

SPIRITUAL WARFARE: ARE YOU STILL IN THE BATTLE OR HAVE YOU BEEN CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY?

1<sup>st</sup> PETER 5:8

BE SOBER; BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL, AS A ROARING LION, WALKETH ABOUT, SEEKING WHON HE MAY DEVOUR.

MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AS CHRISTIANS THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN BE SURE OF AND THAT IS THAT BATTLES WILL COME, THE ENEMY WILL TRY TO TAKE YOU OUT, PEOPLE WILL COME AGAINST YOU AND LIFE AS A CHRISTIAN WILL NOT ALWAYS BE EASY. THERE IS SIMPLY NO DENYING THAT SPIRITUAL WARFARE IS REAL AND PRESENT. SO I ASK ARE YOU AT WAR OR HAVE YOU BEEN CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY? ARE YOU IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP OR ARE YOU ON THE BATTLEFIELD FIGHTING?

BECAUSE MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS YOU CAN FIND ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE FACT THAT YOU WILL GET THROUGH IT. IT'S ONE THING TO BE AT WAR AND NOT KNOW THE OUTCOME, BUT HOW AWESOME IS IT TO KNOW THAT WE HAVE THE VICTORY IN OUR HANDS BY GOD'S GRACE. AMEN! EVEN WHEN IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE ULTIMATELY WE WIN...I ASK AGAIN ARE YOU AT WAR OR HAVE YOU BEEN CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY? ARE YOU IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP OR ARE YOU ON THE BATTLEFIELD FIGHTING?

THERE IS A SCRIPTURE THAT I BRING TO YOU AT THIS TIME BECAUSE IT SUMS UP FOR ME AND HOPEFULLY IT WILL FOR YOU TOO OUR BATTLE.

PAUL TELLS US IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 4:8-9, "WE ARE HARD-PRESSED ON EVERY SIDE, YET NOT CRUSHED; WE ARE PERPLEXED, BUT NOT IN DESPAIR; PERSECUTED, BUT NOT FORSAKEN; STRUCK DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED." HERE PAUL REASSURES US THAT WE WILL WIN. ARE YOU AT WAR OR HAVE YOU BEEN CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY? ARE YOU IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP OR ARE YOU ON THE BATTLE FIELD FIGHTING?

WHEN I FIND MYSELF IN THE MIDST OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE WHICH IS OFTEN, I GO STRAIGHT TO GOD'S WORD AND THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO HAVE SOME GOOD SCRIPTURE HIDDEN IN MY HEART. BECAUSE IT'S TRUE WHEN PAUL SAYS, "THAT WE MUST PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE WILES OF THE DEVIL". (EPHESIANS 6:11-18)

PAUL IS A WITNESS TO THIS SPIRITUAL TRUTH FOR US, BECAUSE, HE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT, AND HE KEPT THE FAITH. WHAT ABOUT YOU, ARE YOU FIGHTING A GOOD FIGHT, ARE YOU KEEPING THE FAITH, OR ARE YOU A PRISONER OF WAR?

KING DAVID TELLS US THAT "GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH, A VERY PRESENT HELP IN TROUBLE." (PSM 46:1) KING DAVID IS A WITNESS TO THIS SPIRITUAL TRUTH THAT GOD WILL NOT LET US DOWN. AMEN!

MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS GOD, HIMSELF EVEN TESTIFIES TO US ABOUT OUR ULTIMATE VICTORY AMEN. "I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME, YOU ARE MINE, WHEN YOU PASS THROUGH THE WATERS, I WILL BE WITH YOU; AND THROUGH THE RIVERS, THEY SHALL NOT OVERFLOW YOU. WHEN YOU WALK THROUGH THE FIRE, YOU SHALL NOT BE BURNED, NOR SHALL THE FLAME SCORCH YOU." (ISA.43:2-3) AMEN!

BUT MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS WE NEED TO ASK SHADRACK, MESHACK AND ABEDNEGO IF THIS IS TRUE, BECAUSE WHEN THEY REFUSED TO OBEY THE KING, HE HAD THEM PUT IN A FIERY FURNISH, BUT GOD PROTECTED THEM AND THEY DID NOT DIE EVEN AS OTHERS DID. AMEN!

MANY CHRISTIANS OFTEN WONDER WHY THEY ARE STILL STRUGGLING WITH A LOT OF ISSUES, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE BEEN SAVED AND BORN AGAIN THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

WE ALSO WONDER WHY MANY ARE STILL LIVING WITH ILLNESSES AND DISEASES, ADDICTIONS FEARS AND ANXIETIES, DEPRESSIONS, EMOTIONAL SCARS, NEGATIVE CHILDHOOD MEMORIES AND MORE. ARE I ASK ARE YOU IN THE BATTLE, OR ARE YOU IN A PRISONER OF WAR CAMP?

I NEED TO REMIND YOU NOW MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, THAT IT'S NOT ALWAYS WHAT YOU ARE DOING WRONG, SOMETIMES IT'S THAT WE ARE NOT DOING ENOUGH OF WHAT IS RIGHT. DO YOU HEAR ME? I WILL REPEAT THAT STATEMENT. IT'S NOT ALWAYS WHAT WE ARE DOING WRONG; SOMETIMES IT'S THAT WE ARE NOT DOING ENOUGH OF WHAT IS RIGHT. I ASK AGAIN IN WHICH CAMP ARE YOU FIGHTING?

SOMETIMES WE DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE THAT GOD WILL DO WHAT HE SAYS THAT HE WILL DO. WE SOMETIMES CONTINUE TO QUESTION GOD'S TRUTHS ABOUT THE VICTORY, BECAUSE WE CAN'T SEE IT FOR OURSELVES. LORD HAVE MERCY UPON US!

THE TRUTH IS IN THE NATURAL WORLD WE LIVE IN, WE STILL HAVE TO STRUGGLE AGAINST MANY SPIRITUAL ATTACKS, WEAKNESS OF THE FLESH AND STRONGHOLDS OF NEGATIVE MINDSETS AND DURING TIMES OF DIFFICULTIES WE HAVE NOT LEARNED TO USE THE EXTRA DEFENSE, INSPIRATION AND INTERVENTION THAT COMES FROM THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT DWELLS WITHIN US. I ASK AM I RIGHT ABOUT IT?

IN OTHER WORDS; WE MUST LEARN TO OVERCOME CERTAIN BARRIERS TO OUR VICTORY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, WE MUST BE PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE! ARE YOU IN THE BATTLE OR ARE YOU IN A PRISONER OF WAR CAMP? WHEN YOU ARE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE YOU WILL NEED WEAPONS TO FIGHT THE BATTLE. AM I RIGHT ABOUT IT?

MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS THERE ARE THREE POWERFUL WEAPONS FOR WINNING THE BATTLE AND COMBINED TOGETHER THEY ARE LIFE-TRANSFORMING. TOGETHER THE THREE WILL BREAK GENERATIONAL CRUSES, BAD HABITS AND NEGATIVE SELF-TALK, AND GIVE US WHAT GOD INTENDED US TO HAVE, TRUE FREEDOM. "YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH AND THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE."

THE THREE WEAPONS THAT WILL PREPARE US FOR THE BATTLES OF WARFARE ARE, "GIVING, PRAYER, AND FASTING". THESE ARE NOT SUGGESTIONS THAT WE ARE GIVEN TO MAYBE FOLLOW. JESUS CHRIST MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE FATHER IN HEAVEN EXPECTS US TO DO THESE THINGS BY USING THE WORD, "WHEN," WE DO THESE THINGS.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO BELIEVE ME; JESUS INSTRUCTS US THAT WE ARE TO GIVE LOVE OFFERINGS (ALMS). "WHEN YOU GIVE TO THE NEEDY, DO NOT LET YOUR LEFT HAND KNOW WHAT YOUR RIGHT HAND IS DOING. THEN THE FATHER WHICH SEES IN SECRET HIMSELF SHALL REWARD THEE OPENLY". (MATT.6; 3-4)

ON PRAYER JESUS INSTRUCTS US TO PRAY, "WHEN YOU PRAY ENTER INTO THE CLOSET, AND WHEN YOU HAVE SHUT THE DOOR, PRAY TO THE FATHER WHICH IS IN SECRET AND THE FATHER WHICH SEES IN SECRET SHALL REWARD YOU OPENLY". (MATT.6:5-6)

AND FINALLY JESUS INSTRUCTS US TO FAST, "WHEN YOU FAST, DON'T BE, AS THE HYPOCRITES, OF A SAD COUNTENANCE AND THE FATHER WHICH SEES IN SECRET, SHALL REWARD THEE OPENLY." (Matt.6:16-18)

MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHEN THESE THREE VERY IMPORTANT CHRISTIAN BATTLE ORDERS ARE FOLLOWED, TOGETHER THEIR COMBINED POWER PROVIDES LIFE-TRANSFORMING WEAPONS FOR ENGAGING IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE. YOU CAN NEVER GO WRONG WHEN THEY ARE PRACTICED EVEN IN TIMES OF PEACE.

AND MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS BY COMBINING THESE THREE BATTLE ORDERS GIVING, PRAYER AND FASTING, YOU WILL PAVE THE WAY TO WALKING IN THE TRUE FREEDOM THAT GOD INTENDED FOR YOU. YOU WILL BE ABLE TO BREAK EVERY YOKE AND DESTROY EVERY STRONGHOLD IN YOUR LIFE! YOU MUST BELIEVE WHAT GOD SAID!

JESUS CHRIST IS SAYING TO US, "YOU CAN FIGHT ME, YOU CAN TALK ABOUT ME. YOU CAN RUN MY NAME THROUGH THE MUD. YOU CAN HURT ME. YOU CAN BETRAY ME. YOU CAN DENY ME. YOU CAN MISTREAT ME. YOU CAN TAKE EVERYTHING I OWN. YOU CAN TRY TO DESTROY ME. YOU CAN PLOT AGAINST ME. YOU CAN MISUSE ME. YOU CAN LIE ON ME. YOU CAN TRY TO KILL ME, BUT YOU WILL NEVER BE SUCCESSFUL, BECAUSE I AM GOD AND GOD ALL BY MYSELF. I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA.

I AM REMINDED THAT GOD WILL FIGHT MY BATTLES FOR ME THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, AND EVEN IF THROUGH HUMAN EYES IT APPEARS THAT I HAVE BEEN CONQUERED, I CAN CONTINUE TO STAND FIRM ON WHAT GOD SAID. YES, YOU MAY APPEAR TO WIN A BATTLE HERE AND THERE, BUT THE WAR OVER AND, YOU CAN'T WIN! BECAUSE I AM A SOLIDER IN GOD'S ARMY.

THE DEVIL IS A LIAR! THE BATTLE IS WON IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST. CHOOSE TO LIVE A VICTORIOUS LIFE IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB. "NO WEAPON FORMED AGAINST ME SHALL PROSPER. (ISA.54:17a)

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, DO THOSE THINGS THAT GOD REQUIRES OF YOU. IT'S NOT MAN THAT WE FOLLOW, BUT THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE BATTLE.

AS I CLOSE I NEED TO ASK YOU AGAIN ARE YOU STILL IN THE BATTLE OR HAVE YOU SURRENDERED TO THE ENEMY?

PAUL REMINDS US TO FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, TO KEEP THE FAITH, AND GOD WILL REWARD US FOR OUR FIGHT IN THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE BATTLE.