

Spiritual Warfare

A Biblical glimpse...and we mean a glimpse!

Throughout the Bible, we find numerous accounts of spiritual warfare. Of course, the entire Bible is the story of Jesus, our Salvation, and His victory over Satan.

However, there are certain Books of the Bible that have more direct references and accounts of spiritual battles, defeats and victories. We are going to take a look at just a few of them so you might get the picture that spiritual warfare is real and ever present.

But as Christians, we read the end of the Book...we know already...JESUS WINS!!!

Readings:

- ♥ Gospel of Mark
- ♥ Genesis 1
- ♥ Matthew 17
- ♥ Revelation 12:7-11

The Spiritual Battle

- ♥ Who is involved
 - God
 - God's angels
 - Satan
 - Satan's angels
 - Man
- ♥ The Battleground
 - Our mind
 - Our body
 - Our emotions
 - Our relationships
- ♥ The Weapons
 - Ephesians 6 (see the Armor section)
 - Prayer and Fasting (Matthew 17:21)
 - Discernment – Believing the battle is real
 - Ephesians 5:11-13
 - Acts 19:13

Know Your Enemy

Satan as Deceiver – Man seems to have always wanted to have power over other people, circumstances and the future. We either have been able to trust God in these things...or we have looked to other powers. Magic, sorcery, divination and other forms of the occult bear witness to this. Where there is less Christianity...there seems to be more of the occult. In our own country, it rears its ugly head in more subtle forms, such as New Age teachings, the “independent spirit,” materialism, etc. But no matter what form it takes, Satan uses it to deceive us.

Satan as Accuser – Satan loves to use our guilt to “pull the rug out from under us.” He will keep condemning you using accusations that will rob you of peace, a sense of forgiveness and joy. We need to remember that God forgets our sins in the “sea of forgetfulness.” Jesus’ blood has cleansed us from all sin before we even commit them. Our guilt is gone...not because of what we do, but because of what Jesus has done. Because of the Cross, We are forgiven!! Done!!! (So remember where those accusations come from...there is NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!)

Satan as a Roaring Lion – Just as the roar of a lion signals impending danger to its prey, so does our enemy use fear as a tool to intimidate and scare us. He will often use this tactic to keep us from discussing him/spiritual warfare/demonic possession or our spiritual armor. We need to understand that the battle is real, yes. However, victory is not us to us. It is already a reality because Jesus crushed Satan and all his demons on the cross. Satan does not have the same power as God. He is not omnipotent. So he cannot read our minds. And he cannot devour us if we command him to leave in Jesus’ name, with ‘voz alta’ (in Spanish – out loud!!). That doesn’t mean we must scream!!! It just means in an audible voice. Jesus’ name has the power, not your voice. So the next time you feel fear, guilt, doubt...remember you can choose what you know to be true! And that is what God says...we are united with Christ...we belong to Him. So choose the Lamb! His sacrifice was sufficient over death itself!!!

Satan as the Liar – Wherever there is a Biblical truth, Satan will try to distort it and make something counterfeit. He will constantly try to challenge the truth. But we know truth is more than just a state of being. It is rather a person. And His name is Jesus. John 14:6 says “I am...the truth!” He is the only one we need believe...He is already victorious...and He asks us to stand on Him alone.

What more do we need?

Dressed for Battle

God’s Armor

God knows that the battle with our enemy is a constant one...and that we live in the enemy’s territory. But we are also provided with spiritual weapons to effectively fight “against the principalities, against powers, against the rulers of this world and against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6:12)

Soldiers would never think of going to war without the proper uniform and necessary weapons. But we tend to forget that we are in an ongoing war. Often when talking about “spiritual warfare,” we turn our heads and pretend that only happens to other people. However, it seems the more we try to do God’s will...love others...and share His Gospel...the greater the big red bull’s eye on our back becomes. So as targets of the enemy’s hatred and constant attacks, we need to be prepared, strong and dressed for battle.

God has given us the spiritual armor we need, both defensive and offensive. Let’s take a look at our uniform!

THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

When you think of a breastplate, what image comes to mind? It is something that protects the mid-section of our bodies...wherein lies our heart. Without our physical heart, we cannot live. If Satan's attack arrows can penetrate our spiritual heart, what happens to our righteousness? It bleeds...loses its protective quality over our spiritual lives...and leaves us vulnerable. Just what the enemy wants! We begin to doubt our righteousness, which we know and understand comes only through faith in Jesus. But these arrows penetrate our faith at its root...the heart...and Satan's strategy to create doubt and a sense of unworthiness begins to "bleed" our spiritual lives of any confidence we have that we are chosen by God...to serve Him...and fulfill His will for our lives.

As we look at these weapons, they all appear to be defensive in nature. And yet, we do have two powerful and effective weapons that we are to use as our primary offensive weapons in this spiritual battle. They are:

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT (the Word of God)

The Roman soldiers used a short, straight sword for hand-to-hand combat. And it was a weapon which symbolized power and authority. Our power and authority comes from our spiritual sword, which is God's Word. Martin Luther's famous battle hymn "A Mighty Fortress" says..."One little Word can fell him." God's Word has the ultimate power and authority. Our enemy cannot stand when the name of Jesus is spoken. To effectively use this weapon, however, we must know it. And how do we know it? We must study it...read it daily...memorize it to use it in battle. Once we are in the midst of the battle, there is no time to run and get your weapon. It must always be ready and available in your back pocket...to be pulled out and used offensively at our enemy at all times.

PRAYER

Prayer is both an offensive and defensive weapon. Charles Stanley says...

*"Where there is no prayer, there is no warfare,
Where there is no warfare, there is no spiritual reality.
Where there is no spiritual reality, there is no victory.
Where there is no victory, there is nothing glorifying God."*

Prayer destroys the kingdom of Satan...and builds the Kingdom of God. It is time we get serious about prayer. Without it...we may lose. With it...

WE BECOME VICTORIOUS SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS!!

Chinks in Your Armor

Strongholds...sin...deception...they can be part of our lifestyle that may allow entry to demonic or natural temptations. And they can put a chink in our spiritual armor.

These things may be behavioral habits or thoughts or attitudes, i.e., worry, doubt, loneliness, rejection, resentment, etc. The enemy will take these things, whether they be big or small...and he will begin to exalt himself...causing our armor to weaken.

We must do the following:

- ♥ Examine our hearts and lives for sin – the Holy Spirit will show us.
- ♥ Examine yourself for unforgiveness O one of the biggest "chinks."
- ♥ Examine yourself for PRIDE – the underlying "sin" condition.

If you find any of the above (and we ALL will), we must do the following:

- ♥ James 4:7 – “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
- ♥ Confess our sins daily.
- ♥ Name your strongholds/sins out loud, and ask God to tear them down.
- ♥ Receive God’s forgiveness.
- ♥ Daily make the Lord the LORD of your life
 - He will help you forgive
 - He will become the authority of your life
 - He will show you what and how to change
 - He will help you resist temptation

“The Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.” 1 Thessalonians 3:3

Prayer Walking

In Guatemala, at The Servant’s Heart ministry, we have set aside each Friday as a day for being on the defensive, not just the offensive in this spiritual battle that we face, which includes:

- ♥ The Prayer Walk
- ♥ Studying Scripture
- ♥ Fellowship

We use specific Scripture as we walk and pray in our ministry building and in the squatter’s area around the dump. Remember...the enemy cannot stand to be around even the name of Jesus...and so he must leave as we so command him to do in our Savior’s name.

Secondly, he doesn’t like it when we learn the truth...thus we set aside time to teach what it really is that we, as Christians, believe...and why.

And lastly, he hates fellowship with “the Light.” And so when two or three of us are gathered in Jesus’ name...there is Jesus also...and so the enemy must flee.

As part of your mission trip, you will have the privilege of joining us in this time of warfare...and victory celebration!!!