my destiny.
 No power of hell, no scheme of man,
 Can ever pluck me from His hand;
 Till He returns or calls me home,
 Here in the power of Christ I’ll stand.”

As we can see from the last three stanzas of the song, Jesus stands in victory (at the right hand of God) and the Devil has no dominion over us. Jesus’s death on the cross (or as we referred to it yesterday, the payment of sin) freed us from guilt, shame, and spiritual death. The song refers to the “Power” of Christ on multiple occasions. It is this power from which we fight.

But God has a secret weapon! Grace. It is important to understand the concept of this powerful word, when realizing your ability to tap into it for the authority to fight. There are many different definitions for the word Grace and it is listed between 118 and 131 times in the New Testimate (depending upon translation). So why is this word such a key component to us tapping into our authority to fight?

Grace is unique to humanity. Some theologians even believe that at some point in time Satan and the Fallen Angels might have been offered Grace by God. There is no scripture that supports such a claim. There are; however, multiple examples found in scripture where God freely gave Grace to those who believe through the death and resurrection of Jesus. One of my favorite verses regarding Grace and one which may be the most appropriate for spiritual warfare in 2 Corinthians 12:8-9:

“Three times I pleaded with the LORD to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.”

This verse coupled with Ephesians 2:8-9 highlights the inescapable conclusion that we as Humans are unable to save ourselves. In OUR “weakness” GOD is “strong”. Paul tells us in the Ephesians passage, “through faith-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast” that God is our only hope.” We cannot fight this war without His authority to do so...



Kid Friendly Ideas

Notes:



Day 12: Accessing our Authority

Friday, October 11th

“Their story is known to all of you. It is the story of the American man at arms. My estimate of him was formed on the battlefields many, many years ago, and has never changed. I regarded him then, as I regard him now, as one of the world’s noblest figures.”

Douglas McArthur, General of the Army, U.S. Army



Today’s Challenge: Identify & Write Three Encouraging Verses to Help Conquer Fear

As the sun disappeared over the horizon, 22 Military Police Officers stood awaiting their transport. The transport that would take them to their destination; Victory Base Complex (VBC) in Baghdad. The flight would only take them roughly 36 minutes to cover the 86 Kilometers of ground between LSA Anaconda and Victory Base, but it was not without its hazards. Any chopper flight above the rugged terrain of Iraq carried hazards. Especially at night. Especially in a Cargo Helicopter (CH)-47 “Chinook”. The massive, twin-rotor, CH-47 was the only cargo helicopter that was cleared to fly night missions over Iraq. What made this flight even more dangerous was that the Chinook would not have an Attack Helicopter (AH)-64 “Apache” gunship flying in support. The First Sergeant had been informed by a point of contact that he had at the airfield, that all the Apaches were “out hunting”.

With the realization that the world’s mightiest Attack Helicopter was aloft and “hunting” the bad guys around the battlespace, the First Sergeant’s mind was placed at ease, but only a bit. Once the bird cleared the LSAs battlespace, it would be on its own with only another Chinook to accompany it all the way to Baghdad.

The two monstrous helicopters touched down on the airfield blowing dust and debris all throughout the area. Because of the imminent threat of the airfield taking rocket fire, the birds would only be down long enough to load their troops and cargo and then immediately lift off again to head South. This gave the First Sergeant precious little time to get his Soldiers aboard and chuck them on the shoulder. Loading onto the massive dual-rotored aircraft was quick but not easy. They had to fight to



pull their heavy, plastic, “tough boxes” through the rotor wash and get them secured. As the loading crew strapped down the boxes, the First Sergeant and Commander made their way through the tightly packed helicopter ensuring their Soldiers were strapped in and ready to go.

The two men departed the aircraft and watched as the herculean helicopters lifted almost straight up off the deck and disappeared into the night sky. The First Sergeant had wanted to accompany his Soldiers on this flight, but the Commander had informed him earlier in the day, that he would not be flying. The First Sergeant understood the Commander’s concerns, but he also wanted to be there. He wanted to face the great unknown that they were flying into. He had every confidence in the leadership element that was being sent to VBC, but there was still a longing to face the danger with them.

Later, around midnight, the First Sergeant sat at his small, makeshift desk in his trailer, while the movie Armageddon played. He sat in front of his disassembled, M9, 9-Millimeter Pistol, cleaning the days dirt and dust from the weapons parts. Even though he knew that his Soldiers had arrived nearly an hour before that, he still took a moment and took in a deep breath. He bowed his head and lifted them all up in prayer as he had done a few times, earlier that day. ‘It’ll be okay. God will be with them’, he thought as he opened his eyes and reassembled his weapon...

“Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the LORD has promised to those who love him.” _ James 1:12



Daily Reading

The First Sergeant had to trust in God! Sometimes when we are not able to control a situation, we are faced with this same dilemma of Faith that the First Sergeant faced. In order to stand against these dilemmas, we must know how to access the authority that we have in Christ.

As we have learned this week we must fight through the authority granted us through Christ alone. There is only one way to fight and win in the Heavenly Realm - through Prayer! Notice I did not say in the physical realm. In that realm where angelic beings (God’s Angels, Satan and his angels) make war. Ephesians 6:18 tells us, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the LORD's people.” In other words, pray all the time. Or pray “without ceasing” as it directs us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17. When we pray demons will run away! Put simply, prayer must guide our lives.

What we must understand about the battlefield on which we stand is that, there is superiority and supremacy of that battle space. On this battlefield, Christians (those who are actively engaged in

the battle and are not POWs) are superior. We are better equipped than our enemies to conduct warfare, as is stated in Hebrews 13:21, “equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.” The word supremacy means “the state or condition of being superior to all others in authority, power, or status” (Meirriam-Webster, 2019). In order for us to gain supremacy of our battlespace, we must be superior in Christ! This will allow us to dominate all other forces in our battle space.

In order to do this we must acknowledge the significance of prayer. This is perhaps the single most direct connection we have in this warfare. Ephesians 6:10-12 will be a fundamental set of verses for not just today's lesson but several there after. So at this time it is necessary to view this key scripture:

“¹⁰Finally, be strong in the LORD and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For 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.”

First we need to speak about one key word in verse 11 - “Stand”. We must stand our ground. The way that we accomplish this might surprise you. We exercise joy, peace, and happiness. Now I know, some of you at this point might be asking, “Seitz, have you lost your mind? We’re in the middle of a war and you want us to be happy?” Okay, maybe happiness, as most humans view the definition of the word, is the not right verbage to use. Let’s try contentment. When we are one with the Lord we can be content wherever we may be. Look at Paul when he was locked in dungeons, but lifted his voice to the Lord praising His name. Secondly, we must look at where it directs us to “put on the full armor of God”. In week 4 we will examine each piece of the armor in great detail. What you need to know about the armor right now is that you must be dressed in it to maximize the effectiveness of your prayers. thirdly, We must claim our authority in prayer! When we stand on Jesus, while wearing the armor, and claim our authority through prayer we are invincible.

Prayer is the primary means that we communicate with God. There are other means in which we communicate with the Lord as well, such as reading the Word and communicating with people that the Lord brings into our life, but prayer is our direct line. We should strive to talk to the Lord more than we do people. This communication will start to conform us to who God wants us to be. As our knowledge of God, His Word, and His Character grow, our prayers may change. As we grow our knowledge and intimate familiarity with God will cause our prayer life to mature. As we open our hearts and minds to allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit in prayer, we will know what to say and when to say it. It is important to remember that God will not allow certain things to come to pass without prayer. The reason for this is that we must prove our willingness to surrender and to become dependant upon Him as our strength. Remember, God is a well that never runs dry!



An amazing example of prayer can be found in Daniel 9:1-19. In fact this section in many New International Version (NIV) translation bibles is entitled “Daniel’s Prayer”. In verses 4 through 14 Daniel laments before God to the unrighteousness that Israel has exercised. And if you read through those verses you might feel like you just got punched in the stomach. But in verse 17, things start to change. Daniel begins to lift prayer requests. And because this scripture is so good you must read it:

“¹⁷ “Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. ¹⁸ Give ear, our God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. ¹⁹ Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”

Okay, I asked this before, but I’ll ask it again; who’s ready to go fight giants with me?!!! Did you catch in these verses how Daniel humbly, yet boldly, appeals to God for Grace? Grace to counter the wrath that He has allowed to fall upon Israel. And for those who know the rest of the story what happens? Israel was delivered from the hands of their enemies, just as they were delivered from the hands of Pharaoh. Daniel was faithful in his prayers! So we must be faithful in ours. All prayers are answered - eventually; In God’s perfect way and in His perfect time. Another way to look at prayer from a secular, legal stand point is that prayer is like a restraining order against the powers of darkness.

When praying we must consider the scope of our prayers. We sited 1 Thessalonians 5:5 earlier which tells us to “pray without ceasing”. Ephesians 6:18 tells us to “pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” We must bombard Heaven with our prayer requests. Be assured that Satan will try to distract us. He will try to fatigue us. He will try to do whatever is necessary to get us to stop praying. He will try to get us to rely on wisdom from below instead of power from above. What we must remember if we have a lacking prayer life, is that we are lacking in our relationship with the Lord. If or when this becomes an obstacle to our relationship, we need to expand our sphere of prayer! We must pray in the spirit (Ephesians 6:18) and in all environments. No matter where we are. We must step out in Faith...



Kid Friendly Ideas

Notes:



Day 13: Tools of Authority - Part 1

Saturday, October 12th

“I am an American Soldier... I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat, I will never quit, I will never leave a fallen comrade...” U.S. Army Soldier’s Creed



Today’s Challenge: Eat with Someone of a Different Background Challenge

In today’s challenge you will be tasked to “break bread” with someone from a different race, color, creed, religion, culture etc, than yours. Talk to this person/people, and more importantly listen to what they say about their specific differences. Reflect on these differences and try to relate to them, with the realization that we are all one in Christ. Post to social media, share by text/email, or talk to someone in person and let them know how this experience affected your life. Eat hardy Warriors!

The First Sergeant and the Commander boarded a UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter early for an unexpected trip to Baghdad. The First Sergeant squinted from behind his dark, Oakley sunglasses as an intense blast of course sand beat against his face, from the rotor wash of the powerful war machine being forced into the air. He looked toward the South Gate to see an immense convoy waiting to exit LSA Anaconda, on a supply run to an unknown position, somewhere in Iraq. His attention was abruptly brought back toward the front of the bird as his head was thrown around by a sudden shift in the choppers direction. He looked at the crew chief, who pointed down to the ground at a group of shepherds armed with AK 47 Rifles. He shook his head and chuckled to himself, amused that the pilots were so skittish of a couple of goat farmers with rifles.

Less than seven minutes into the flight, a shrill tone came over the radio through the headsets, notifying of bad weather close to the choppers flight corridor. The Commander chucked the First Sergeant in the left shoulder and pointed out the forward canopy to what looked like a wall of blackness. Chatter came through the radio as the pilot attempted to get clearance to conduct an emergency landing at Al Taji Army Airfield on Camp Taji.

The bird sat down on one of the exterior ramps of the airfields and the crew immediately conducted an emergency shutdown of the aircraft. The rotors rapidly stopped, the crew chiefs pulled the M240B Machine Guns inside closing the side crew doors. Then they both jumped out of the helicopter on different sides. The two men furiously fastens down the rotors with guy wires to the tarmac and struggled to get back inside. Literally no sooner than the cargo doors on the sides of the helicopter slammed shut, the aircraft was pummeled by a brute force wind from the South. The men inside leaned into their restrains as sand and other debris ferociously pelted the hull of the Blackhawk. "I'm mighty glad we made it to Taji." The pilot chimed through the headsets, " 'cause if not, we'd have crashed in the desert."

The First Sergeant looked out the huge window that rattled inside the frame of the cargo door he sat closest to and chuckled to himself. He imagined the bird having to conduct an auto rotational landing (a landing where the chopper basically crashes) inside a sandstorm down onto the desert floor. After the "crash" he, the Commander, and any of the crew that were still alive, would have had to radio a distress message to any Coalition Forces in the area. Then they would have to establish local security in a sandstorm where you literally could not see your hand at arm's length and treat any wounded. The First Sergeant quickly banished those thoughts from his mind and took a deep breath. In his utter physical exhaustion from the previous days 15-hour trip he had been on. He took a few moments to reflect on this close call, knowing that during his time in Iraq that there would no doubt be many more. He just hoped that God would be with him as he remembered that scripture said that he would be...

"He LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him." Psalm 28:7



Daily Reading

In Deuteronomy 31:8, it is written that "The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."". Just as the Lord was with the First Sergeant in this situation, He will be with us as we employ the tools of authority.

I must emphasize that our study of the Tools of Authority will be covered in greater detail in week 4 when we talk about the Tools of the Warrior. It is essential however, to introduce these tools now in order for us all to know that they are there! Ephesians 6:11-20 details the tools of authority, which is the Armor of God. We already mentioned that yesterday we must be clothed in the armor in order to pray the most effectively. The word *stand* appears four times in these passages. In verse 14 we

are told to stand *firm*. It is interesting where this choice of words is placed in the passage. It is first associated with the belt of *truth*. All throughout our series we have gone to some length to understand that the Devil is not interested in truth. In fact quite the opposite.

This concept of standing firm has three important parts. First, we can stand firm because Jesus had already won! When He died and rose again we were made victorious with Him. Second, we must defend the ground that has already been taken. With this you might say, "Now wait a minute Seitz, you just told us a couple days ago that we have to go on the offense. True, but in order to hold the ground that we have taken, in offensive operations we must defend. Third, Satan will try to rob us of the blessings that we've already been given. This is why it is imperative for us to stand firm on God's truth so that we can be victorious.

We've gone to great lengths to make everyone understand that our enemy primarily occupies the Heavenly Realm outside of the Physical Realm. With this being said do not be fooled into thinking that the worst person in your life is your problem. This or these people are only the physical construct through which Satan is working to get to you in the physical realm. 2 Corinthians 4:18 reminds us of this fact, "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Up to this point in the study, we have not truly addressed the cold, hard truth that Satan is coming for our souls. He is. He wants our minds. He wants our hearts. He wants our blood. He delights in the pain, tears, suffering, and death of Humanity. Why? Because God chose us to replace Him and to give His favor (blessings) to us. Satan's one goal in life is to destroy us. All of us! There will be at least one "day of evil" (and more than likely many days) in every Christians life, where Satan will come for us. Whether it be a direct or indirect attack. Whether it is as simple as causing us to sin or snuff our corporeal life from temporal existence. He is coming. In Ephesians 6:16 we are given hope regarding these attacks, "In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." When Satan unleashes Hell upon us we must keep our shields up! We must not budge!

Hopefully with the graphic depiction of our enemy in the last paragraph, anyone who is participating in this study that was not awake, now realizes just how serious this is. Too often I think as Christians we can read the Word with a dispassionate view toward it. Sometimes I think that if we don't see how it can directly affect our lives, we can turn a bit of a blind eye to it. We cannot here. We must do as it commands us to do in Ephesians 6:10, "Finally, be strong in the LORD and in his mighty power." God's Power! God's Armor! God's Battle! It might be a bit easier for me to think about getting suited up in armor for battle, since for most of my adult life I wore body armor and trained for war in the physical realm. But for those who cannot relate to suiting up for battle in the physical sense, think of it as preparing for a job interview. You begin the day early. Ensuring that you have everything set out and ready to put on. You ensure that you are well groomed; haircut, style, finger nails clipped and filed, and

that you have a perfect shave. After putting on your suit you look at yourself in the mirror to ensure that everything is perfect. Once everything is perfect, you are ready. When “dressing for success” in God’s armor, you are dressing up to be more like Jesus.

We will depart for today with Romans 13:11-12, “And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.” Or the Armor of God. It was once said that, “It is always darkest just before the day dawneth.” This popular quote first authored by English theologian and historian, Thomas Fuller can loosely trace its roots back to a verse from a famous Warrior - King David. David wrote in Psalm 46:5, “God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.” Make no mistake the Devil is on the move, but the Lord is always a step ahead. When we put on the “Armor of Light” we are walking with God and when we are with Him, Satan will run from us...



Kid Friendly Ideas

Notes:



Day 14: Tools of Authority - Part 2

Sunday, October 13th

“If you can’t get someone off your mind, pray for them.
You may be the only one that cares enough to do so.” Anonymous



Today’s Challenge: Romans Road (Romans 5:8)

Take the next step in memorizing the Romans Road. This can be a great tool for you to use to share the gospel with others. The third verse is Romans 5:8. “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

On the First Sergeant’s second day in Balad he had been introduced to the unit’s interpreter Hassan Hussein. The former Iraq Air Force Colonel and Intelligence Officer, whose name in arabic means "good", "handsome" or "beautiful" seemed to be a respectful and polite gentlemen. There was something that the First Sergeant did not trust about Hassan though. Perhaps it was that he had been a former Iraqi Officer. He had served under Saddam Hussan. He had also worked at the very installation where they now stood. He watched as Hassan spread his Islamic Prayer Rug across the dust and removed the sandals from his feet, washing them with American purchased bottled water. Deep down this enraged the First Sergeant. He did respect Hussan slightly though. He hailed from the Shia Tribe, which had traditionally been a tribe, that even though they made up a large percentage of the population, did not have much power or authority in Saddam Hussan’s tyrannical government.

One day, during one of their talks, the First Sergeant and Hussan were interrupted with a message saying that Hussan was to be delivered to the post headquarters. “Is this going to be a good thing, sir?” the First Sergeant asked his Commander. The Commander looked at him and squinted his eyes. “It remains to be seen.” The post Intelligence Officer had called a meeting with them and their Iraqi Interpreter.

Upon arriving at the post headquarters they were greeted by the Intelligence Officer who quickly took them outside to an area behind the headquarters building. The men sat down at the table and to the First Sergeant’s surprise the Intelligence Officer did not direct them not to speak about this

conversation. There was little small talk or pleasantries. The Intelligence Officer immediately began to question Hussan over the specifics of what he about insurgent cells operating inside the city of Balad. The First Sergeant knew from the talks that they had that Hussan's loyalty was to Islam, and he wondered if he had any information regarding the radical extremists that they were locked in bitter conflict with. If he did would he give it to them? On more than a few occasions in a respectful way Hussan had made clear his disagreement with other religious views outside of Islam. The First Sergeant was again surprised by the amount of information that Hussan gave.

After they had finished and arrived back at the unit area, Hussan readied himself to depart for the day. He stood in front of the Commander and First Sergeant with a large smile on his face. As was his custom, he called the First Sergeant by his last name and then continued to speak, "You see, these people who kill in the name of Ahlaha are dangerous to the people of Iraq. They threaten what we are trying to build here. For the first time in as long as I can remember we have a real chance to make a better future here. (The First Sergeant's Last name), that is why I told them what I did today." Hussan finished as the smile slightly faded from his face. The First Sergeant gave a single nod of the head to his 45 year old interpreter, gaining a better sense of who he had just proven that he was.

The First Sergeant felt ashamed of the way that he had held a prejudice in his heart against Hussan. Just because he was Muslim. Just because he was different than the First Sergeant. Just because he had served in the military that American's had opposed during this war. This was wrong and he knew that after this demonstration that Hussan was here to help, the First Sergeant would think of him differently...

"no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me," declares the LORD."
_ Isaiah 54:17



Daily Reading

Yesterday we began to talk about the "Armor of Light" (Romans 13:12). Today we will expand upon our knowledge of these tools.

The first part of armor that we must talk about is the Belt of Truth. Ephesians 6:14 is the reference for this piece of the armor, "Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,". During biblical times, the belt provided an anchor point, to secure a warrior's armor in place. In the Roman Army the tunic was placed under the

belt and it was what the Warrior's scabbard for his sword was attached to. This was the fundamental piece of the armor from which other pieces were held in place. The "belt of truth" is what keeps us on course through our Christian walk. It's what we believe at our core. It is a broader worldview that holds together our values, beliefs and guides our decision making abilities. This is our standard for reality. Satan will try to make us believe that truth is relative. He will always try to exploit truth with lies. To combat this we as Christians must establish God's Word as the Objective Truth within our homes.

The second piece of the armor contained in Ephesian 6:14 as well, is the Breastplate of Righteousness. A breastplate is a piece of armor covering the chest. It's primary purpose is to protect a Soldier's torso from stabs and slashes of a sword or spear. Roman armor, which served as Paul's inspiration for spiritual armor, was made from pieces of molded or forged metal. The breastplate covered the Roman Soldier from belt to neck. The spiritual breastplate that all Christians must wear comes from righteousness imputed to us by Jesus at the cross, as described in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God..". It protects our heart as Proverbs 4:23 directs, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Through this plate, Christ's Righteousness, (not ours, because we are not righteous as Romans 3:10 explains) as we march into battle is displayed to the world. When we "put on" the breastplate, we agree to commit ourselves to the pursuit of Holy Living.

The third piece of armor we must concern ourselves with are the Gospel of Peace, referenced in Ephesians 6:15. These are the "shoes" of a warrior. Roman Soldiers wore sandals called, Caligae. These were heavy-duty, thick-soled, open, work boots which were designed to protect Soldiers feet on long marches and even in battle. Ephesians 2:14 tells us that Jesus is our Peace! I think that it is fitting that the word peace is associated with this piece of armor. Shoes give us the support to stand. We stand upon the Gospel and ultimately our Peace is found in Christ. When we stand upon the rock which is Christ we cannot be moved. When we live on truth (the belt) and live in righteousness (the breastplate) the Peace of God will protect us. Miracles only come from acting in truth!

The fourth piece of armor is the Helmet of Salvation, which Paul speaks of in Ephesians 6:17. Many times in my career I was so glad that I had a helmet to protect my head. Being tossed around in armored vehicles, bumping my head sliding around corners, and even absorbing shock from explosions, were just a few of the times that I was blessed enough to have a helmet. In day number 7 we talked about the source of this battle being in your mind. This piece of spiritual headgear is designed to protect our minds from Satan's onslaught. When our mind, or more appropriately our thoughts are taken captive by Satan, then we will become a POW. This piece of armor is our "assurance" of Salvation. There are many verses in the Word that assure us of this, but the one that I like the best is 1 John 5:11-12, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life." The helmet in a broad context allows us to maintain self control, patience, and mental endurance. It assists us in

maintaining our focus where it belongs - on Jesus. It allows us to claim our position in Jesus, not using circumstances and situations as a crutch.

Now to this point we have talked about pieces of armor that you wear. These pieces of armor are designed for you to keep on. The final two pieces you pick up as necessary to fight with. The fifth piece of armor is the Shield of Faith. This weapon allows us to act upon Truth. We can take that truth and use it for everyday Holy Living. Ephesians 6:16 (also mentioned in 1 Peter 1:5) specifies that, "...you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." The shield is our direct protection from Satan's attacks. This shield cannot be pierced or destroyed by the hottest fires of anger, hatred or bitterness.

The final piece of armor is something most of us pick up daily, but don't usually think of it as a weapon. It has been called God's Love Letter. The Sword of the Spirit, is the Word of God. The Bible, as detailed in Ephesians 6:17. This is the only weapon we have mentioned that is an offensive weapon. We are told in Hebrews 4:12, "For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." God's Word is Truth. Not just A truth, but ultimate and objective truth. Where we refer to the Word as a sword, is when we use the Word. The bible must become our sword. We must know the Word of God to defeat Satan!

Now that we have the historical knowledge and the access to authority to fight the battle, next week we will look at what it takes to live as a Warrior...



Kid Friendly Ideas

Notes: